

Narrator: Irwin Dilg
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Place of Interview: Narrator's home, located at
6316 Lincoln Avenue, Morton Grove
Interviewer: Denise Rossmann Christopoulos
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INTRODUCTION

Irwin Dilg's ancestors were among the first builders of Morton Grove. His father, Fred Dilg, was one of the first businessmen in Niles Township owning and operating the Morton Grove Exchange and Post Office. Irwin became manager of the Exchange upon the death of his father.

He remembers the physical aspects of the landmark building which also housed the first telephone exchange. As a child, Irwin recalls hitching up the horse and wagon to take grocery orders at local farms. Much of the Morton Grove Exchange's business was carried out in barter with the local residents and farmers.

Irwin recalls the Morton Grove Colts baseball team of his youth and many of his responsibilities managing the store with his mother. The building was erected in 1904 and housed various social events. The top floor ballroom accommodated dances, parties, political rallies and was a local meeting place.

Irwin returned from the service to find his mother had changed the tavern into a successful ice cream parlor. This was due in part to the propriety of the post office in the building and subsequently Prohibition. At this time Irwin Dilg went to work at the county assessor's office and later became a court clerk and police magistrate for the village.

ID: Irwin Dilg

Q: Question asked by interviewer, Denise Rossmann Christopoulos.

TAPE ONE, SIDE A

Q: First of all, would you like to tell me your parents' names?

ID: My father's name was Fred. My mother's name was Seana and the last name was Torieck.

Q: Was she from around here?

ID: No, she was born in Hanover, Germany, and was about four years old when her parents came over here. They landed in between Deerfield and Northbrook. Their parents had a farm. Of course, the children grew up and she married my dad later on in eighteen-something, I forget the year. There were three children born in our family -- my brother, my sister, and I.

Q: Do you know why they originally came to this area when they came to the United States?

ID: Well, my dad was born here, but my mother was born in Hanover, Germany, and her folks were born over there.

Q: And they settled in this area and your parents met?

ID: Well, around Northbrook. Just a little north of Glenview, between Glenview and Northbrook. They had a farm there. And that's where the airport is now. And later on the last one of my relatives -- my mother's sister that was married and lived on the farm -- they sold it to the Glenview airport. That property, yes. And, of course, they scattered all over.

Q: Where the Glenview Naval Air Base is today?

ID: That's right. Their farm was right in the center of where the Naval Air Base is.

Q: How interesting. Did your mother work at all other than on the farm?

ID: No, that's all. They were all used to farming. It was a big family and they helped one another and went from one relation to the other to help them when they needed extra help or they were sick. But she never did anything but housework and that.

Q: You said your father was born here?

ID: My dad was born here, yes.

Q: In Morton Grove?

ID: Right there where the Fireside is on Waukegan Road. My grandfather came here in 1847. That's when he bought that property and it ran all the way up to the railroad tracks.

He had a farm there and they had cattle. He had a general store like we had down here. Only his was on a larger base because he had more land.

Q: Did he sell his crops also besides the general store?

ID: On the top floor, he had a hall like we had, and he had a general store and cattle there. He used to have (pauses) . . . flour, feed . . . He didn't have any coal and wood because the wood was gotten from the trees that were around the property. But he had cattle in the pasture. He used to sell milk, calves, and cattle. I used to go up by him when my brother'd take me there. Every time we went up there, my grandmother would reach behind the clock like I have in there -- one of those kitchen clocks -- and there was a stack of silver dollars or half dollars. The little ones would get a half dollar, the bigger ones would get a dollar.

Q: You remember that?

ID: Oh, yes. I was about six, seven years old at the time, and I always said "thank-you" beforehand. (laughter) I knew what I was going to get.

Q: Did you help your grandfather out in the store as you got older?

ID: No, we moved down here then when I was about a little over a year, about fourteen months old, when we moved down to our corner and they kept me at home. They didn't let me wander around anywhere because I was very young. Of course, there weren't many people here at that time either. My dad started in business for

himself when he bought that from Mr. Koller. Mr. Koller was a brother-in-law of my father that had that store before us.

Q: I see.

ID: His wife was my father's sister. See my father had six sisters and five brothers. There were eleven in the family.

Q: Where was the Koller store before your father bought it?

ID: Right on this side of the railroad tracks, up against the tracks. I have pictures of that building there.

Q: We'll look at that a little later. What's your birthday?

ID: July 10th, 1893.

Q: And you were born in Morton Grove?

ID: I was born on the Waukegan Road, right across from the Fireside. We had a log cabin there. My dad worked on the farm and helped out in the store when they had extra help needed. He worked there at nights to help tend bar and everything. They had a bar and a grocery store. When he got through on the farm he went over there and naturally they put him to work. The other ones were too lazy to work. They were getting so fat and he was the thin one. That's why he passed away when

he was young -- 46 years of age. He had a heart attack worrying about paying for the building that he built on the corner that he had purchased.

Q: What do you remember about your early home -- the home itself?

ID: Oh, I can remember when I went to school in the old Village Hall on Callie Avenue here. That's where they had a kindergarten school. I had to go there. I don't remember the teacher's name, but I was about five-and-a-half, going on six years old when I went there.

Q: How many students were in that?

ID: I can't remember how many there were. There weren't too many people living here at that time. Because the town was small . . . there were about half a dozen of us I think going there. Weren't too many that lived here. There was a big greenhouse across the way. They called it Poehlmann Brothers. And that's where my dad always got the business from. There was a pickle year down below -- this side of Oakton Street that was Squire Dingee's and later on there was another one up here where Vegetable Growers are now. They have the property. And we used to go in there when we'd go down to the river swimming during the summer. Skating in the winter.

Q: Did you fish off the river?

ID: Oh, yes, we caught sunfish there, bullheads and crappies . . .

Q: Sunfish?

ID: Sure. We called them sunfish. They were like a perch, you know, small. There wasn't much to them/ when we'd bring them home, "Well, why didn't you get more" . . . well, we couldn't fish more. In the wintertime, we'd go down the banks with our sleds, from the toboggans, then skate on the ice. And we played like they got hockey now, we called it sheeny (?). we cut our hockey sticks out of the trees with a crotch like that and a handle. We used to have tin cans then for the puck on the, on the ice, and we'd knock them around. We had a great time there. Sundays we had a big team. And a lot of people used to come there on Sundays and watch us play.

Q: Sounds like you had a great boyhood.

ID: Well, it was the only opportunity to have any enjoyment in the vicinity, because there wasn't much activity that you could enjoy. Summertime, we'd have a ballgame. We had the first ballgame in back of our barns between now and where the Vegetable Growers are. The other pickle factory that I talked about was Henning Pickle Factory. The farmers used to bring their pickles in there. They had big tanks in there where they'd throw the pickles in and then they'd mix it with water and acid like, to make vinegar.

Q: Did they get the pickles from the local farmers in the area?

ID: Local farmers would bring that all in here. They had no scale. Later on we had a scale, but we had it in the street. When the town grew up more, got larger, we

had to remove it. The state made us remove that scale because we were on their property. We put it in the driveway. We used to weigh all their loads of pickles and the hay and the oats, what they'd bring it, you know. We'd weigh all that material, and we'd give them a ticket. They paid 25 cents for weighing a load. And later on, Henning Pickle Factory put in their own scale. Then we discontinued our scale and took it out. We sold them the scale, in other words, because we weren't going to use it anymore. We filled ours up with sand.

Q: Who did they sell their pickles to? Do you remember?

ID: Well, they used to make the pickles and they just sent them to the Chicago stores. And they would buy them all. They'd have that put up in barrels, and the vinegar would be in barrels, too. The big stores would buy them and other places. They'd ship them out of town. The railroad put in a sliding there that they could pull right up with their cars and load there. We used to come out of the river in the summertime when we'd be swimming, we'd go in the pickle barn there like a big long shed, and we'd get up on those rafters and reach in and get a pickle. Every once in a while we'd get a pickle in the back of the neck. One of the fellows would throw a pickle at us. "Get out of here now! You got enough there!" He says, "Before you know it, you'll fall in there and we'll make a pickle out of you." And we'd run then. But they knew some of us . . .

Q: I was just going to ask if you were a mischievous boy! (laughter)

ID: They knew us all. They knew who we were. But, "You had enough now! Go on! Get out of there." They'd take those crooked pickles that they couldn't put in the

jars and throw them at us. They wouldn't throw a good pickle at us because that would be wasting a good pickle.

Q: So as a young boy, you mainly went skating and fishing on the river.

ID: Skating and fishing. In the wintertime we went skating; in the summertime we went swimming and fishing.

Q: How about picnics?

ID: Well, they used to call that St. Paul Park down there, which is now forest preserve. And Mr. Klehm from Niles Center at that time, he owned the park. He had the grounds. He had boats there that they would rent out on Sundays, and when they had picnics. The people would go boat riding by themselves. You could take your girlfriend down there for a boat ride. But during the week, the kids would sometimes get into a boat and they'd break it loose from there and the boat would get down the river. We'd have to go over there and get the boat up. Then you had to have a pair of oars, so we had the key and we went and opened up the shanty that they had the oars in. We'd go down and pick up the boat and put a new rope on it. We'd take care of the boats for Mr. Klehm because he was over in Niles Center two miles away. He couldn't have a man, because staying there would be more expensive than giving my dad the key and my dad gave good service and he educated the children not to molest anything and damage anything because he'd have to have them reprimanded for that. So, he would get a chance to get the grove free of charge so he could run the picnic and have it his day to make up the loss. That was a big way of making money on the side! Then we would have

the bar and the kitchen and everything. We'd have his help come around and help us like they do on other picnics. They had a kitchen there and he had an ice cream parlor there.

Q: Where were the woods located or where was their park located for picnics?

ID: Over here where the forest preserve is. Klehm owned that park. They used to call it St. Paul Park. And the railroad company used to bring all the people out that were coming to that picnic from Chicago with trains. They'd have as many as five trains, fifteen coaches on each one and they'd be in the side track. Till the time came when the railroad company wanted to buy the grove from Klehm and Klehm didn't want to sell it to them. Klehm at one time was president of the County Board and he also was treasurer of the County Board. So he said he would not sell that grove to the railroad company because they were going to charge him for the trains that were coming out. Instead of them making the money, they were getting their hands into the gravy pile, and he would refuse to them so they wouldn't run the picnics out here anymore. So he turns around and then sold it to the county and the county got started in forest preserves. That's how the forest preserves were started. And they bought other groves other places as the years went on. By that, the picnics were cut down.

Q: Did they also have a platform for dancing?

ID: Oh, yes. They had an outside platform and, if it would rain, they had a big pavilion there that the people would go in. There was a bar on one end and an ice cream parlor on the other end. Then they could be inside and dance and the

bandstand inside and everything. The outside platform had a tower built, like, where the band used to be up on top. They always used to have a five- to six-piece orchestra.

Q: Where did they get the band?

ID: Come from the city of Chicago, other places, you know. Those people that would run the picnic, like church organizations, they would bring their band out and they would bring their help out to take care of the kitchen outside of the other ones that were hired out here. If they had nobody to take care of the kitchen, Mr. Klehm provided for that because he rented the grove. He'd get so much for renting the grove. It all depended on the size.

Q: It sounds like it was a lot of fun.

ID: Well, that was the only thing that they had.

Q: It was the main event for people?

ID: Yes. The only thing they had in those days.

Q: Were there ever any parades in town in the early days of Morton Grove?

