Narrator: Carl Eckhardt
Date of Interview: June 13, 1976
Place of Interview: Narrator's home, located at
8511 Austin Avenue, Morton Grove
Interviewer: Denise Rossmann Christopoulos
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INTRODUCTION

Carl Eckhardt's parents were born and raised in Russia. After they were married, the Eckhardt's moved to Germany and Carl was born in Fidichow, one of seven children. The Eckhardt family came to the United States and settled in Northbrook when Carl was six years old. They then moved to Morton Grove in 1925.

Carl Eckhardt tells of many remembrances of Morton Grove and his young adult years. He gives an interesting and informative interview about entertainment in Morton Grove such as local dances, the movie house, Morton Grove Days parades, skating on the river and the local roadhouses.

Carl has a long list of community-minded activities including work with the police and fire commission, zoning board, engineer for twenty-three years with the fire department, Morton Grove Days Committee and the Chamber of Commerce.

In 1940 Carl bought the service station located on the corner of Lincoln and Austin Avenues. When he entered the service in 1942 at the age of thirty-four, he closed and boarded it up until he returned home. In May of 1946 changes were made to the original building.

The main emphasis of this interview comes to light with Carl Eckhardt's dedication to individualized freedom and his three-tear battle with the Teamsters Union, Local 705. Carl refused to accept a contract offered by the Teamsters and refused to require his men to join the union. Carl told union officials that if his four employees chose to join the union, he would talk contract. The employees refused to join, and Carl Eckhardt stood firm. He single-handedly withstood an around-the-clock picket line from Mary 24, 1955 to August 31, 1958.

Mr. Eckhardt went to the National Labor Relations Board, which refused the case because the station had so few employees. A court injunction was sought and hearings dragged on for two years. On august 2, 1958, Judge John Dempsey ordered the picketing stopped. This is a colorful account of one man's stand of right against might.

CE: Carl Eckhardt

Q: Question asked by interviewer, Denise Rossmann Christopoulos

HE: Helen Eckhardt. Mrs. Eckhardt is interviewed at the end of this interview.

TAPE ONE, SIDE A

Q: We'll start with the biographical data. If you could tell me your grandparents' names?

CE: Well, my grandparents I did not know. My parents were born and raised in Russia on the Volga River Valley. They were in a little town called Krasny Yar. My father served in the Russian cavalry, the Cossacks, until he was 26 years old. And then he married my mother, and they, in turn, with my grandmother went to Germany. We landed in a little town which is south of Stettin. Stettin is a seaport on the Oder River. This little town that we landed in was Fidichow. I was born in Fidichow. I'm the oldest of five surviving. There were seven all together. There's one who was older and one after and I was born here -- only lived a day or two. My brother, Ed, is the only American citizen by birth. The rest of us all are naturalized through my father. We came here May 13, 1913. We landed in what was then Shermerville, which is now Northbrook.

Q: How old were you then?

CE: I was not quite six when we came here. I would say five and a half. I was born in November, and we landed here on May 13. So I started school here in Northbrook the following September.

Q: Do you know why they picked this area when your parents came over? What made them come to Shermerville?

CE: Well, my uncle was here first. My father's youngest brother got here -- I don't know to this day how he got here . . . he was kind of a wanderer. And he landed in Shermerville. He landed first, I think, in Jefferson Park near the settlement of so-called Deutsch-Laender, Russian Germans, who kind of settled in Jefferson Park, which is the Milwaukee Avenue, Lawrence Avenue area at that time.

There were two brickyards. One in Shermerville and one at the County Line Road, which is now Deerfield. There were two brickyards there that employed a lot of greenhorns or foreigners at that time. This is how John landed there. And he, of course, wrote to my dad and mother, and said this was a land of milk and honey and jobs and money was plentiful. So with some money that he sent my dad and some money that he borrowed from a cousin, people by the name of Werner, they pooled their resources and came here.

Werners had four children; my dad and mother had four at the time. So we landed in Shermerville. In fact, the Werners are second cousins of my father's. One had guts to leave and the other one had the money, I'll say that. So between the two of them, they got together and we came over here together -- in fact, lived in the same house for about three months until they found other places to live.

Q: Where was that located?

CE: In Shermerville.

Q: What type of house?

CE: The house has since burned down, but it was a two-story building, which was a store building at one time and had been moved into this area. It's a little town there which was known as Bach Town, name of the people that were settled there. The farm was there, and then there were possibly eight houses in that settlement. And we landed in that particular area. Subsequently we moved to the corner of Waukegan Road and Dundee Road, which is now forest preserve, and lived there for, oh, about three years, I think, and then moved close to what is now the Crestwood School. It's on the little street called Angle Avenue, and it's just west of the Crestwood School in Northbrook. The house is still there. The other two are gone -- we wore them all out. (laughter)

Q: How long did the two families live in that home together?

CE: About three months in the first one. The Werners moved out on that farm on Techny Road. They were sharecroppers. They had a deal with the landlord to maintain the farm, I think. But they didn't really farm fulltime, because Mr. Werner still worked in the backyard with my dad and the rest of the gang. The farming was kind of a sideline with him. But they did live there for the longest time. And subsequently when we moved to Morton Grove, they did, too. I don't know why, but they just happened to land here, too.

We came here in 1925 to 8721 Fernald Avenue. The house is still there; my sister lives in it now. And Werners were on Fernald also, but just south of the Lutheran Church, the second house south of Capulina on the east side of the street. They subsequently have separated. Two of them are in Glenview, one is

up in Northbrook, and Katherine is in Evanston, I think. Anyway, we've all gone our own separate ways.