ID: Yes, there were, and I have a picture. I kept trying to find the photo where they had them all lined up before it was paved streets here.

Q: On Lincoln Avenue?

ID: On Lincoln Avenue. Morton Grove Days is what they called it. After the grove was sold there, they had the picnics up here on Dempster Street in Linne Woods. That's where we had all the tents set up. When they got through marching around through the towns -- we would march with that parade -- go through Niles like that and come through on Niles Center then -- it's Skokie now -- and then would come around in through Golf here and part of Glenview and back . . .

Q: You went through all those towns?

ID: With the parade, yes, and horse and buggy. Later on it was cars that you had and trucks. And motorcycles that were in the parade. We had a coal truck that we cleaned up and the band was sitting in there playing while they were going. They'd get the people wearing the big signs on the side. "Come to Linne Woods to the Picnic". The liquor dealers would have a picnic, the churches would have a picnic.

Q: Were they picnics just for the holidays or any other special events?

ID: Well, special events like the churches would have theirs during the week. They wouldn't have it on Sunday because that would take them away from church. And different organizations would have them like on Saturdays and Sundays. The baseball club would have them. Different organizations would have their picnics on different days. Some of them would try to get Saturdays and Sundays, the main day. That's why my dad was lucky to get in that July month. Fourth of July and

The fifth, or else if it was on the sixth or the third or the fourth. If the fourth happened to land on Sunday, well then he'd get the Saturday before.

Q: It was good for him!

ID: Right. He got that gratuity because he was helping Mr. Klehm get along with his building,

Q: What types of groups marched in the parade? The volunteer Fire Department, bands . . . like that?

ID: Right. They lined up over here. The baseball boys were dressed in their baseball uniforms, the different fire departments from Niles, from Niles Center, from Glenview, from different portions -- Glenview, Morton Grove. Yes, they were all dressed up in their uniforms. And naturally the police department was out leading it with their motorcycles that they had those days. Then they would parade through the towns, like I said. They'd come back, they'd go to the grove, and that's where everything was set up and waiting for them to get in. They'd have those booths there that they could raffle. I participated. I ran the bar for them one year. And the next year I'd have charge of the raffling groups. They'd change off. Everybody took their different stations.

Q: Speaking of baseball, were you on the baseball team?

ID: I was on the Morton Grove Colts. Yes, I used to pitch for them until I threw my

arm out and that's where I got arthritis to this day. I can feel it now. Oh, I tell you!

Q: What year was the baseball team started?

ID: What year? Well, I'd have to go back. (laughs) that was going when they played back of our barns before they ever had a baseball team over there. They used to play back there when I was a little bit of a . . . "knips" (?), they used to call me, "Knips, come here!" (laughter) That was just like a little skeeter -- "knips." Eight or nine years old. I used to take care of the pop stand. Take the empty bottles that would be laying around -- put them in the box and put the full ones in the pack of ice so they'd be cold for them. Nickel a bottle those days. That's all. They didn't have to pay a deposit on the bottle or anything. And we'd have sandwiches there if they wanted them. My mother used to make up sandwiches for them. We had ball teams back there, and they used to change their clothes in one of our barns. We called the buggy shed where we had our special buggies and some other blankets and stuff like that for the horses. The second floor was like a dance floor. That was all kept clear and we had the benches around the side and used to have little shindigs up there -- birthday parties and like that. The fellow would come with their concertinas, little drums and their clarinets that they played.

Q: This is all in the barn?

ID: Right. All upstairs. They had no halls before we had that hall, you know, when we built the big one.

Q: Where was your barn located in this area?

ID: In the back of the old building that was over there alongside the railroad tracks.

Q: Did you have uniforms when you played ball out there on the land next to the barns?

ID: No, we didn't. no, they all had just like a sweatshirt on and some of them had their old overalls. They'd cut them off at the knee so they wouldn't be running with them flapping around. They didn't have any. Later on they got uniforms.

Q: Do you know who organized the baseball team then?

ID: Well, we organized it. Later on we got uniforms for them and they were hanging up there in the barn. That's where they used to change the uniform. When it would rain or so before, well, we'd have to take a barrel of shavings like that and throw it and mix it in with a rake to get that mud and water out of there.

Q: How old were you when you were on the team?

ID: Well, before I got on the team? I didn't get on the team until they played over there in back of the depot, across where those factories are. I was about thirteen, fourteen, when I started.

Q: Who did you play against? The other towns?

ID: Different towns, yes. When I got so that I got in there and they were getting pretty good, well then they tried me out for pitcher. That's when I tried to overdo myself and I threw out my arm.

Q: Did you have a pretty good record on the baseball team?

ID: Yes, I did, because they always said, "We'll put Dilg against you," and I used to pitch against Willard Galitz. That's in Skokie. He pitched for Skokie -- well, it was Niles Center then.

Q: Were they your greatest rivals?

ID: Yeah, they were. That was down Oakton Street. They got a picture painted on the wall in the bank over there, and I could put my finger right on where we played ball down Oakton Street. Right there. I often tell them, "Remember that one over there Willard?" "Ain't that something," he says. "You don't get it as much as I do, but everytime I go by there, I think of those days." (chuckles) And his brother used to be a ball player, too. There was only two years difference in them. He passed away, of course, when he had the same operation as I had.

NOTE: Conversation about operations and physical ailments has been deleted for the most part. Interview continues.]

TAPE ONE, SIDE A ENDS

TAPE ONE, SIDE B

[Conversation joined in progress. Remarks concerning operations and physical ailments have been deleted.]

ID: Then I got well.

Q: Was this Dr. R. W. Drostenfels?

ID: Drostenfels, yes. He was the first doctor we had here. Eisendorf (?) was the first one, and then Drostenfels took over when Eisendorf (?) passed away. Then he moved over in one of our buildings on Fernald Avenue. That's still there, right across from the where the baker's shop used to be. And then later on he built the one where Mrs. Hoss is next to the store over there the corner.

About a week later, walking around, I said, "I'm going to walk down." She (Irwin's wife) said, "Well, don't overdo it, now." (referring to recuperation from illness at home) I was down here at Bringer Inn drinking a glass of beer with the guys. I was so hungry for a glass of beer. That was during Prohibition; we didn't have any, see. And Frank Frees was in there running the -- "Hey," he said, "Irwin, when you get home?" He's got that Dutch accent. "I heard you almost died," he said. I said, "Yeah. I did there. Pretty close to it." "Well, by God, you're going to have one on me," he says. I said, "You betcha. I can use it, too, now." And I got home, my wife said, "You stink like a brewery." She said, "What did you do?" I said, "Well, I couldn't help it." She said, "I thought that. I was afraid of that. Now did you overdo it?" "No." "You better get to bed and get some rest." So, all right, I went to bed and I

rested and I slept like a trooper after drinking that beer. I knew I was all right when I had that. But I belched a lot from it.

Q: (laughs) Did you have a doctor when you were a kid?

ID: When I was a kid? Oh, I got bit by a dog once. I always used to pet every dog that was, when we were in the old building. I pet every dog that came into the place. And they were out hunting around the farm here and into the picnic grove and all that. The hunters were looking for squirrels and they'd come into the tavern because it was the only place. The dog laid down in front of the stove, and I wanted to pet him, and the dog was wet and tired. He jumped up and snapped me. He caught me right underneath the jaw and in the lip here with his clamp, see? And they had to take me to the doctor and the doctor burned it out with iodine.

Q: What doctor?

ID: Dr. Drostenfels. He put me on his knee and he said, "Now this is going to hurt you and burn you a little bit, but that's all right. I got to do it," he says, "otherwise you'll get sick and we got to operate on you, and I don't want to operate on you." Oh, I cried already. "That's all right. Don't cry." And he put that needle up on that spot there, and then he held the lip with his hand, and he stuck it in there. Burned it out with iodine.

He watched it. Every time he came over to -- we had the post office and everything there and he looked to see if he had any mail and stuff -- he looked

at me and he looked at it all the time, see. "Oh, you're all right," he said.

"It's okay." So I watched every dog after that!

Q: Did you ever use the services of Dr. Klehm of Niles Center?

ID: No. I went to Dr. Rudy Sintzel.

Q: Where was he from?

ID: He was from Niles Center. His father was a doctor and he used to be the doctor around here before we had the doctor here. Before we had Drostenfels. And before Eisendorf (?) was here. We had the exchange and we could get Skokie by telephone. There were certain ones, like the Klehms had a telephone. Everybody didn't have a telephone because they couldn't afford one, see. They couldn't afford the wiring and that. We'd call Klehm's and he would relay it to the doctor.

Q: Did your mother have all three of you children at home?

ID: Yes.

Q: Did she use a midwife?

ID: We were in that log cabin then, across from the Fireside. The Fireside Building, the center building, is still there, that my grandfather had. Then there was a hall up on the third floor -- we called it the third floor, but the basement, the

main floor and then the bedrooms on the second floor, then the third floor was not as big as our other building that my dad built. That's why my dad had a heart attack. He worried about paying for it, you know. He built too big a place. He wanted to get away from the farm because he was overworking himself there and he wasn't getting anywhere.

He wanted some money to go in business. And my dad's father wouldn't give him any money. He said, "You don't need no money. You got a job here. You can stay here and take care of it the way you are. You're the best help I got." He said, "Pop, I'm either going to get some money to buy this place. I made a deal, and I need the money. If you're not going to give me the money, I'm going to quit. I'm going to go by myself." "Then you got to get out of the house." He said, "That's where I'm going. I'm going to get out of the house."

Q: Is this when he bought the building from John Koller?

ID: From John Koller, yes. That was the store that he bought there. He made a deal because he was a brother-in-law -- paid it off as he made money. When his time was up, I think it was in eleven years . . . (pauses) . . . yes -- he built this other corner where the other building was on. The attorney we had -- Shaefer -- had an architect that talked him into too big a building.

Q: You're talking about the big one in 1904 that was built?

ID: Nineteen-four, yes. That was too big of a building for him to have, and he worried about paying for it, see.

Q: The building was started in 1904. How many years did it take to finish it?

ID: The men that worked for us started in March of 1904, when the ground starting breaking. And it was finished in 1904 in December, and we had grand opening New Year's Eve of 1905. It just worked out fine. The painting and everything wasn't finished yet, but we could do business. My dad said, "We got to get it open for New Year's Eve. That's going to be a big night, and we can make some money then to help pay off."

Q: Did you have a big party?

ID: Oh, boy! All the farmers from all over as far as Arlington Heights and up in Wheeling they all came down. "There's a grand opening at Dilg's." We had posters made, and my brother and I went with the horse and buggy we had them big posters saying -- they were about that size of that blue part there (gesturing to something in the room) -- that would hang over the windows, like when they had curtains in the taverns hang over the top like that. Two of them hooked together, one on one side and one on the inside. And they would show, "Dance. Grand Opening at Dilg's Hall, Morton Grove." And they all came down there. We had to hook up the grocery wagon team. We had a grocery wagon then with two horses that we used to peddle groceries all the way up to Des Plaines River on Central Road. I went all the way there to Des Plaines River, but we had customers there where we sold groceries. And where Ignatz and Mary's is up on Milwaukee Avenue that was as far as I went with the team.

Q: That's pretty far.