But we in the Eckhardt family have stayed pretty much in Morton Grove. Ed, as you know, is superintendent of schools; Henry lives right across the street from him. He used to be in the liquor business where the bank is now. He's since in the advertising business. My sister still lives in the homestead. My brother Dick is the only one that moved away. He went to Sturgis, Michigan. He passed away two years ago in January. But he's the only one that got out of Morton Grove, and the rest of us kind of kept out roots here.

Q: What did you father do when he came here to Morton Grove?

CE: He was working in the brickyard. Both of us were working in the brickyard in what is now Horner Park at Montrose and California. There were two brickyards there -- one in Irving Park and one on Montrose. We worked at the Bach Brick Company -- no relation to the Bachs that I mentioned earlier. We had a Model T Ford, and we drove from Northbrook all the way down there to work when the weather was right; otherwise we'd take the train, then take the streetcar out.

But we drove through Morton Grove, and it's a long ways by Model T Ford from Bach Brick Company out to Northbrook. So we decided to get in closer to the work. They were building some houses on Fernald at the time. And the streets were not paved yet -- they were getting ready to pave them. When we went by, there were three houses in a row that were built by Boemmel and Weigt -- Frank Boemmel and Richard Weigt. There were several Weigts there. And we decided one house was big enough for all of us. There was a two-bedroom house with an attic that was expandable.

So, my dad decided that was the way to go, so we decided to buy it. They wrote the original contract on a shingle or a piece of board they had there. The first mortgage of $3,500, and a second mortgage of $2,500. That made $6,500 -- $500 down. And this was all written on a hunk of shingle, and then the following Saturday we went to the bank where the village administration building is now and consummated the deal. And so we moved into Morton Grove on Labor Day of 1925.

Subsequently I quit the brickyard and went into construction. My father went to work at the Glenview brickyard, so we both got closer to work. Actually the main reason for moving was to get closer to work, but then the other reason was, "Okay. We're going to be in our own property at last." And this is how we got here.

At far as my father was concerned, he worked for the village as the superintendent of public works. He was the water boy, the garbage man, and the street sweeper -- the whole works. This was for a number of years he did that. And after that, he hauled the mail -- at that time, the mail was transported by rail. And the depot, he'd go there in the morning, meet the train out of Chicago, and then he'd meet another one later on out of Chicago. There were two -- one in the afternoon and one in the morning -- to get incoming mail, and then there would be three trains going out. He would pick up the mail in sacks where the Villa Toscana is. The dining room was then the post office. He had a little Dodge pick-up truck that he hauled his mail back and forth. And he did that until they finally hauled it by trucks. Anyhow he lost his job. So then he worked as a custodian in the village hall for a while, and subsequently got too old and he had to quit. He lived to be a ripe old age of 89 years and ten months. And he died with a valid driver's license in his pocket.

Q: No kidding!

CE: Right. Yes, he was a tough guy.

Q: Getting back to you, what's your birthdate?

CE: My birthday is November 27th, 1907.

Q: So by the time you got to Morton Grove, you were in your teens.

CE: Yes, I was a teenager.

Q: Where did you go to school then?

CE: I went to school in Northbrook. I graduated from Crestwood School. Then I went to high school in Highland Park, which was then a combination township high school. Deerfield and Shields Township owned the high school in Highland Park. It was known as Deerfield-Shields Township High School. I took the two-year commercial course there, and I did not finish it. I quit in May of my second year and went to work in construction until the fall, and then the construction work stopped and that's how I got involved in the brickyard with my father. So, as far as my schooling is concerned, I did not go to school in Morton Grove. When I came to Morton Grove, I was working, as I told you, in the brickyard with my dad.

Q: What did you do for entertainment in Morton Grove?

CE: Entertainment? Oh, chase girls! (laughter)

Q: I bet! Were there dances or what did you do for a dance?

CE: Well, there were dances at Dilg's Hall. That was at the corner of Lincoln and Ferris Avenues where the condo is now. There was a hall upstairs and there were dances there. And there were dances in Niles Center, which is now Skokie at Alf's Hall. That was a hall, oh, right where the old fire station is. In that area. That's all torn down. Oh, they had a nickelodeon, so there was a movie in town.

Q: Where was that?

CE: There's a brick shop in there now -- at Capulina and Ferris.

Q: That corner?

CE: Yes, there's a brick building in the back, and those were the nickel shows, we called it -- nickelodeon.

Q: What kind of movies?

CE: Oh, they had silent movies with a piano player . . .

Q: Somebody played the piano in the movie?

CE: Yes, there was somebody playing the piano. This fellow that I mentioned before, Dick Weigt, who was a builder, he was the guy that ran the movies. His son is still in photography. Some day I have to go see him, because he keeps inviting me over. He says he's got umpteen pictures of me that he took at parades and different functions we had throughout town, particularly of the Legion. And he has movies, he says, "I've got all kinds of footage of movies about the Legion." And he keeps wanting me to go over. He's not married, and he lives on Fernald just north of the church on the same side of the street. It's the house that has the tile roof. His name is Roland Weigt.

Q: Did you go to Riverview?

CE: Oh, yes, I went out to Riverview many times.

Q: I'm trying to find out if most people stayed in Morton Grove or if they went other places outside of town.

CE: Well, Riverview was something everybody went to three or four times a year. If you had a date, it was a lot of fun, and it wasn't really too expensive. Rides were a nickel and a dime, and then they had a lot of free rides, too. They would pass out a lot of stub tickets at different shindigs around town -- promotional things. You'd wind up with a few tickets in your hand and all these are for free, and then you'd wind up going down there in your old Model T Ford.

Q: Where did you find most of the girls? (laughs)

CE: Oh, there's plenty of them around here. Well, I married one from Skokie, because, I don't know, you always have to marry one from out of town.

Q: (laughs) How about picnics and parades in town?

CE: The biggest picnic would be the Morton Grove Days. That started the year that we got here. It took place usually the second or third week in August. When we first started the parade thing, I would go with the fire engines and the one police car, or the (emphasizes word) motorcycle rider. And they would go through Glenview and up through Niles and Skokie. The idea was to attract attention that today was our Morton Grove Day. It was just a one-day affair.

Q: It was one day?

CE: Originally, right. And it finally spread out -- at the tail end it was a four-day thing. But the parades were real lengthy and very dangerous. In fact, the reason they stopped that type of parade was we had a few accidents along the way. Not serious, but . . .

Q: What type? With vehicles?

CE: Automotive, vehicle accidents. They would bump into each other. They decided that was not the way to go anymore, so they went into a marching parade after that. They would start where the Morton Grove Days picnic was, and then go down Ferris Avenue, up and around to Harms Road, Theobald, then up -- the Edens Expressway was not there then -- and Harms Road was the road they would go

through, and then you'd come back down Dempster Street. It would be like a parade.

In the later years they didn't parade in town at all. They just started up at what is now Edens Expressway at Frontage Road. They'd form on Frontage Road, going south on the west side of Edens. Then they'd parade down Dempster and the reviewing stand would be at what is now the Legion Hall. The parade would then go into the grove in the Linne Woods. It got pretty big, and after Harrer Park was established, then the parade vehicles would go into Harrer Park and would leave more room in the picnic grounds for other cars to park.

Q: How about swimming in town?

CE: There was a little hole right over here off of Austin. There was a greenhouse there.

Q: The gravel pit there?

CE: No, it wasn't a gravel pit really. The gravel pit was south of Lincoln. South on Menard was where the gravel pit was. That's where my dad got all of his gravel for the streets and alleys. Shovel it by hand and spread it out by hand. There was a swimming hole here, but it wasn't too much. It was actually a water retaining basin for the greenhouse is what it was. It wasn't concrete like you would know today, like a swimming thing -- it was just a hole. I never swam there, but the kids used to swim there. They called that "bare A beach," you know.

Q: (laughs)

CE: There was what they called Hobo Island this side of the railroad track, near Vegetable Growers, but a little south. There was a little island there, and the river went around this thing. The river at that time was fairly clean. The kids bathed there and swam there.

Q: Were there really hobos around there to give it the name?

CE: Yes, they did have hobos. They had hobos that lived there and then at Poehlmann's, too. I guess one hobo starts and then the rest of them follow.

Q: Poehlmann's would hire them?

CE: They would hire them for a day or so hourly, and they'd make a few bucks. Also the railroads, freight stopped here a lot because of hauling coal into Poehlmann's, and they hauled manure out of the stockyards here. They used to call this Manureville at one time, because when you came through Morton Grove, you could smell it from the railroad track. The manure cars were parked right along that siding there, you know, where the depot is now. Well, there's a siding there yet because it's the Baxter's.

Q: I bet on a hot day, it was something else.

CE: And, yes, it smelled real nice. It was very special.

Q: (laughs) Did you ever fish down at the river?

CE: I didn't, but the kids did.

Q: Skating or sledding?

CE: Yes, we skated. That was our skating rink. I did a lot of skating down there, and we played hockey there. Not with hockey sticks like you see today. We had to find a willow. Lot of willow trees there. You'd find a branch that had a club end on it, saw it off, skin it and that was your hockey stick. And the hockey puck was a tin can. It was kind of a dangerous thing. Of course, we didn't play as rough of a hockey game as today. It was always a question of choosing up sides. And we'd choose up sides by toss of the coin or thumbing the hockey stick up to the top, hand over hand. Or draw straws as to who would get first choice. And you always picked the biggest guy, see? And we had two big guys. One was Joe gable who became chief of police later on, and a guy by the name of Elmer Minx. They were the two biggest guys, so whoever got Joe usually won the game, because Joe was just a little bit bigger and a little more agile than Elmer was.

Q: How about other sports? Baseball?

CE: Played a lot of softball. We played some baseball and basketball. We didn't have a gym to play in, but there was a pavilion, which was located in St. Paul Woods. And as you enter St. Paul Woods, there was a road that went straight through -- there was an open, it was open in the summertime; in the wintertime, they put shutters on it. And it was a dance pavilion really; it was built for

dances for picnics. It had a real high ceiling on it, built like a log cabin almost. We played basketball in there. And we used salamanders for heat. A salamander is almost like a barbecue is today -- like the Weber kettle is today. Only it was larger, like a barrel with a grate on it. They normally were used for heat in construction and open areas. They burned coke. Coke is a form of coal. They used to make gas out of coal, and the by-product was coke. After the gas was extracted from the coal, it became kind of a real hard, gray burned material.

Q: So, now what did you do with this salamander?

CE: Actually it didn't heat the building. It's too big a place to heat the building, but the salamanders were there so that when we were not playing or if we took a break, a time-out, why you'd get around it, and stay warm. Otherwise you'd freeze to death. Of course, we didn't play in the sub-zero weather, but we did play when it was cold, and it was freezing weather. When you're running and playing ball, you're warm, but the minute you stop, why, in that kind of temperature. So, the salamanders were primarily to keep you warm. Like, you know, the football game, they have these heaters, too. They serve the same purpose.

Q: What about pranks? Were you ever in trouble?

CE: No, I just never got caught. Now, that's the difference.

Q: How about Halloween? Did you ever go crazy? (laughs)

CE: Halloween was real fun. We had lots of fun here, but I had more fun in Northbrook. They had outside privies in those days.

Q: Well, you were younger in Northbrook anyway.