ID: And on muddy days, I had to go and get orders from the farmers on Saturday. If it was muddy, I'd hook up my little, what they call them the fuchs. That was a little buckskin bronco. It's the German pronunciation of a buckskin bronco. "That's the Fuchs," he said. "That's a tough horse to get rid of." And they look out for him. I got him for nothing from the ones that used to run where Parfait's Restaurant is now. Reichter (?) Brothers used to have a tavern in there. It was a -- branch brewery had a warehouse there and they had a beer agency there where the branch brewery used to deliver beer to the customers out here. We didn't take any fomo them. We took it from Chicago Brewery. They used to come out from Chicago to give us our beer. Because Koller that sold to us had Chicago beer there. And my dad just took the Koller's name off the front and put Fred Dilg up there, and the Chicago Brewery sign was theirs, see. He stayed with the same beer.

Of course, that was easy, but they had this horse, and they said, "Can you ride?" I was about thirteen, fourteen years old. I said, "Sure. Why?" He had a regular English saddle . . . (pauses) . . . I was out there every day watching him exercise that horse. He used to exercise him around right where those buildings are built now where The Studio Restaurant is in there, and where that Parfait Building is. Like a pasture in there. I was watching that horse all the time. I liked him, you know. I liked that color of him -- tan. And, oh, his eyes were white, you know. Sharp. His tail was up there like that. (gestures)

He says, "Bill, bring him over here," he said to his brother, Reichter Brothers there. "Oh, he's too wild for him." "Oh," he says, "he's been watching every day. He said he can ride him." So he took that English saddle and instead of taking the buckle and shortening it, he tied it into a knot. You know what those

knots would be on your legs? There's the mark yet . . . (shows legs). I had them on both legs.

Q: You're scarred from that!

ID: Scars, yes. They rubbed my skin right down to the bone. And I couldn't say nothing I wouldn't even tell my mother.

Q: Stubborn, huh?

ID: Then I was walking around, my stockings were full of blood all the time. My mother said, "What is that?" Let me see what you got there. Come here. Where did you get that?" I didn't dare say anything. I said, "I fell down."
"Well, why didn't you say something?" she put some bandage on it there, washed it out, soap and water. That was the American Family soap -- I'm still using it to this day. We used to get it by the case over there, and I brought everything over when we moved over here. That's eight years ago and I still got about a half dozen bars downstairs yet. I wash my dishes with it. Fels Naptha soap, too.
Well, anyway, to get back to this horse business -- is this all right now?

Q: Sure, go ahead. I'm enjoying it. (laughs)

ID: I got in there and I rode that horse. And he said, "He can ride him." I said, "I could ride that horse if I had a Western saddle." "Well," he said, "I ain't going to give you a saddle. You can have the horse." I said, "No," I says, "I won't be able to keep him." "Why not?" "My mother won't let me." He said,

"You take the horse home now, and I'm going to go over there and tell your mother how nice you can ride that horse." "Well," my mother says, "I don't know." She didn't know anything about this then.

Q: Right.

ID: So we put him in the barn and I took care of him. I walked him around every day because I didn't want to let on about my legs. So I kept quiet, I didn't say nothing. A little fox, like a little foxy.

So one day he said, "Well, let's see you ride that horse now. He's pretty wild there." "Oh," I said, "he's exercised. I walk him around every day." "That's not very much." Because every time you wanted to get him out, he jumped. You had to look out for him -- kicked, too. Bill looked at him. Bill says, "He can ride him because we had the saddle on there and he rode him." But Bill straightened those stirrups out for me, buckled them, you know. Made new holes in there so they would fit me.

And I got up there and I rode him. Well that was all right. So my mother broke down and she says, "All right. You want a Western saddle, we'll get Paroubek over here" -- a harness maker in Skokie. I had a Western saddle, bridle, everything made by Paroubek. He had ordered one through the Western saddle people, and they sent it in. and when they put that on, you ought to see that, how that horse looked.

When the mud days would come, I didn't want to get the buggy all smeared up with mud and use the buggy horse because my dad used to let me use the buggy horse, but I would never put a saddle on him. I'd take that little Fuchs and I'd put the saddle on, and I'd go out there with him. I'd tie up his tail, you know.

He had a short tail anyway. So he wouldn't get the tail muddy. But I had to take care of that horse myself. Had to feed him and everything. He used to scratch like that when he was hungry in the barn. Had to pat him, talk to him, before I'd go in. Otherwise he'd squeeze you in the stall. Oh, he was foxy. Smart. Fuchs, smart. And so, I got that horse out on the muddy days and I went to the farms. I knew each farm. I knew how to get around it. Instead of going around that long road, I'd go through the fields. I'd jump the ditches with him, over the fences.

That was a good horse, and I hated to get rid of him. So one day, I said, "Well," -- I was getting into the business more -- "we got to get rid of that horse because he's out there kicking the stalls to pieces, and you ain't riding him." "Well, I haven't got much time by the time I'm going to school and I got to get some sleep and all that." Well, the horse is getting tired, too. I'm getting tired of riding the horse, too, you know, I was getting different ideas. I wanted the buggy. I had a girlfriend, then . . . And that was no good on the horse! So we sold the horse to the blacksmith here -- Charlie Peschke. He was Constable and I got a picture of him there where he's holding the horse. He had that top hat on, you know.

Q: I've seen one like it.

ID: Big star on the belt on here (gesturing). He had a stall. He went into the stall, and he got in there so quick. He thought he had the lines around the posts -- you know, everybody had posts there-- and the horse run away on him. He smashed the buggy to pieces and everything. Charlie says (clap hands), "That's all. That horse." He said, "I ain't going to buy a new buggy. That's

enough.” Market day over here the first Monday of every month. He takes him over there . . .

Q: In Niles Center?

ID: Niles Center. He got a hundred dollars for him. That was a lot of money for a riding horse them days. Used to give them \$25, \$30, \$40 at the most. Hundred dollars for that horse because he could see he was a Fuchs. He was a Western horse. And this guy knew it, that bought him. But he didn't say anything until he paid Charlie, and he says, "I'll get two hundred for that horse when I get him back where I'm at. Because that guy is broke in already. You can see it." He said, "I can tell it." He rode him on bareback over at Niles, see? So I cried like hell, you know, but I couldn't stop it because the deal was made to get rid of the horse, then we sold the saddle, too. The saddle -- I don't know who got it. Somebody got it. I forgot who got it. And the blanket that goes underneath the saddle, that was all gone. I didn't need it, so I used the buggy, then, after that. But that's the way I used to deliver.

On Tuesdays, I took two ponies and the grocery wagon -- I had another horse that I used to put in the spring wagon to deliver short orders around. Like coal and that. In the back we had a big trough there. We had five-gallon cans of kerosene in each one, and the prosperous farmer -- they didn't have no light, you know, no electric. It was all kerosene then. Would take two gallons or would take five gallons. And the one that wasn't so prosperous he would take one gallon, kill that, come the next week again, see? One gallon would last him.

Then we had a little barrel of mixed candy, and I'd give all the kids a little candy. They all used to know me! The dogs even knew me when I'd come through,

over through the yard and the fence. They'd bark, you know, and all that . . .

Q: So you supplied a lot of these families with their basic needs from your dad's place?

ID: Oh, yes. Like I said, all the way to Ignatz and Mary's and almost in Des Plaines. Then we went up here to Sharp Corner, what they called Sharp Corner at Church Street and Niles Center Road. I can name some of them farmers if they'd come back to me. One was married to Chicken Fritz," the girl. Chicken Fritz that had the tavern there across from Skokie Valley Hospital. During Prohibition time we'd call him Chicken Fritz. He used to have a lot of chickens up there and his first name was Fritz. I forget his last name now. Comes to me later. After you're gone, I'll think of a lot of that. (laughter) When you want to think of it, you can't, you know.

Q: Yes, I know.

ID: The memory's slipping a little bit. Well, anyway, all those farmers -- Krueger's was one. Myrt Krueger was married to Chicken Fritz. And then the one on the corner I can't think of that name yet. There was Cartroy's (?) over there on East Prairie Road. I remember your family, Rossmann. I remember them. And Langfelds. . . (pauses) . . . And Faggens (?), Matt Faggen (?) -- he'd be in the field. He'd be picking beans or something like that, anything and he'd holler (German sentence) "_____,," I'd holler, you know, (German sentence) "_____." That's a spinach sticker, see? (laughter) That was in German because he knew we were going to come in, so the woman would be

getting up that was helping him, whoever she was, his wife or his mother or whatever. Come walking to the house. She'd give me the list where she had made out for groceries and I'd write it in the book. And then I'd say, "Say hello to the spinach sticker over there." (laughter) She says, "*Das es auch.*" Then he'd wave when I'd go then. That's with the horse and buggy or saddle horse.

Q: So you knew almost all the farm families around here?

ID: All the farmers, all the way up to Glenview, like Ignatz and Mary, all over there, and even some in Niles -- this end of Niles. And then up in Tessville, (now Lincolnwood) up there to . . . (pauses) . . . Crawford and Lincoln. We'd come down East Prairie Road all the way up to Lincoln Avenue then come down Lincoln Avenue, and go over Touhy and come out on Railroad Avenue and come in that way. We'd get all the farmers up in there. Church and Niles Center Road. Dahm's had a grocery store up there in Gross Point -- what they call Sharp Corner. Then there was a tavern that he had, too, right across from Dahm's store, Pete Hohs. He had a son and the son was running it when Pete passed away.

Q: Which place did your father own at the time?

ID: He owned the big store then.

Q: This is after 1904 when you were doing all this?

ID: Yes, right there.

Q: How did the people pay for their things? Did you bill them when you went out to deliver?

ID: Oh, well, they always paid me when I'd bring the groceries to them.

Q: Did you ever trade different things?

ID: Oh, yes. We would trade with farmers. Now the farmers up here on Milwaukee Avenue near Glenview, they had big farms. These other ones we vegetable farmers like. Those big farms they would have hay, oats, corn, wheat, milk, eggs and butter. They would bring theirs in what they had. If they had ten pounds of butter, five gallons of milk or any load of hay -- if it was baled hay or if it was loose hay -- and so many bags of corn -- that would all be put on paper what it was and end of the paper what the rate was. And then our groceries were there on the bill. "Well, now, you got more than what you owe here." So you get so much money for that. Then we'd give them the money. Then if we had more coming than they had here, they would take something in trade, like gloves for the men, shoes for the men, boots, overalls, Ingersoll watches -- we had everything in there. They would take it in trade. Instead of paying money, they would take what they had coming and the amount. If they had fifteen dollars coming, they would take fifteen dollars worth of merchandise or coffee, sugar, stuff like that that they didn't have at home. They didn't need milk, butter and eggs because they brought them in.

Q: Did you ever have a problem with people not paying their bills?

ID: Oh. Mostly the bar bills. Bar bills you couldn't collect.

Q: What did you do? Did you run a tab?

ID: We had a regular book. We had a journal that we used to run. And we have some coming to this day yet. I could name the families, but it wouldn't be right, you know, to do that because that is not etiquette. Those are the families that had children, they had good jobs and they ignored us. They wouldn't even trade with us, wouldn't even come to our hall because they knew their parents owed us money. So they stayed away, they ignored us. My mother always said after my dad was dead, "Don't pay any attention to that. Forget it. Because that makes enemies worse. And they, in return, will see the mistake and they will come back later and offer it. Then just tell them to forget it, we wrote it off." We wrote off thousands of dollars like that.