CE: Right, but here we took gates and switched them on people on their fences. Take the gate and raise it up the flag pole. They used to have bread boxes at the stores, Schuetz's Baking Company and bakers would have a bread box. At two in the morning they're baking bread, you know, the old story with the Holsum. Well, these guys would deliver bread during the night and leave it in the bread box. It was a lot of fun to steal that bread box and set it up on somebody's roof or just plain hide it and watch the guy hunt for it the next day. Privies were nice to tip over. There was one trick we pulled -- we didn't do it here. A bunch of us were out one night. It was on Halloween, and we hauled a sickle-bar mower from the blacksmith's shop in Glenview. Hauled it to Wheeling and hauled another one back from up there. The guy didn't know whose mower it was. We traded them. They used to have all that stuff sitting out front. And the other, we'd hook on the wagon somewhere and pull it a few miles down the road.

They wouldn't know. Morton Grove when I got here had one policeman, and he was on foot. In Northbrook -- in Shermerville -- we had the same thing. We had one policeman; he was on foot. Well, he couldn't get very fast with a bunch of teenagers. We didn't do anything really malicious, though. Like today they just destroy things. That is something we never did. Here or in Shermerville.

TAPE ONE, SIDE A ENDS

TAPE ONE, SIDE B

CE: At the time we moved here, they were in the process of paving Callie Avenue, Fernald Avenue, Georgiana, and School Street.

Q: This whole section in here.

CE: That section. They finished them that fall. They finished the streets all right, but they didn't finish the grading because the weather got on them. They put sidewalks in and the streets in at the same time and the curbs.

Q: What was Lincoln and Dempster like?

CE: Dempster Street was an eighteen-foot street with a ditch on each side. Lincoln Avenue was the same thing. Lincoln Avenue was an eighteen-foot street with ditches on each side. Between the sidewalk and the street, there was just a mud hole. The real paving of curbs didn't come until later. Lincoln Avenue had curbs and gutters first.

Dempster was widened and paved with curbs and gutters after World War II. It was always ditches. There was no business on Dempster Street at all until after World War II. There was a couple of roadhouses. Where Gartner's is. And there was a roadhouse in there and a nightclub. Smithwood Drive is actually where the Lincoln Tavern building was. And the other was a big yard in front of it. Where Parfait is now, there was the Bridge with a club and tavern in there. The rest of Dempster Street was nothing. Schaul's Bowling Alley was the Highway Garage, and Gutman's Restaurant is where the Marguerita is now.

Q: So you just mainly got around using your father's car?

CE: Yes.

Q: When did you get your first car?

CE: My own car I got when I was twenty-one.

Q: How about communication in town? What newspaper did your family read or did you get?

CE: The *Tribune* and *Daily News*. But then they had the *Niles Center News*, and it eventually became the *Skokie News*. It was the local paper. That was before *The Life* and all the rest of them came out. There were several other smaller ones started up, but they never amounted to anything. All the folks read the *Abendpost* for a while, but then they learned how to read English.

Q: Do you know who that was put out by?

CE: No, it was some German on Lincoln Avenue.

Q: In Chicago?

CE: Yes.

Q: Was your family actively involved in any church?

CE: Yes, in the Lutheran Church. The German Lutheran Church. In fact, my dad was a trustee and elder for a lot of years. My brother Dick, the one that moved away, also. I've been active, but not in the actual management -- never held an office in the church. The reason I didn't want to was because there were two of them, and that was enough out of one family. Today they're still trying to get me involved in it. Well, at this stage of the game, I think you younger guys better run it. I'll help you when you need me, and I do that. But I'm still very active otherwise.

Q: Was anyone in the family involved in the volunteer fire department?

CE: Me. I was there for 23 years. I was an engineer all the time I was in the department. And I was president for the five years. I resigned from the fire department and the presidency and the zoning board at the same time to take the job as police commissioner. The reason for that was the then Mayor Schreiber who I helped to elect, wanted someone on the police and fire commission that had some experience with fire. They were going to integrate a volunteer department with a full-time department, and so he asked me if I would get on it. I could have stayed in the volunteers, but I felt that it would be a conflict of interest. There would always be some rub if I stayed on it. Legally, I was not bound to get out of it, but I felt it would be better. The village and the department would be better served if I divorced myself completely from the department, which I did. I couldn't stay on the zoning board and be commissioner, too, so obviously I had to get out of that. And then it was just as well because I had enough jobs as it was. The fire department was self supporting for the longest time.

Q: Now what year did you first get involved with the fire department?

CE: 1941. We were a not-for-profit association, incorporated under the state laws for not-for-profit corporation. We owned and operated the equipment. The money that we got to buy, service, and maintain all the equipment came primarily from donations and from an annual dance that we would have. We'd go door-to-door and sell tickets to the people in town. We would raise, oh, rive, six thousand dollars at that dance.

Q: At one dance?

CE: Yes. Well, as I said, we could twist arms and ring doorbells. Of course, the industry then came in later and was always good to us.

Q: How many people usually attended these dances?

CE: Well, sometimes nearly everybody in town was there. (laughs) Well, the first dances we held at Dilg's Hall I mentioned before. We moved to what was then Mueller's Hall where the Toscana is now. And then the last dances we had were at the Legion Hall, because that was a bigger and better place to hold it. We would hold raffles and raffle stuff off. Never raffled a car, but we'd always have donations. People would donate things to us, then we'd raffle it. Some of the smaller prizes we'd give as door prizes, the bigger ones, why, we'd sell them tickets and raffle them.

Q: And the local businesses contributed?