I think I got the book out there on the porch yet. I didn't want to throw it away and let somebody see it. I wanted to burn it and the village won't let you burn anything here. Chris Hildebrandt, when he was fire chief, said if you stay alongside of it, you could do it. I didn't want to let anybody see those names. Hurt the younger families, the generation growing up. So I don't know. I might do that some day. Stand right on my other lot over there where those logs are and burn that thing.

Q: When the new building was built in 1904, did you have the other one torn down?

ID: No, we had it moved down at the end of the block. In other words, when my dad was in the old building, little money at a time when he found out there was a lot

for sale, he would put a dollar down on it. Ten dollars or twenty dollars. Whatever he had. And then he owned the lots like that. And he moved that building down to the last one up at Capulina and Ferris Avenue. That's where -- Smiley's Garage was in the back. Willard is in there now. And the front is where the taxidermist is . . . Paine (?), Mike Paine is in there. My air condition guy, George, is in the apartment in the middle. Anyway, then we sold lots off. Schloff's (?) got one lot. Then Kuffer's (?) came along and they got two lots there. And then the telephone exchange, that was Ross, Rosse, Russe, or something like that . I can't get the name just right. Anyway, whoever it was.

Then came, oh, another one, . . . (pauses) . . . Cluskey (?) in there now, Pete Cluskey (?) died. My father's brother-in-law Koller, bought that hidden one. That was north of the alley where you go in back of the condominium building there. He built a bungalow there. And his daughter got married to Ed Lumpp.

TAPE ONE, SIDE B ENDS

TAPE TWO, SIDE A

ID: (Tape joins conversation in progress) . . . and converted it into a two-story building and rented two apartments, upstairs and the downstairs. Separate apartments. Then later on sold it.

Q: So when he built the building in 1904, you were just a boy.

ID: I was about eleven years old when we started building. I used to play on the ground pile. I used to have a slingshot, and I'd get certain stones out of there

and put them in my pocket -- round ones, like a marble, so I could shoot. I always had that slingshot. I could shoot birds out of the tree. I was getting so good with them. And I's have the wishbone form made -- two slingshots on there with the little piece of leather for a cap. And I'd get them things up there like that and -- bing! -- down the birds . . .

Q: (laughs) Well your mother must have had to look after you constantly. (laughs)

ID: Later on I had one of those little buckshot guns, and I still got it on the shelf in there. (gesture)

Q: Do you?

ID: Yes, sir. I don't want to give it up. (laughs) I often think I should give it to some kid, but if I give it to the neighbor's kid, they're liable to hit somebody and shoot them in the eye with it. Then I'd get in trouble by giving them that gun. So . . .

Q: It probable has a lot of memories for you.

ID: Leave it on the shelf, where it's sage. A "daisy," you call it. And a good spring. I could put about fifteen little buckshots in there, and it cocked like that and it had a good spring, too. At last I had my mother take it away from me. You know why? Because that big building right beside -- the birds would stick their heads over the top, and those gutters cost money. They're white --

they're big galvanized gutters and some of them were copper. I'd shoot holes in there and then the water was coming down.

Q: (laughs)

ID: And that's why my mother took the gun away. And she buried it and I didn't know where she buried it. But I knew where it was when I moved. It was in between the comforters where that one closet -- we had nothing but blankets there, and I never looked in there for anything. That's where she used to put her money, too, when she'd hide it. Then we wouldn't get a hold of that money, and spend it too much. Not that we were thieves or anything, but sometimes when we found a couple of dollars or so, why we wouldn't say anything. We were smart, too, like all other kids. Thought we were smart and we weren't.

Q: Sounds like you had a good childhood at home.

ID: Oh, yes, yes.

Q: Were you close with your little sister, Lillian, when you were kids?

ID: Right. Yes. Lill, we used to call her. Short. Lill. Lill, Herb and Irving -- Irv. They wrote my name Irving all the time. See, because they called me Irv.

Q: But it's Irwin, isn't it?

ID: Yes. My right name is Irwin. I-R-W-I-N -- that's the way I was christened. I always used to use Irving all the time until my sister was older and I was older. She said, "Your right name is Irwin."

Q: And you never knew that. (laughs)

ID: I looked at my christening certificate, and then I say it. Then I knew it. That's when I started using my right name.

Q: I remember last time I was here you were telling me that when they tore the building down it was made out of steel.

ID: This big building, you mean.

Q: Yes, the construction of it.

ID: Oh, yes. And beams that were curved like around the front there. They were all heated, you know, made that way. I watched them when they took it down and when they came out with a wrecker, I said, "What are you going to do with that thing." He said, "I'm going to take this building down." I said, "You're not going to take that building down with that there." I said, "When you put the power on there that thing will be lifted right off the ground. Your power'll lift yourself off. You won't move nothing." "Oh, what are you talking about." I said, "I know because I owned that building. I sold that building. I hate to see it go down."

The man thought he was going to remodel it and make a condominium out of it. We had the architect there. And it was beautiful the way he had it set up. We were going to take an apartment there and then later on tear this down and sell this corner.

That one deal that we had, the man was going to take the two corners, but they wouldn't let him go up another story. That building could have went up two more stories, but they wouldn't let him go up to six stories on it. He could only make a five-story out of it. He had the hall split into two stories, and then the balcony was another story. That would have been a five-story building, see. But he backed out because they wouldn't let him go up to six stories. He had to get his money back by remodeling it and paying for the land. So he backed out.

Last March he came here and wanted to buy this corner. I said, "Well, I got a guy that wants to give me \$150,000 for it." "I'll give you \$150,000 tomorrow if you get the village to give me a permit," he said. He was over there and the village wouldn't give him a permit because they want it. And they only want to pay around a hundred thousand dollars. I ain't going to take that -- that's why I'm still sitting here. And I'm going to have to go to court with them, but they think I won't last that long.

Q: You had that building a long time.

ID: Right.

Q: You handled a variety of merchandise in there. Do you remember some of the things? Did you carry shoes and material?

ID: Shoes and material. My dad used to go down there to Marshall Field's wholesale house. That was on Adams and Fifth Avenue. Fifth Avenue is Wells Street now. And it was on the southwest corner of Adams, but the building is torn down now, of course. That used to be the wholesale house. Watches we used to have. Chains, watch chains, and jewelry of any kind. I've got an astro (?) watch now that they used to have on a chain that I got for my birthday when I was 21. And then I got a little pencil -- the end of it you take off like this and you put it on the tip and it's sort of a square pencil, like. It's got three little sapphires in there, three little white ones and three little green ones in there in the different spots. You put that on one side and you put your watch on this side. You run it through your vest. Where you going to get a three-piece suit now with a vest? If I want to use it, and it's laying in the drawer there. It's a good watch. I haven't used it much because I only use it when I got it, naturally, and then we had vests with the suits. When I was 21 -- oh! I was a sheik then until I got in the Army. And when I got back from the Army, I never used it again. Then we had the watch fobs in Europe, and I had a fob, too. I don't know what happened with that.

Q: So you carried groceries and material, everything like that?

ID: We had everything? What else can I think of?

Q: Do you remember any of the prices for different things?

ID: Oh, yes. We used to get a dollar for an Ingersoll watch.

Q: A dollar?

ID: Dollar for an Ingersoll watch, and we probably paid about 50 cents for it then in a lot form -- see we'd buy so many. And shoes -- we had stockings there, too.

Q: Did your mother work behind the counter?

ID: Oh, yes.

Q: And for material and things, she took care of them?

ID: We all worked behind -- oh, yes. Another thing. We sold gingham clothing like. On the second floor of that big building, we had a dressmaker that came over from Germany -- Katie Nunemacher (?), her name was. She was a dressmaker, and we gave her one room upstairs. Free -- rent, board and room we gave her. We had a home sewing machine, to give her a start in this country. She came over, she was a poor person. She showed my mother that she was a dressmaker. My mother says, "I can use you."

My mother was a sharp woman. Don't forget, she had to be because when my dad died he was only 46 and my mother was 45. She had to be sharp in order to get by with a big building like that. She took the money that she got from the insurance company -- my dad's insurance. It was only a thousand dollars. She put that down on this old corner, right here, and bought this place. All the way to the corner. Then later on we sold that to the bank when they wanted to start the bank. Then my brother built the two-story building there that the Guild Press is in.

Later on, when I was in Arizona with my family -- my brother had passed away. His wife, Elsie, sold that lot there next to my lot -- we each got so many lots. I didn't own it. I lived in Arizona; I didn't know it. She did it so quick. They didn't know whether she should do it or whether she didn't do it, but she wanted money, too. She was too hungry for money. She didn't need it because she had plenty. He chewed her down. She said, "I wanted more money and he chewed me down." I said, "It's your own fault. Why didn't you wait until I came back and I'd have bought that. I'd have given you more than what he gave you to this day." "Well," she said, "I didn't know that. You were in Arizona and I was up a tree." I said, "You weren't up a tree, Elsie. I don't want to get you mad at me or me mad at you. But it's done now, you can't retrace it." I got myself off the track now, what was I talking about?

Q: You were talking about the gingham and the woman who came over, the dressmaker.

ID: Oh, yes, that's right. And she said, "Katie, I'll help you. I'll give you room and board here. I got a sewing machine. I'll give you room and a bed. You're in there -- that's yours. And we'll get you customers. . ." -- because all these farmers that came in, the women would come along. They would like to buy a whole roll of gingham to make a dress for the little ones, for themselves and all that -- ". . . And we have a dressmaker now. You can measure them up upstairs. No fooling! That will save me trouble." "What does she charge?" "Well, you make that arrangement with her. You can buy this whole roll of gingham. The label says how much and how many yards is in there. She'll know just how many little dresses and how many big dresses she can make for you." "That's fine."
(claps hands)

Q: She got all that money? You never took any of that?

ID: That's right. She got all that money, that lady did. Later on she said, "I've got money now. I want to pay for my room. That's the least I can do," she said, "and my board." "No," Irv's mother said. She says, "You sure? "All right," she said, "then I'll make you a reasonable price. Ten dollars a month." That was it. "Oh," she said, "that isn't enough." "Yes, that's ten dollars a month. That's enough," she said (his mother). "They are bringing business to me when they come and look for you." That word travels fast from one neighbor to another. She was there Sundays and every day. We were not Catholic, but she was Catholic and when the Catholic church started here . . .

Q: St. Martha's?

ID: St. Martha. Reverend Berg. My mother gave him the hall for one week free of charge. They had carpenters put up booths and they were selling different notions of things to make money to start the church. That's how we helped in the town, and still some of the people gypped us and didn't pay their bills. But we helped build the town and to this day, it makes me so mad with the village here. These guys don't know nothing about it, of course. They don't care about that. They want to take this property away from me so cheap -- \$50,000 less than what I can get for it. They won't give me a permit to sell this. Then forget about it if they're going to build a school and different things over there. I don't know. (pounds fist) They ain't got no brain either. I often thought I want to talk to Mayor Flickinger. My lawyer he don't care how it goes. They ain't

bothering themselves as long as -- he'll get his cut anyway regardless of which way it goes. So, I don't know. That's the way things go.

Q: Well, your place was like a meeting place for all the men in town . . .

ID: That's right . . . meeting and a supply place. We supplied them with everything that they needed. When they didn't have any money, we took exchange of goods. We took their goods, they took our goods. Now like the farmer, if he had money coming, well, "How much is a bolt of this here? My wife picked this one out and that one out." "That costs so much to you and this one costs so much to you." Take that off the bill see?

Q: What kinds of sales would you have per day?

ID: Oh, that was hard because some days were good and some days weren't good. It all depends on the weather, too. When the weather was bad, they didn't come in with their horse and buggy or with their supplies.