CE: Local business would contribute, yes. We had very fine support from the local people as well as the business community. The first piece of equipment that we did not actually raise the money for was the piece we bough in 1960, which is a perch. And that money we got from the Morton Grove Days Committee. They gave us $30,000 to buy that truck. The department as a whole was always active in the Morton Grove Days carnival, picnic. We usually ran the bar. In fact, we built a big portable bar, the one big tent and the kitchen. But between the fireman and Frank Miller, who was a carpenter-contractor, and the one who built my dad's house, Dick Weigt, we built them. Adolph Poehner was also in the building business. At any rate, we were renting tents, and tents we didn't like at all, so we built this portable thing, and we would store it every year and put it up every year. Actually the Morton Grove Fire Department would usually set up the carnival. We also ran the bar and ran a raffle booth of our own. Usually used to raffle toy fire trucks -- what else can the fire department raffle? We wanted this piece of fire equipment, and, because of our activity in the Morton Grove Days Committee, they talked them into giving us the $30,000, which they did. That was right after Harrer Park was established, and they made big money on the carnival. They made something like $26,000 that year, and it was a good time to ask for it. So we got the $30,000.

Q: How many men were involved in the fire department?

CE: We had twenty-three until the time that we bought this truck. Then we had to build a station on the west side. We expanded to forty-five. When I got out in 1964, the count of men then was forty-five men. But it dwindled down. It never did get back up to forty-five men.

Q: Do you know what it's at today?

CE: We have thirty-six, I think, including the chief, right now. With paramedics and all of them combined. But there are no more volunteers. That's all gone. You mix the volunteers with the full-time guys and friction is there. The one is getting paid and the other one isn't, and so it had to happen.

Q: Yes.

CE: It just happens. I have to tell you my favorite story. I keep telling this one. I had the service station at the time. The old fire chief was Adolph Poehner. He had a very decided broad German accent. The same as Mayor Finke, and he was left handed.

And so, we used to drill at seven o'clock on Wednesdays. I'd close the gas station at six, and so that gave me an hour to get there by seven. So I closed the gas station quick and then come home and grab something to eat and get over there. I'd get there at five minutes to seven o'clock, and the darn truck was gone already. They'd be over when I was dropping hose, and I'm an engineer. I'm supposed to be driving.

So this goes on, this happens twice. And so the third time, it wasn't going to happen again, I raised heck in the meeting. I said, "Look," I said, "we're supposed to be there at seven o'clock. I'm here at five minutes to seven o'clock, and you guys are gone." The old man got up and he said, "Carla" -- he always called me Carla -- "Carla, when I say seven o'clock," and he waves that big hand of his, "I mean a quarter to seven." It was a standing joke with me ever since. That's why when you got here at quarter to seven, I was. . .

Q: Was anyone involved in the First World War in your family?

CE: No.

Q: It didn't affect your life at all?

CE: No, we'd just gotten here in '18. My father became a citizen September 20th, 1918. My brother Ed was born September 8th, so he appears on my father's citizenship papers. Ed doesn't have to be on that. It just so happened he got on there. So my father did not get involved. My uncle only had one eye, so he didn't get involved in the First World War. I used to stand on the hay rack and sing "Keep the Home Fires Burning" at Liberty Bond rallies in my soprano voice, but other than that I wasn't involved.

But in World War II, the three brothers were involved. My brother Henry and I and my brother Dick. Richard was drafted first and then I enlisted in an Army Ordnance Unit, and my brother Hank was drafted after that. Ed was not drafted, because he at the time was in the parochial school and studying to be a teacher. So he was exempt because of being a student as well as being in a parochial school. They exempted him. Otherwise, there might have been four of us. I don't think they ever would have taken him, because they had a rule, you only take so many from a family. I enlisted, so I don't think they would have taken Ed at any time.

Q: How about the Depression years? Did that affect your family's life in any way?

CE: Everybody's, yes. Depression years, I always had a job. I worked for as little as $15 a week. Sometimes only one was working, sometimes two of us were working, but Depression years were rough on everybody, not only in my family, everybody's family. In Morton Grove, I think that most of the homes that were bought in that time were all repossessed or lost because of default on mortgages and default on taxes and whatnot.

That's why after World War II, most of the properties, including the one I'm sitting on here, were taxed delinquent. I bought this as vacant property. The homes on Capulina east of Marmora, everyone of those homes were sold for from $8,500 to $8,800 when they were built. Not one original owner kept them. They all defaulted on the mortgage. Some of them sold after the war for four thousand dollars.

Q: Incredible.

CE: Most mortgages weren't worth it. It go tough, you know. When my dad had one for $3,500, he had trouble paying it. He didn't get it paid until after the war. So I worked for the mayor the winter of '32. I was getting $35 a week, and I was working seven nights a week. I worked thirteen hours a night, and half the time they couldn't pay me. That was Prohibition days.

Q: Did a lot of people work over at Poehlmann's?

CE: Yes.

Q: And then they collapsed about, what, '32 or '33, didn't they?

CE: Yes, Poehlmann's never were big pay, but it still was a big payroll for the village. People there worked for $15, $18, $20 a week. Six days a week, eight hours a day. Two things broke Poehlmann's -- one was, of course, the Depression; two, the worst thing that happened to Poehlmann's was that the heat was with coal, and it was coal dust. They put a new set of boilers in there. -- Plant A, they called this. It was Plant A, Plant B and Plant C. Plant B and C were where the school is on Harrer Park. At Harrer Park, they got rid of all three houses; it was all under glass. But the people of Morton Grove used to hang their laundry out on Mondays, and if the wind was from the south on Monday, that smoke would come over and dirty their bed sheets. So they made them put in a bunch of equipment to eliminate that.

Q: Like early air pollution control?

CE: Right. They did that at a time when the people could not afford to do it, and that was one of the reasons that they went haywire. So, in other words, they kind of cut off their nose to spite their face at the time. And when these people talk pollution to me now, I kind of see red in some instances, because we're making a big to-do about nothing in many instances. We're forcing industry to do things at a time -- and they want it now. You know, it has to be now. They have to finance themselves and go in up here to get rid of this pollution thing. Wells Manufacturing was one of them they've been raising heck with. Now Wells was there first and long before anybody else was there. And Wells are a fine group of people, and I happen to know them very well. They made them do a lot of things.