Q: Sure. Do you remember any of the prices?

ID: I know we paid 25 cents a gallon for buttermilk. My dad used to drink a lot of that because it was good for his health. A whole gallon like that (gesture) -- 25 cents. That was a lot of money for it, but buttermilk was expensive, too. Then we had butter and we had eggs -- 25 cents for a dozen eggs. That was about two cents an egg. Today -- what the heck -- look what you're paying for eggs.

Q: I know.

ID: Oh, we had them all ready for twelve cents in a group. Now, if we took a case of eggs, we got them for twelve cents a dozen.

Q: Did you have a lot of men that used to come in there and just sit hours and hours away at the table?

ID: Sitting at the table -- yeah! And smoking their pipe and spitting on the floor. I'd go and move the cuspidor over to them, you know, and some of them would be chewing tobacco. That would get my cork. I'd have to scrub after they got through. They'd chew tobacco and they'd get mad and then -- (pounds fist) "By God!" They'd go (makes spitting sound) right there! One was playing cards -- Bill Schiller (?) over here; he used to work at Poehlmann Brothers. He was a steam printer. They were playing cards and he got so excited, instead of throwing the cards on the table, he threw the cards on the floor and spit on the table! (laughter) Yes, sure. Chewing tobacco. I said, "What the hey? You got this guy so excited -- look what he did! Here are the cards . . ."

Q: Oh, no.

ID: "Oh," he said, "I quit. I quit," he said. He got up and walked away. He was ashamed of himself. (laughter)

Q: Oh, that's funny.

ID: All those things happened.

Q: Who was the bartender?

ID: Well, we had an extra bartender because when my dad died my mother couldn't be behind the bar all the time and I was too young yet.

Q: Right. Are you the second oldest?

ID: I was the third youngest. My brother was the oldest, my sister was two years younger than him, and she was three years older than I was. She was eighteen when my dad died, because she could get the post office. She was of age. My brother was 20, two years older. He couldn't get it. My mother didn't want it because she said, "My daughter is taking care of it now. It's up to the children because if something happens to me, then they got it." My sister got the appointment -- the youngest postmistress in the United States at that time. I was three years younger than my sister. I was fifteen -- no, fourteen, going to be fifteen.

Q: Who did the appointing?

ID: Chicago sent out an inspector.

Q: And you had to be a certain age?

ID: Oh, yes. They had to examine everything. He said, "The books are in wonderful shape. Who takes care of these?" She said, "I do. I've been taking care of them for a long time for my dad." He said, "What school do you go to?" She used to go to a Chicago Business College where my brother went. I went to Metropolitan and I took a six months' course of shorthand and typing at Chicago Business. I didn't like shorthand so I dropped it, and I didn't finish. But I took a business course in Metropolitan and law and bookkeeping, general store business.

Q: So she took care of the post office in the building here?

ID: Yes, we had it in the old building over there. We had it up against the wall like that, then the bar was over here, and then the pool table was over here, and my dad had a little desk.

Q: A pool table?

ID: Yes, we had a regular pool table. You'd shoot the ball up the wall like that and it would come back and hit the different holes. You had a block there, scoreboard -- you put down how many numbers you got. How many scores you got. The one that got the highest score naturally won. Later on we had a pool table in the big building -- a regular pool table where you play pool cue or pocket pool, bottle pool, you know. Knock the leather bottle over. We threw that out because that costs too much money to repair the cloth and when they were half drunk then they wanted to shoot pool. They tore the cloth with the pool cue. That was too expensive because that costs a lot of money. So my brother put that in his basement and he sold it later on. We used to go over there and shoot once

in a while. His wife didn't like that when we had too many of them over there, made too much noise.

Q: So did the people have to go to your place to get their mail or was there delivery? Did you ever deliver?

ID: Well, at first they used to come to the post office and pick their own up. They had boxes there with their names on it. Some of them had their own box that they could turn the knobs. They were by combination. They could pick out their mail. They had to pay for those, and the other boxes that were free, we'd stick their mail in there and they'd come to the window and they'd ask for their mail. While we were taking care of the store, we used to go over and wait on them and give them their mail and then we'd go back and finish the store. Things like that. We would get so much a month to take the post office. Later on, we had to close the doors going into the tavern because somebody made a complaint. "I don't like to go into that post office because there's a tavern in there." We had some of those . . . (pauses) . . . ritzy kind. Highbrows, you know, what we call. And they were the trouble makers. That's how Lutz got the post office. He complained about us having the tavern on the other side and they had to move the post office out of there. It was politics -- strictly politics. Then they took it down there where . . . (pauses) . . . Andy . . . Jerry Roohuntz has got the barbershop there. There was a post office next to him and then there was a beauty shop where Mueller's corner was. That's where Villa Toscana Restaurant is now. John Mueller was there and he built three stores.

Q: Was Lill still the postmistress when it moved?

ID: Well, no. When they moved it down there, Lutz was postmaster here already. They made him postmaster.

Q: How many years was she postmistress?

ID: Thirty-some years. She would have had, gone two more years, she'd have got a hundred dollars a month pension. And he took it away from her before. Scotty Krier helped him do that. Scotty was a Democrat and we were Republicans. It was under Franklin Roosevelt's time. And Roosevelt okayed it because they had a Republican in there. Well, get him out. And it didn't make any difference when Mike Weber was mayor of Lincolnwood. He was Democrat, but he said, "You couldn't find a better postmistress anywhere in the county than she is. The mail is properly -- when we call, say there's something wrong -- she promptly took care of it."

George Wagner was the delivery man on the mail later on after we quit running it around. Then we had a steady man do it. The man lived in this building here first and he had a shed over there where the bank building is now, this side of it, where my brother's garage is, where he had two ponies in there and he had a little covered wagon like. Then he used to go and deliver the mail and the rest of it was farm. It was all cherry trees in front here and the garden stuff alongside here. There was no garage here. He had that team in there. Later on when my brother built the garage, he wanted to move here, my mother put this kitchen on. And that's the mistake they made. When they made that porch out here she had to build it over that you go down in the basement. I wouldn't have fallen down there and broke my back. There wouldn't have been no ice there.

Q: So you have to outside to get to your basement?

ID: That's why I slipped and fell and I hurt two ribs and two spines.

Q: I remember you telling me that. What do you remember about the dances that you had upstairs?

ID: Oh, yes.

Q: Did a lot of young people come to those?

ID: A lot of young people used to come there and I used to be a crack dancer.

Q: Were you?

ID: Honest to God! But now, my feet bother me.

Q: What kind of dances?

ID: I used to go with Bernie Cliftonberg (?) -- he was a Jewish boy -- he was going with Virginia Poehlmann. She was a girl -- not quite as tall as you -- but looked similar as you.

Q: Really?

ID: Yes, Ginny was wonderful. And my wife that I married was chummy with her. My wife was so jealous of me that I was dancing with Virginia all the time, and I told her, why I said, "You're a little bit heavier than she is. I can't handle you like I handle . . ." "Well, you like her, you don't like me!" (his wife said). That was jealousy and then she forced the marriage on me.

Q: Was your wife's name Ruby?

ID: Ruby Fink. Right. Her mother helped the deal along, you know. They always said, "Old Lady Fink fixed that marriage up all right." Because they used to live where I moved three houses over here on Dempster, on Callie Avenue. Mrs. Pollex lived across the way, Freddie Pollex did -- he had asthma so bad he couldn't work much -- and Freddie Pollex was the son that run the tavern over there where that condominium is built on Ferris Avenue. He had a tavern there and had the Lodge Hall after while and everything.

But anyway, to get back to it, he used to take care of the ice cream parlor. I went to the Army in 1918 and came back in 1919. He was jerking sodas there. I said to my mother and my sister, "Well, Jesus, what the hell happened with the bar?" "Well, what are you going to do? Prohibition was in effect. The post office is there. We either lose the post office, and we couldn't do nothing, no business here." She sold all the liquor that we had in the basement here to Fred Pine and Felix Roxbauer, managers of The Dells. It was a roadhouse on Dempster Street. Well, it was the only thing she could do. Herb said, "And we put an ice cream parlor in there." Fourteen -- fifteen hundred dollars for ice cream. Fountain and a glass for candy. Big glass case that high. (gesture)

Q: Did you make your own ice cream?

ID: Now, we got Cunningham's from Evanston. Cunningham's had a factory on the North Side and they had an agency in Evanston because they sold a lot of ice cream in Evanston stores. They used to come over in here and they'd bring it in big five-gallon drums.

Q: Financially that must have hurt your business quite a bit..

ID: Well, it changed it. With the dance hall up there, we had no bar. Couldn't sell no liquor or anything. We had temperance and all that. You wanted to cheat, you'd get caught and then you'd get closed. Especially with the post office -- we didn't dare do that. So we didn't run many dances there. Just a very few parties like wedding parties or something like that. We couldn't help what they'd bring in. That was different, of their own. If they had homemade wine and all that. We had more trouble with them that we didn't rent out anymore.

Q: What would you do? Would you organize the dances and get the music?

ID: When I came back, I says, "Well, this is no place for me. I'm going out and look for a job. This guy here, Freddie, he's about fifteen years old. He can jerk those sodas and clean those dishes better than I can. He's used to it. Let him continue there." So I went down to Pete Hoffman who was the coroner -- Peter M. Hoffman down at the County Building. He lived in Des Plaines and he was what we called "Uncle Pete." My family used to give him the hall free of charge when he run for coroner. He was coroner for 22 years. Politicians in those them days

had to run every two years for the office until it was the law that they could run four years. We'd give him the hall free of charge, wouldn't charge him anything. Then the people all come over. Oh, the farmers would come! And "Pete Hoffman is going to talk. We like him for coroner. We're going there to the meeting." And they would buy drinks over the bar. That was before Prohibition. I said, "I'm going down there."

So I went down to him. Little mustache that I had. I went in the office. "Hi, Pete!" I says to him. "For Christ's sake! When'd you get back?" he said. I said, "Yesterday. And I was so damn mad when I got there. What did you guys do while I was in the Army?" "Why, what's the matter?" he said. "Prohibition! I got an ice cream parlor there and my bar is gone." He says, "Kay" -- to his daughter. . .

TAPE TWO, SIDE A ENDS

TAPE TWO, SIDE B

ID: (conversation joined in progress) . . . Pete Hoffman told his daughter, Kay, to get him his bottle. I smelled it. It was booze. "Oh," I said, "gee, no wonder." He said, "You think I'd have it there if it didn't have 'poison' on there? With these guys, it would be empty. They would all be drunk. They wouldn't be working." He had a lot of fellows working for him, assistants, you know, and coroner. When anything would happen, he'd have to send them out here and that. Well, anyway, he said, "Are you working?" I said, "No. God Darn it, what am I working? I got an ice cream parlor there. Kids can take care of that."

He picked up the phone, called Billy Weber, and he said, "Hello, Billy. Pete Hoffman. How are you?" "How in the hell are you, Pete?" he says. He said, "Say, Billy, the reason that I called you, I got my nephew here" -- he used to call me -- "he just got out of the Army. I got to place him. You got a job for me?" He says, "Send him over!" and he said, "We'll take care of him." So his daughter took me over to where the assessor's office was -- in the same building. Pete was up on the fifth floor and I had to go down to the second floor. And this fellow Weber -- I didn't think much of that tall, silly fellow; I could see his face -- "Why, I know you! Sure you're from Morton Grove there. Sure! That's it. Well, we were out there at Pete's meeting. When did you get back?" I said, "Yesterday." "Fine," he said, "Billy," -- to his son (also named Billy), "take care of him." So he had me sign my name, address and a telephone number if I had one.

Number nine, Quincy number nine, we called it because I always used to go to Quincy number nine with my dad on Mondays when he'd go to the bank. Then we went over to see the lawyer at Randolph and Clark there and where the architect was that built our building. Lawyer was on the third floor over there and there was a tavern down in the basement. And there you would get a roast beef sandwich you could go and help yourself to, cut it and everything. And he'd have a glass of beer and I sat there and have a glass of soda at the table. He put the glass on the table for me. I never drank then; that was before I went to the Army. I used to go with my dad.

I remembered that this fellow Weber used to come out to the place. So he put me to work and I was sitting there at the high table. I said to the man, "What are you to do in here?" "Well," he said, "Just don't pay, you can work -- we'll find something for you to do." Well, the next day I had to come in, I had to

sign the sheet again where you sign it when you go out to lunch and when you come back you sign it and when you go home you sign it, so they know you're on duty. Well, it was all right. So I knew my way around.

I got home that night, "I got a job." "Yeah, what you got a job?" (response Irwin received) I said, "I'm going to work in the assessor's office. Pete called up Billy Weber and Billy Weber knew me and he put me to work right away. He had his son take me down there and show me what to do." "What are you doing?" (response) "I don't know. They got big books that you open up this way like that. They got all kinds of names in there." I said, "I don't know what I'm going to do, but I got to sign the sheet in and out. That's the main thing. The guards really check." I was getting, what, \$175 a month.

So I worked there for about three months. All of a sudden, the guy, "Dilg! Come up here!" I said, "Oh, oh. I bet you I'm fired." Because I didn't do nothing, just sitting there scribbling with a pencil and paper. Of course, in between that time, they had sent me out on the street. Took me over to Howard Street there, east of Clark Street, a field assessor they called it. And he showed me on the sheets what he had to do. The next month I had to do that, see. Taking his place, showing me how to fill out a slip and read that, to have the assessment. What they have in the office and everything, what kind of office it was, how many rooms, and, so they could assess them. I wouldn't have anything more to do with that, they do that in the office. That was just a routine, politics.

So, when he called me up about 90 days, I thought, "Oh, oh. I'm fired." So they put me over, I said, "What are they going to let me go?" He said, "No. Your Uncle Pete is behind you. They're going to elevate you, give you a better job." I said, "Yeah? What?" "Circuit Court. Did you have any court

experience?" (response) I said, "Well, I took law in school." "Yeah, sure, you did, huh? Well, all right, today you get over there."

So they took me down to the main office. Then after awhile that chief clerk took me down three and a half floors. This is on the fourth floor; we went down a half floor. Back stairway. Dead flies, they call them. And a little fellow by the name of . . . (pauses) . . . what the heck was the judge -- a little Polish fellow, nice guy, fat guy. I met him on the golf course here not long ago, some years back. I had to take care of the window there. He showed me.

I was there one month. Then they called me again. I thought, "I'm getting fired now. And that's for sure." Because I didn't like that job. You get your hands dirty from the dirty files. You go up there and you get the number from what the lawyers make out a receipt, you know, and put his name and address and telephone number there and what he wanted. Number, file number so and so, and I'd go and look around those files and pull that out and hold the receipt until he returned it, and when he got through with it, then he'd take his receipt back and I'd give him the receipt he gave me. I'd give him the files, and I'd put the files back.

So they took me on the pending files. That's up on the fourth floor of circuit court. That was in the County Building; now it's in the new building. Well, anyway, there I remember I had to work with a Jewish boy, heavy-set young fellow. Not younger than I was. Andy, his name was. I said, "What do you do, Andy?" He said, "Well, you just watch me." And he said, "Don't pay any attention to the guys talking there. Just point to me and I'll educate you." I had experience there for about three months.

Then they took me to the record writing department where they come in to get certified copies of the decree and the warrants, you know, and everything. Frank

Lee (?) was the head of that. He liked me. He wanted to keep me. "Oh, this guy Dilg is all right. Don't take him away from me." Then they put me in the chancellery department because I had a little typewriting experience here from school.

Then from there I went to the naturalization department. And then I went to the execution department. Then from there I went to the filing department, and then there I went to the cashier's. I was cashier; I was locked up in the cage about this size of this room. Locked there -- I couldn't get out, but I could press a button if I need it. Window here, I'd wait on the customers. Lawyers would come and they got a file to that filing department where I went through. And I remember him yet from Evanston. He put it in through the window with the money, see.

Ten dollars for filing a suit against anybody. I take the \$10, put it in the drawer, put a receipt in there for the files -- \$10 for filing the suit. I'd mark it I.A.D., my initials, see, who got the money. Then at night I'd have to check in with the record of my sheet. I'd have a sheet there, write it down. Had the file number from the filing card, number down and the number on there. The head cashier was inside. He was the assistant to Mr. August W. Miller. And Louie Hecht (?) was the chief clerk out there in front, big, reddish-hair Irish guy. Tough. Mule driver, we used to call him. "Dilg. Come up here. I want to see you." Holler! -- everybody out in the street could hear him. Then he needed a washroom for washing your hands or had to relieve sometimes, too. So then he'd call for me then.

I had to balance with Louie Granzo (?) who was the head cashier. "Okay, Dilg, now you better go and get your train." He always used to let me get a little earlier start. Instead of working until five o'clock, I could leave about ten

minutes to five because my train left at 5: . I got home about ten minutes to six. If I'd miss that, then my wife would be mad. I was married then. When I got in to be cashier, I got married around that year. That was in 1920. 1919 I came back from the service around April, and then I got the job and I went through these other monthly turns until I got in there. Worked myself up.

One day a judge came, give me a check and he said, "Can you cash this?" I looked at it, it was county, same as my check, County of Cook. Judge Hugo M. Fremd (?). I looked at him. I said, "We're not accustomed to cashing checks here. We got money, but seeing that you're a judge, I guess there's no harm in doing it. I never did it before." So that was a try-out, see, and I didn't know it at that time. He wanted to take a look at me, Judge Fremd (?). See what I was like. I got a picture of me where I was standing like this in front of the door, taking, counting my money. They took a picture of me in the cage. That long coat on, big bushy, wavy hair, and high haircut like if they clipped you. I never liked them long on my neck anyway; they bother my neck here.

Well, anyway, to get to the end of a long story, I cashed it for him. I was supposed to call Louie Granzo (?), but I didn't. I thought, "I'll take a chance on it, because if anything is wrong I'll tell Pete that I thought it was right." A judge certainly ain't going to have a county check, and I said, "Well, have you got some identification?" He said, "I thought you'd do that." He pulled out his card and showed me "Judge Hugo M. Fremd." "Oh," I said, then, "I'm sorry I had to put you through that -- I never cashed any check for anybody and I never had any opportunity to, because nobody asked me to." He said, "It's quite all right. It's quite all right. You don't offend me one bit." I said, "Thank you, judge." I counted out his money, and he said, "Thank you." And then, "See you later," he said. And away he went.

The next day or so, August W. Miller, the head of the office was in this private office, Clerk of the Circuit Court -- Granzo (?) comes in and he says, "Mr. Miller wants to see you." I said, "Oh, oh. I'll bet you I'm getting fired." So I said, "yes, sir, Mr. Miller?" He said, "Dilg, oh, yes." He said, "Dilg, you've been with us for so long now," I said, "Well, what did I do that's wrong?" He said, "You didn't do anything that's wrong. Now just don't get upset." I said, "Well, I was afraid I was getting let off. Because I just got married." And he said, "We know that." But he says, "Uncle Pete wants to elevate you, and Judge Fremd's clerk, Bill Gleason, he's passed the laws examinations and he's going to practice law with Bangover (?) and Lubin (?) -- I knew that firm, you know, from filing suits -- "and he will be leaving in 30 days. And you're to take his place." I said, "I don't know nothing about being a clerk." "That's why we're going to send you up there tomorrow morning with him. He knows all about it and Judge Fremd was down yesterday to cash his check." "I thought I did wrong, didn't I?" He says, "No." He said, "You couldn't do anything else but what you did. You did all right. He just wanted to get a look at you." I said, "That takes a load off of my shoulders."

I went up there the next morning. We came in through a door like this to the courtroom, and the judge came in through this door like that to his private chambers. The bailiff introduced himself and he said, "Joe, this is Irv Dilg. Irwin Dilg, he's going to take my place at the end of the month, and when the judge comes in, you tell the judge that I'm here, that he's here. I want to introduce him to the judge." Joe said, "Okay." So Joe was Irish, the judge was Jewish, and I'm a German -- they called it the League of Nation court. I stayed there with him until '20 to '26. I worked there for Judge Fremd six years.

Seven years. Going on almost eight. From 1920 to '26, that would be seven years there. November of '26 is when I had to leave.

My daughter was born in '23, three years after we were married. She had contracted asthma, hereditary from my grandmother and their family.

Q: Your wife's side of the family?

ID: My wife's side, yes. And my wife didn't have it until her dying bed at Tucson, Arizona, when she was 41 years of age. Then it showed up. Her mother was out there taking care of her and I was here trying to take care of the little one. She had asthma then. She said, "Ain't that funny how that asthma works?" And my daughter and granddaughter have it both. My granddaughter's out in San Diego, California, now with it. She wanted to come here for a visit. I said, "Ruby, it's just as bad here if not worse. It's cold . . ."

Q: What's her name?

ID: Ruby.

Q: She was named Ruby, too?

ID: Yes, Ruby, from her grandmother. My daughter's name is Shirley. Shirley and Ruby.

Q: When you came back from Prohibition and your business had turned into an ice cream parlor . . .

ID: We used to make banana splits, banana splits. That was the big thing. My mother used to make her own fruits. Like strawberries or peaches and different fruits, you know. She'd cook the fruits, like the strawberries, and then put them in the fountain jug. We used to sell 40 gallons on a Sunday. Forty gallons of ice cream on a Sunday. Cunningham used to think we were the best stop he had. They don't sell that in the big stores.

Q: What did a banana split sell for?

ID: Forty-five cents.

Q: Oh, you're kidding. They're so expensive now.

ID: Today they get 75 cents to a dollar, dollar and a quarter. Over here at the Buffalo you get a dollar and a quarter for them.

Q: How much was an ice cream cone? Five cents?

ID: Ice cream cone, yes. A nickel. And a double-size was a dime. That's right, and root beet, naturally, a nickel in a glass. Ten cents for a schooner. And what else did I say? Oh, uh, milk shake, fifteen cents. Chocolate milk shake, that's chocolate milk and the ingredients, all that milk that was in with it, we put in the electric turner.

Q: Can you remember any other way that Prohibition affected Morton Grove? Do you remember any changes it made in the town?

ID: A lot of them went out of business. Taverns. We had quite a few taverns, and the only taverns that stayed were the roadhouses that had food with it.

Q: Along Dempster?

ID: Right. Dempster and Morton House over there, because they had food. And then, of course, Mueller's Tavern was turned into strictly a food place like, uh, who was it that was in there before? Oh, Leo's place. Mrs. Mueller sold out after he died, to Leo -- he's tending bar for the Moose Lodge over here now. I can't think of his last name.