Q: Haven't they been fined?

CE: Yes. They're making them do a lot of things that they shouldn't have to do to stay in business, so Wells is building another plant out in Woodstock. It's already built, and I think eventually they'll just move out of here. So, there'll be another set of jobs gone. See, every time you move somebody or you force people out of business, you lose jobs.

And that's what happened here. Poehlmann's went broke, and you couldn't buy a job. When I started that gas station in 1940, I couldn't hire all the guys I wanted for $15 a week. They were glad to work, and they were glad to work seven days if I wanted them to. You couldn't buy a job.

There wasn't a job available in Morton Grove until 1941 when Bell and Gossett moved into Morton Grove. And we had to take Morton Grove Days' money -- we got hell for doing that -- $4,000 to put a water main from Austin Avenue to Lincoln and Austin, down to where Bell and Gossett is now. Put a water and a sewer main down there, so they would come on those conditions. It was public money, but then it wasn't -- Morton Grove Days money -- which those funds were earmarked for a community center. And we used that money for Bell and Gossett.

That's when industry first started to come back in Morton Grove. It mushroomed after the war. But they came in during the war. Harper's came in during the war also. After that, a lot of industry moved in.

Q: Do you remember a lot of the roadhouses on Dempster during Prohibition?

CE: I was a cabman is the reason I know them so well. I went into the cab business in the spring of 1929. I quit the brickyard and went on construction. They were

building what is now the Navy Base; it was then Wright Reynolds Airport, and I worked there running this ditching machine. I made quite a bit of money. I was making a dollar and a quarter an hour, making overtime and whatnot.

A friend of mine that I caddied with one time at Morton Club talked me into going into the cab business with him, in a partnership with him. And we did a good business because the roadhouses were here. They had The Dells, as I mentioned before, the Lincoln Tavern. There was the Villa Venice up where the Fireside is now on Milwaukee Avenue. The Garden of Allah was in Glenview. There's a school there now at Lake Avenue and Waukegan Road. This was kind of a hot spot -- real hot spot. And they had all kinds of what we call blind pigs, just ordinary saloons, and then some of them had women also. Guy Lombardo played out here. We had Wayne King, Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians, Ted Weems, Elmo Tanner and Perry Como started right here in Morton Grove where Smithwood Drive is now. Right across in the back. That's where the Lincoln Tavern was.

Q: No kidding. Did you go in them?

CE: Oh, yes, sure. See, they never sold booze. You brought your own.

Q: This is during Prohibition?

CE: Right. You brought your own booze. That is, the house itself never sold booze there. But they had gambling rooms upstairs. It was the same as Las Vegas is now on a smaller scale. They had slot machines. Not in the dining room -- you never knew gambling in the dining room. The bands played and they danced. It was all in a side room or upstairs. In the Lincoln Tavern it was upstairs and

also at The Dells it was upstairs. The kids never got in there is what I'm trying to tell you. The people that got in there were select people with money.

Q: Was the clientele mainly from Chicago?

CE: Oh, sure. The convention people and guys with money.

Q: Were there ever any problems with any of the roadhouses?

CE: No.

Q: Like with the law?

CE: The law? No, that was all taken care of at the state's attorney's office. Oh, every so often they would pull a raid. There'd be a splash in the newspaper that they raided them, and then tomorrow they'd be open again. It was kind of an accepted thing. Murphy's Steak House at Austin and Dempster was a restaurant, roadhouse there. He served steaks at that time, too. He also sold gin and booze and whatnot. The waiters at The Dells would come out to the guys at the cabs looking for booze. We never handled any of it, but we'd go over to Murphy's and get a pint or two for them. They would, in turn, take it in to the roadhouse and give it to somebody that needed a drink, you know. So we would buy it for a buck from Murphy, and take it in and give it to him and he'd give us three dollars for it. He'd probably go in and sell it for ten. I don't know.

Q: (laughs)

CE: That kind of thing went on. The Arlington Park Racetrack opened that year, too. That was another reason I went into the cab business, because where the Swift is now, that was an all-night stand. They had the coffee shop, and it ran all night. The depot was open all night because the North Shore Railroad was running at that time. The el, as we called it -- they call it the Swiftie now -- came out there, so there was traffic there 24 hours a day. So we hauled mostly the help that worked at these places, plus musicians. In fact, when Fred Waring was here, he stayed in Evanston at the Oak Crest Hotel, and we hauled the whole band for the whole month that they were here.

Q: Were there big stages inside a lot of these where they were playing?

CE: Yes.

Q: Was it dancing or just like a nightclub?

CE: Dancing. The stage was just for the band, and then they had the dance floor out in front and tables all around it. The tables were usually small.

Q: Were they plush and really decked out?

CE: Oh, they were decked out real nice. Yes, and palms and whatnot.

Q: When did you get married within this span?

CE: I got married kind of late in life. I was thirty-four when I got married during the war. I got married and went to the Service. I got a trade.

Q: (laughs) Don't let her hear that.

CE: I was married February 14, 1942. And I enlisted in the Army on April 23, 1942. I was thirty-four years old, and I was changed from a 1-H, H was overage, to 1-A the day I was married. So I went to the draft board and had a reporting, and I told them the story, they said, "Don't worry about it." They said, "You're in business. We won't take you." So in the meantime I just couldn't see that -- they won't take me. They're going to take me one of these days, so I better get in there now. So I tried to get in the Navy and I couldn't. I was overage for Navy. And I also had a bum eye that they wouldn't accept. I tried the Air Force, and they didn't want me. I was too old for them.