He bought him out, and he had a hall in back there. See he would rent the hall out, and that would help him get by during Prohibition time. Then he turned it into mostly food. Put more tables in the tavern. Instead of having only three tables like I had with the tavern, he had about seven or eight tables in there. And then the little serving room that he had for a side room, he had six tables in there instead of two.

Q: Did a lot of these places have liquor anyway?

ID: Oh, yes. They cheated a little, yes. But they had to watch out because if they got caught, you know, they'd nail them. Well, that's why I didn't go ahead with it and open it up again when I come back from the Army. I said they couldn't have done it with the post office there because they had the government inspector. You see the government inspector would come out there. And where did they go when they wanted to look for an alien. An inspector comes, naturally from the U.S. government. He'd go to the post office, and he'd say his credentials, "United States Postal Inspector." See? And my sister would say, "What can I do for you?" "I'm looking for a party by the name of," he'd say, just take an ordinary name, "James Henry Smith. A man about 46 years of age." Either white or Mexican, something like that. Most of them would come out to the greenhouse to get a job to hide, see?

Q: Oh.

ID: And then they'd live in a shed somewhere. In the summertime they used to sleep in our sheds over there. And we'd have to chase them out of the coal bins and that. They'd sleep on top of the coal just to hide. Oh, you'd be surprised. Those were the guys that the government was looking for. Wetbacks from Mexico, got away . . .

Q: That had illegally entered?

ID: Right. And they'd pick them up that way. "Yes, there's a man that had a letter here the other day. I remember." "Do you have any idea where he is?" "I think he's working at the florist over here, at Poehlmann's." "Fine" That was one lead. He said, "Thank you very much and if I need you ill be out again." She said very nice, "Only glad to help you." He'd go over to the office and he'd lay his credentials there and he'd ask if they had the man on the payroll. "Yes." They'd have to send this inspector down with him where this guy is and he'd take him. He showed a badge. He said, "You're under arrest. You come with me." And he'd have to get his coat, go up to the office, get his check what he got coming, they'd figure it out, take him along with him. And if they wouldn't go, then he'd take them over to the lockup and lock them up. He'd come out the next day with a wagon to pick him up.

Q: Were you pretty close with the Poehlmann family?

ID: Oh, yes. Because Mr. Poehlmann -- after George Harrer, he got to be our first mayor. And naturally he knew that my dad was an old settler, and he always used to come over there and he loved to play cards. Pinochle or sixty-six . . .

Q: What was his first name?

ID: August F. Poehlmann. And the other one was Adolph Poehlmann. John Poehlmann was taking care of the wholesale store downtown.

Q: Their father was William, is that correct?

ID: Yes. And that's from Milwaukee. They were a Milwaukee family, the Poehlmann brothers, before they came here. Then there was a George Poehlmann. And Gus Poehlmann.

Q: Were they cousins?

ID: No, they were all brothers.

Q: There were five brothers?

ID: Yes, there was George, Gus, John, Adolph and August. August was the youngest.

Q: Do you know what made them decide to move over there when they started their greenhouses?

ID: Well, first they were down below. There used to be a water tank down there, if you had any idea or . . . And then they'd throw the switch back, it would go in, and that's where we used to have -- my dad used to keep in contact with all the breweries that sold and bottled beer. Keg beer especially. And they had horses and wagons in those days. And naturally they would have manure. He would say, "I will pay the freight if you will have the car of manure sent to me at Morton Grove here." And he had arrangements with Jake Hoffman that was the first agent here and the longest one, the oldest one here at Morton Grove when the depot was on this side. And Poehlmann's later on bought it when they built the new one that they tore down now and built the new one again.

TAPE TWO, SIDE B ENDS

TAPE THREE, SIDE A

ID: They would say okay. They'd send the cow manure to us. The depot agent, Jake Hoffman, worked with my dad and he was a good friend. He could play a violin, it was perfect. And he taught me the violin. I could play the violin nice. And I played it in our hall.

Q; Really? Did you?

ID: I had two violins. My mother bought me one first -- \$25 one to practice on. Then she bought one, it was perfect, with a nice plush case inside and \$300 she paid for that. At that time, it was dandy. We played concerts up in our hall. My teacher that used to be up in Swedish Park in Glenview, he once said, "You got

wonderful fingers, but you don't practice enough." I had a motorcycle I used to ride on that motorcycle more. (laughter)

So, my dad had it arranged with the depot agent, "If the farmers come there and want the number of that car, you send them over to me. Don't give them the number." That was business for my dad. They'd come in and they'd get a shot and a beer. Ten cents for a good shot and five cents for a schooner of beer. That's fifteen cents, over and back. When they'd load up, they had to come and get the number from him. The depot agent said, "Well, I gave the number to Fred Dilg. You go over there. He's got the number. I don't know what the number is."

Q: (laughs) Clever.

ID: Smart, same thing. Very smart of these two. (laughs) So, all right, then he'd have to come back here. He walked over first; he had the team hooked up on the -- we had chains in front of the place on both sides, Lincoln and Ferris, so they could tie their horses up so they wouldn't run away. Well, those other horses with the wagon, they didn't run very far. You know, they were tired. So, he'd get back here. He said, "Oh, I got to get the number from you." "Oh (claps hands), I forgot to give you the number." "That's right. How do you know what car to get?" "That's right, there's a couple of cars down there," he says.

So he'd give them the number to the car and they'd start to unload. Well, sometimes the farmer would have the neighbor farmer help him unload because if they had it over three days on that siding they had to pay the mortgage on it, see? So they'd get that car empty in three days. When the roads were bad, they had to put four horses on the wagon to go through with a load of manure. Then they had to have the neighbors there to help them with their team and help them

unload. They got that empty, sometimes in one day if they kept on it and worked late and early. Maybe in two days. It all depends on how far they had to haul it from here to there. And they got that out.

Then after they had that car empty they would come up and we had free lunch there. Sausage, cheese, herring, white bread, and mostly rye bread. They'd go over to the lunch counter and they'd get a shot and a beer, and then they'd get themselves a sandwich, have maybe another shot and a beer, and then they'd go unload that and then they'd come back. When they got an extra load again, another shot and a beer and another sandwich, see.

And we make money with that manure there and they would have to pay people to haul it away if they left it there at the brewer. Or if they'd have that car loaded and billed to Fred Dilg at Morton Grove, they wouldn't have to pay. We'd have to pay the mortgage on it, and the mortgage was a dollar to a dollar and a half. We made that on the drinks we sold to them, plus. See how that worked?

Q: Yes. Very clever. How long were you in the First World War?

ID: I went in the first of August of 1918. I came back about the fifteenth of April. I was ready to come home and I never...

Q: Within the same year?

ID: No, 1919. I left here, had to go to Wilmette. Got on the Northwestern train. We were sent down to Northwestern depot over to New York Central. New York Central right straight to New York. And we were in the fairgrounds in Syracuse, New York. There we got in the tents. And I have never been in a barrack until I

Got here at Rockford when I was discharged. From New York back to -- I was home during Christmas and New Year's. I was traveling in between that time. I left after Christmas, got here the next day, left the day before New Year's and got there the next day. I only had seven or eight days -- about ten days in all -- to do my traveling and come home for a visit..

Then, of course, when the war was over I was transferred back. They wanted me to sign up. They'd made a lieutenant out of me. I said, "No, no. I got a business at home that is waiting for me. My mother and sister are running that. My brother is in the garage business by himself. My dad passed away. My mother needs me, and I want to go home." I didn't know that the bar was out until I got home.

Q: Who took your place when you were gone?

ID: My mother had a bartender there, and we had lost the bar when they took it out during Prohibition times.

Q: Must have been hard on her.

ID: Then Freddie Pollex was jerking sodas out of the soda fountain. We didn't need anybody then. She had a heavy man doing the coal, flour, feed, and wood outside. That was Bill Eiser -- Emil Eiser's father. He worked for us over 60 years, and the housekeeper worked for us 64 years. Lena Gabel. She came there from Duffy Christ's (?) across the way when she quit over there. That was nineteen six, I think it was. Nineteen-six she worked there. Yes. Lena passed away. She was quite a cook. She never married, my sister never married. The two boys

married, my brother and his wife and I and my wife, and my wife passed away in '41 out there in Tucson. She caught cold -- the little one had cold first and she got over it . . .

Q: Did she go to Tucson to help her asthma then?

ID: Oh, yes, it outgrew it, see. And she was here on a visit in '36 to see me and went back and caught cold by changing trains, I guess. Had to go to school and was home in December with the flu and her mother got her over the flu. And when she got her over the flu, her mother got the flu. The next month she died and was buried on her birthday, the seventh of February.

Q: Going back quite a bit to when you were a boy again, would you like to talk about your schooling? Where you went to school? Do you remember any experiences?

ID: First the Morton Grove school at Grove School.

Q: Who was your teacher?

ID: Mrs. Ordway. Yes, she was my teacher. Heavy-set. She used to take the four o'clock train that used to get here at 4:15. I don't know where she lived; whether she lived in Mayfair or lived somewhere else. Anyway she used to get the train there, so we got home at four o'clock. We went to school from nine to four.

On our way home, we'd fight, we'd do this, and throw snowballs at one another. And when we didn't have snowballs, we picked up something, you know, a piece of

wood or so. I remember they put it on my shoulder and they'd say, "Now knock it off for him," and the one that knocked it off, it was up to me to knock him off, see.

Q: (laughs)

ID: That was the game we played. The usual roughhouse, you know.

Q: Right. Did you walk to school?

ID: Oh, yes. From here over to Grove School. Sure, we had no transportation then. Nobody bothered with it. We had to go by ourselves. My sister and brother had to go to German School -- they were younger -- from the old place. They had to walk to Skokie.

Q: To learn German -- how to speak it?

ID: Sure. I learned it. I went to German School after I got through with Morton Grove School here. I went to Heidtke, the minister that confirmed me over at the Lutheran School. I got a picture of that whole thing. My dad gave the first \$500 to help that church start, and then moved the bell over here from the train. They still got the same bell. It came out on freight, and Bill Eiser made two sleds, like a sleigh, and put the team on there and moved her over. It was a heavy bell. You couldn't lift it.

Q: Were you involved in any other activities as far as the church went?

ID: Well, they wanted to make a minister out of me when I was confirmed. Sure.

Q: Really.

ID: Reverend Detzer from Skokie, Heidtke here and Reverend Julius Toepel from up there on Milwaukee Avenue. They all three came in to see my dad when I was confirmed. I got pictures to show you I look like a minister. I shouldn't tell you this, but it's the truth. My dad says, "No, I can use him here," he said. That was before my dad died in nineteen-eight. He said, "I'm sick already. I got trouble, and he's coming along now. I even have to take him out of school one of these days to help here. He's going to be a big help. If I send him there to school to be a minister, he can make more money cleaning glass doors for customers here." (laughter) It's true. My dad was so mad that the three of them were there pushing him, you know.

Three ministers coming to get me. And Detzer used to like to come in here. When he wanted to take the train to go to Chicago, he put the horse and buggy in our barn and we'd take care of them, give them an armful of hay and water or so. Then hitch them up for him. And Toepel did the same, see? Heidtke, of course, he walked here. When he wanted to get sacramental wine, we had to take him down there on North Avenue where they had these wineries where he could buy that sacramental wine. I took him down several times. I wanted to buy some of that during Prohibition time. He gave me a bottle. He said, "That's your transportation fee."

Q: (laughs) Do you remember what your major interest in school was as far as a subject went? What were you most interested in?