I subsequently got into an Ordnance Unit that was formed by the National Automobile Dealers Association. The ordnances was a heavy armament maintenance group in the Army and with the sole purpose of maintaining and repairing tanks and heavy equipment. We were supposed to be scheduled to go to Africa. I enlisted in April, and we were supposed to go to Africa in July. Well, we didn't get to Africa until Christmas, but that's another story. I spent two years in Africa, and I spent thirteen months in France. Came home with all my marbles and all my faculties.

Q: Africa must have been quite an experience.

CE: Yes, it's kind of a lonely looking place. It's dry and dusty and dirty. We were at a seaport. We were at Port of Iran, but the country itself is very much like spots of California where they grow grapes. They'll grow anything where you can get water, but you don't have any water. So they have irrigation. The Arabs are the ones that really started irrigation. They have aqueducts coming out of the mountains, and then it finally winds up in the ditches, and then it goes into irrigation. They grow grapes and fruit. The land is almost like Africa. It's kind of a red, sandy loam material. Now grass grows on it. Very few trees. Fruit trees along the river . . .

TAPE ONE, SIDE B ENDS

TAPE TWO, SIDE A

CE: We were pretty close to the Port of Iran because we, we serviced equipment as it came off the ships. And some we assembled. We assembled what we called the six by six, the big trucks that the armies use. We assembled those, and we put the jeeps together. They came in a package. Put wheels on them and put the tops on them and things like that. We serviced all the tanks for the African campaign and all the heavy equipment. It was all unloaded at the Port of Iran and we serviced it and then shipped it on out.

Q: When the Second World War came, how did people around here feel, this being an almost all-German community?

CE: There's only one thing that happened here. This is a German community obviously. There was an outfit they called the Bund. It was a German singing group, song group; there are a lot of German song groups anyhow. And this bunch they called themselves the Bund. They had a meeting at -- it was then Deckert's -- it was during the war. I wasn't here when it happened. Some of the local villagers made a big to-do about it, that the Nazis were meeting here in Morton Grove. And it was no such thing. It was just a bunch of Germans who were having a meeting. That's all. Just because they called themselves the Bund they were an organization, why, everybody thought they were Nazis.

Q: So people were accusing these local German people of being Nazis?

CE: Right. They weren't involved in this nonsense. But that happened once, and they found out there was nothing to it, so it all blew over. Hell, I'm German, born a German, I enlisted in the United States Army. And when I got over there, they were taught that once a German, always a German. You know, like they say, once a Mason, always a mason. And how can you fight against your own people, you know. We had brothers fighting against brother. Some American soldiers were Germans and were Americans and fighting against Germans in Germany. It's tough. You're now an American. I haven't lost anything over there. And I feel the same way about them. I didn't leave anything, I haven't lost anything. I couldn't care less.

Right after the war in Germany was over I got to Germany. I ran a prison camp in France, a German prison camp. I had two camps, in fact. I was a first sergeant. So I'm a German-American wearing an Army uniform and I got German prisoners under me. There was some to-do about that at first among our

guys:”He’s a goddamn German.” Well, who else could run it? They picked me because I could speak the language. I could read and write it. I knew the people. I was old enough -- I wasn’t a punk. At that time I’m thirty-seven years old, so I wasn’t just a punk kid that they sent over there to run this thing, so I was the logical guy to do it. And I did it.

Q: I bet that didn’t sit easy at first.

CE: Right. But soon as they found out that I was firm and I was the boss and I was doing the job, we both got along really well. It’s only human nature. There was a lot of propaganda and a lot of patriotism instilled in the Army -- both sides. We call it brainwashing. So here you got this goddamn Kraut, you’ve been fighting them all this time. And they weren’t fighting them at all -- they were back here fixing tanks and whatnot.

So, here these guys that I got as prisoners were actually infantry men -- guys with rifles. So, when we got them, we took the rifles away from them and we gave them a shave and a haircut and put some clean clothes on them and put them to work. What do you want to fight with this guy for? He’s happy he’s out of it, too, you know. So that took a little while to cure that, and finally they were giving them cigarettes and everything else. After a while, the biggest problem was to keep them from fraternizing (laughs) with them.

Q: How many were in the prison camp there?

CE: At one time, I had fifteen hundred. I had them in two different locations.

Q: Okay, how would you like to start on the gas station a little? What year did you own the gas station? 1940?

CE: Yes.

Q: Did you say you bought it?

CE: Yes, I bought it in ’40.

Q: How many years did you have it?

CE: I ran it until I went in the service. Then I closed it and boarded it up.

Q: The trouble all started in ’55?

CE: Right. When I come back from service, I reopened it in May of ’46. And in ’49 I put the addition on to it in back here. And the following year in ’50, I changed the front. It doesn’t look anything like it was when I bought it. And then I ran it until the trouble started in ’55.

There’s all kinds of documentary evidence here to it, but I can give you briefly what I see happened. I was up in Wisconsin fishing, came back on the sixteenth day of May on a Monday and walked into the shop. My head man, fellow by the name of Wolflick, who’s since passed away, greeted me as usual and we talked about what happened while I was gone. And in the course of the conversation mentioned the fact that a couple of guys were there from the union and wanted to talk to me. They told them that I was fishing, I’d be back Monday.

And they left a copy of contract lying on the desk and said, “Well, when he gets here, tell him to check that out. We'll be back to see him.” So I asked him what else had gone on. “Did they ask you to join the union.” Says, “No. All they said was they wanted to see you.” I asked the rest of them, “Did they talk to the rest of the guys?” They says, “No.”

Q: How many men were working there at that time?

CE: I had four. And that's all it was as far as the conversation was concerned with the union. And I questioned them at length whether the men had talked to the men about the union.

So, on the 24th of May, their two guys came back from Local 705, IBT [International Brotherhood of Teamsters], and they hire these gasoline drivers and platform workers. And they also have this gas station thing as a sideline, so I knew about their operation a long time from Chicago and other areas that I'd seen. So anyway, this fellow, Bruno Phillipini, kind of a swarthy guy, built about like I am, came in and talked out of the corner of his mouth. He had a great big goon with him, guy by the name of Leguski.