ID: Well, I confirmed here and went to the Metropolitan Business College. I had to quit there because my dad died. Then I had to come home and help my mother. That upset my mother an awful lot because I had to quit there. Then when I got her quieted down, I went to work for the City National bank on Dearborn and Monroe Street. On the southwest corner.

Herb Scharenberg that opened up the bank here wanted me to get the routine of the bank. So when they opened up the bank here I was going to be his assistant and be cashier here. Well, in the meantime, my dad passed away. My mother said, "No, I'll need him here now," I even had to quit that. They took in Harry Mueller then. Harry Mueller was working in the Merchandise Mart Bank and he getting the experience. Because Scharenberg saw that my dad was pretty sick, that he was ailing and something might happen there that they couldn't get me anyway. My mother wouldn't release me, see? And I had to stick there and help her.

And then, of course, naturally things straightened themselves out. I . . . (pauses) . . . got along. When the bank failed here, I went into the bank and used the safe deposit vaults. I rented the bank from Galitz, the administrator there. I was renting out the boxes and then I had the books there of all the insurance. I got the renewals of the insurance. Some of them I lost, some of them I got. While I was in there, Prohibition was appealed, and I knew I had to get back in there because my interest was mostly there. So I got Walter Poehlmann to take this over. I said, "You've got something here and I don't want to release it until I find somebody to take over." Otherwise I had to notify Galitz that I was going to release it, see? I wanted to have somebody to take it over; otherwise, he'd put somebody in there. I didn't say anything that I was going back to the family business.

And in the meantime, I had no money. I had to get a loan on my insurance policy to get a bar put in there. Because when the bank opened up here, Kruse was running the bank, he was running down to a speak-easy down the alley here where Mrs. Niemann's second husband, Ed was. After her husband died, she married this guy. And he was running a two-car garage there and they knocked him off for sale of liquor so he closed that side and then he had the wall in between and he opened up the other side and he was doing the same thing. They had to knock him off again. Yes, the second time. (laughs)

Q: Do you remember what newspaper your family got when you were a child or growing up?

ID: Yes. The *Chicago Daily News*. That was one. The *InterOcean* was another one.

Q: A lot of people got that paper.

ID: Yes. *InterOcean*. We had the news office for the paper. We had post office, grocery store, flour feed, coal and wood, telephone exchange, newspaper exchange, laundry office. You could bring your laundry there and the laundry man would pick it up and it would be boxed for you. We had everything. That was why we called it Morton Grove Exchange.

Q: Was the *InterOcean* a Chicago paper?

ID: Oh, yes.

Q: Did you receive that German paper, the *Abendpost*?

ID: Yes. That was a Chicago paper, too.

Q: I would think a lot of people would find out about different local events just by coming to your place, you know, word-of-mouth?

ID: That's what the place was. It was a regular exchange -- information . . . When a doctor was called, we had the telephone exchange there. There weren't very many telephones out because everybody couldn't afford one. "Send the doctor!" We knew where the doctor lived. He was over on Ferris Avenue. He had one bedroom; his bed was there and the clothes closet was his medicine cabinet.

We had to go and knock on the door, on the window, get him out of bed. He'd come over and get our horse and buddy out of the barn there and hitch them up himself and go to that farmer. He knew where the farmer was. Otherwise I had to go with him the horse and buggy and show where the farmer lived because I delivered groceries there. They all worked hand-in-hand with one another. When the woman was going to have a baby, we had to have that horse ready, you know. Had that horse hitched up all ready out in the shed if it was going to be late at night. That horse wanted to get in the barn many a time where he belonged, but we had him tied with a rope and with a strap there that he wouldn't back out of there. Otherwise he'd have walked into the barn to try to get in with the buggy because he was so used to being in the barn at night.

Q: Right. (laughs)

ID: Then when he came back, we had to wait with him if he couldn't tie him up anywhere. But he mostly took the halter that he had on and he would tie him on the tree, anywhere in the farmer's year, there was a little orchard tree or something like that that he could tie him on. Or else the farmer would be there. He'd take care of the horse for him. He'd put him in his barn. Things like that.

Q: You had the first telephone exchange in 1911? About that time?

ID: We had it before 1911. My dad died in nineteen-nine. It must have been around nineteen . . . (pauses) . . . eight, I think, when they put the switchboard in there.

Q: And then if you wanted a telephone in your home, they had to set up the wire? Is that how it went?

ID: Yes. Ours was Quincy number nine. That was the public telephone. It was in the hallway. Anybody could go in there and use that. Then we used a switchboard. We had a switchboard right where you went downstairs, and we had the wires upstairs in case that phone would ring at night. We had keys that would fall down and would light up. That would be the number of the phone that's calling.

Q: I see.

ID: Then we'd have to take the cord and plug it in that number and then push that key up and then "Hello." "Dilg?" "Yeah." "Send the doctor, will you? This is

Schmidt up there on Milwaukee Avenue." Or whoever it was, you know. We knew about those cases. They would warn us ahead of time. Then I'd have to get up, get dressed, go over to the doctor and get him out of bed. Either hitch up the horse or if he says, "You can go now. I'll hitch them up. It ain't urgent. It's just that they want a doctor." "Well, all right."

Q: What was the fee for a person to have a telephone?

ID: Oh, they were cheaper. At first everybody couldn't afford it. Most farmers couldn't afford the telephone, but those that could, I don't know exactly. It would all depend on how far they were in distance. They went by distance, you know. I don't remember the price that they paid. I don't want to quote one and then be wrong on it.

Q; What do you remember about the transportation in Morton Grove? I realize that most of it was by horse. The roads were pretty bad.

ID: Horse and wagon. Bicycles. I had a motorcycle later on when I got a little older. I could ride the motorcycle; I could save time. I could take my orders that way and then deliver them with the horse and wagon later. I remember one day I was coming around off on Milwaukee Avenue onto Dempster Street, John Steil's place was on the left -- the house is still there; I can show it to you. And Beadle's (?) was on the other corner. I'd come around with that motorcycle so fast. It was a dirt road, dust. I had a khaki uniform on, greens, you know, goggles and the khaki pants, gloves on. Vroom! I had my muffler taken off, you know, -- now I hung right and go around the corners when they go by and have

their mufflers off. Even the cars when they make a piece of junk, they ought to take it off the street. They make so much noise. But I didn't think I was doing any harm.

Q: Right. (laughs)

ID: Of course, there weren't so many people living here. I'd come around there. Naturally, this guy had chickens, see. And there'd be a chicken on the other side and I'd be coming along with that and that damn chicken'd want to get ahead of me like that. And I'd hit the darn thing (slaps hands) and geez! Brooom! Not pay any attention to it. I'd get home, my mother would look at me. She'd talk in German to me. Can you understand German?

Q: No.

ID: She'd say, "Whose chicken did you hit?" I'd say, "Nobody's. Why?" She says, "Go and look in the mirror once." I'd look in the mirror and . . .

Q: Feathers?

ID: . . . egg was all over my face and I didn't know it. She says, "Whose was it now?" I said, "Must have been Steil's because that's the one that I seen run across." "You didn't know you hit it?" I tried to get out of it, see. I said, "Well, I suppose. I don't know any other one that run in front of me." "Here, two dollars. You go back and pay that farmer for that chicken."

I went back and the guy was ready to take a pitchfork in hand, you know. I said, "Mr. Steil, I'm sorry. My mother made me come back. Here's two dollars for that chicken." "Your mother told you that?" I says, "Yes. If I don't come home paying you with that, I won't be able to stay in the house." "All right," he says. "I'll take the two dollars. Next time you slow up a little bit and you wouldn't have hit that chicken." "I'm sorry."

When I got home, "Did you pay him?" I said, "yes. I told him I was sorry. He said all right." When he came down with butter and eggs and milk, he says, "Take that two dollars off. I don't want those two dollars you give me." Telling my mother, see. "But don't say anything to him." "No." He said, "Because the chicken had no business on the other side either."

Q: Oh, so he was giving the two dollars back?

ID: He was giving my mother the two dollars back that she gave me to pay for the chicken. He didn't want that. He said, "that can happen, because my chickens were on the wrong side."

Q: But he wasn't going to let you know that.

ID: But he didn't want me to know about it. So my mother told me later on, "You got honest people in this world just like Mr. Steil." I said, "What about Mr. Steil?" "He gave me those two dollars back. He made me take them off of that bill and gave me that back and then he gave me the price of the butter and eggs what they were. That's good enough, he said, that I was honest enough to send

you to pay for that chicken.” “Well then I should have had the chicken,” I said, “since I paid for it.”

Q: (laughs) Troublemaker.

ID: Yes, but I wanted the chicken there first when I got home. I said he should have given me the chicken if I paid for it. But, “What would you do with the chicken. You don’t even want to pick the chickens when we tell you to go out and get a chicken.” I says, “Well, at least I could have ate the chicken if it’s fried. I like fried chicken.” That’s the way we got by in life. You know, we had to pay for everything we did, and don’t insult anybody and be nice to the people because they might be a customer of ours.

Q; Right. The customer comes first.

ID: And that’s the way we built our business up.

Q: Was anyone in your family a part of the Volunteer Fire Department?

ID: Yes, my dad was vice president of the fire department.

Q: Oh, was he?

ID: He had . . . (pauses) . . . Eisenstein (?) from Stern Clothing Company -- he was a Jewish fellow -- come out on Sundays and he would invite all of the fireman of Morton Grove Fire Company to come over there and get measured up for uniforms.

When they had uniforms, they had a coat, a pair of pants, a cap, a badge and then Morton Grove.

I had my dad's cap here until some time ago I took it over to the fire department. Christ Hildebrandt said, "We'll put that in the glass case there. A relic," he says. "There ain't many of them left." I wondered what's going to happen with it when I go. It'd only be thrown away, so might as well have it.

Q: What year was this?

ID: When he was in the old building, before he got into the big building there. It was in between the time of 1894 and 1905. And when Eisenstein would measure these guys up for uniforms, my dad would say, "Okay. Christ Koller." When he came in, "your uniform is here. You can take it." "Well, I haven't got no money with me." He says, "Well, you can pay a dollar or two dollars a week out of your pay if you want to."

Some of them never paid at all. My dad would pay it right when it was brought out. Paid for it and then collected from the firemen. Half the firemen paid, half of them didn't. But, he got the modern idea of having them in uniforms, see? That's why they voted my dad in as vice president. They put in George Harrer as the first president of the fire company and my dad vice president. I got the pictures of them where they're all lines up in uniforms and they all looked nice.

Morton Grove was the only one that had coats and pants and hats to match. The other ones had a jacket. Some of them with white suspenders, to hold their pants

up. And some of them with a big belt on. It didn't look like anything. And Niles had that and Skokie had that, too.

Q: Sounds like your father was awfully good to a lot of people in town.

ID: Oh, yes. He had more friends and when he died, I'm telling you that was a week. We were closed naturally, and . . . (pauses) . . . that funeral was so great. Horse and buggy all around the place. All around the front, on the side, in the yard and all over. And he was buried over on . . . (pauses) . . . what street is that now? The little cemetery over, the town main cemetery. We moved it after a while when we got out lot up there at Ridgewood. There's a little cemetery in between Dempster and Waukegan Road going south . . .

TAPE THREE, SIDE A ENDS

TAPE THREE, SIDE B

ID: You've got enough information, have you? I hope I've given you everything that you want.

Q: Oh, you've been the best interview!

[END OF INTERVIEW]