He says, “Did your man tell you what we wanted?” I said, “Well, he told me that you were going to be back. He said that you were talking something about a union.” “Well,” he says, “did you read the contract?” I says, “Yeah, I read the contract.” He says,” Well, all you got to do is sign it and we're all set.” I said, “Sign what?” He says, “the contract.” I said, “You got to be kidding!” “Well,” he says, “it really don't mean anything because we're organizing this whole area. In fact, we're going all over the state line. You might as well get in now and avoid a lot of trouble.” I says, “What are we talking about trouble?”

"Well," he says, "you know if you don't sign it," he says, "we'll picket you until you do." I said, "Well, it's a fine how do you do. Have you talked to any of these guys about joining your union?" He said, "We don't have to." I said, "Well, I'll tell you. In this instance you better." He said, "What's the big to-do about it?" I says, "this contract as I read it doesn't suit me at all. You have no right to picket me, I don't think, to make me join your union unless my guys want in."

Q: And they never talked to the guys?

CE: Never talked to them. So I said, "I think you ought to do first things first. You ought to talk to them, and if they want to join your union, then I will talk contract to you. But this contract as I see it, I will not sign. So I'll talk contract with you, which I think is the law, but you first talk to them." "That ain't the way it works." I said, "Well, that's the way it's going to work here." "Well, what's your big objection to the contract?" I said, "Well, there's several things that I object to. Number One is I don't want you auditing my books. Nobody audits my books except the government. Number Two," I says, "I'm not going to do your dirty work for you. The contract reads that thirty days after I hire an employee, he must join your union or I fire him."

So in this instance, I would be doing their work, and if I didn't sign the contact and put these guys in their union within thirty days, I'd have to fire every man I ever had. So, I just couldn't see that at all, because they didn't even bother to talk to them. "So," he says, "that's your final reply?" I said, "That's it." "Well, we'll see you later!" (says gruffly) I said, "Okay." They're going to see me later.

I was president of the Camber of Commerce at the time, and, of course, they had been in town all week and talking to everybody. Everybody's up in arms. None of these guys belonged to the Chamber of Commerce, the gas station men. But being a leader in the business community, they came to me for advice as to what I was going to do. Well, I told them exactly what I was going to do. I didn't give a darn what anybody else did, I knew what I was going to do. I said, "They're going to have to make me over my dead body. Unless they talk to these people, I will not sign any kind of a contract."

So they wanted to call a meeting. I said, "Sure. Let's have a meeting in my basement." "Oh, you could -- they'll bomb you!" "They're not going to bomb my house! Forget it!" so we had a meeting down in my basement. We called an attorney from Evanston. He came in and listened to our problem.

Q: In the meantime, had anyone else signed up?

CE: Not yet. They were all in abeyance, and they were waiting to see what would happen. So they came back, we had the meeting in the meantime and decided that we would not sign. The lawyer in the meantime, instead of going to work for us, went to work against us. He had a meeting with the Gasoline Retailer's Association. Guy by the name of Postilion was running that and Louie Pike was running this union, so these two were in the same bed. So he advised us to sign up, said you couldn't beat them anyway. So I said, "Well, that's enough of you. Get lost!"

So we took a vote that we weren't going to sign, that we would hold out. We felt that if we would hold out for a week, they couldn't picket all of us at the same time and stop us all from getting gas. So, they could only do that for a

week and they'd walk away. This is what we thought was going to happen. Well, we figured then the pig would get up and walk away. But what really happened was this: They picked the weakest link in the chain. And they'd picket one at a time.

Q: Smart.

CE: So, divide and conquer. The first guy got into Big Alf up at Central and Dempster. He was getting a load of gas, and as soon as the gas truck came, they came with their goons and their pickets. Had a bunch of tough-looking monkeys with them. Four carloads of them, and they were all business agents and goons, youths, hired goons is what they were. Well, as soon as these guys got out of the car, everybody started shaking,

So, Big Alf came running over with this guy from the union. He said, "What should I do." I said, "I can't tell you what to do. You're twenty-one years old. You were the one who said you would beat them down with a club, so now I'm not going to tell you what to do." I said, "You said that you were going to stick until the last dog was shot." "Well, I can't do that (says in a crying voice)." He left, and, of course, he signed it. He gave them the $25 for the one guy in his shop, and, next. Then they just went right down the line. It took them a week to get them all. One by one, they succumbed to their demands.

Q: What was the difference between you owning the land, property, and the gas station as opposed to these other people who were just leasing? Was that any great factor in this?

CE: It was and it wasn't. They were going to get out anyway is what the whole thing is. The companies put pressure on them, too. "Look we'll have to, if you don't sign, we'll have to get somebody else in because we're not going to let the station stand without gasoline," they pressured them. They would have gotten them regardless. They never signed up all the men in a station. Just one union car was it. That's their policy throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. Has been and still is as far as that part of the union is concerned.

At any rate, they came to me then, and Al Topp -- Al Topp and Gabrielson were partners. And there's one clause in that contract that reads, and it's in here. I can quote it here, "for the purpose of this contract, there shall be but one owner." So one of the partners must come into this union. This is strictly illegal, it's immoral, it's everything else. So they hung their hat on that, and I got involved with the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce and Chicago Commerce and Industry.

By this time, people with some influence got behind me in particular, because I assured them I wasn't just bluffing. I meant business because I'd already been out of has. So we took the Topp and Gabrielson case to court, in the Cook County Circuit Court. They got mixed up with their testimony, and they finally wound up giving in . . .

Q: I heard he held out for a week, or a little bit more than a week, and then he finally signed.

CE: That's a long story that I don't know all the answers to because I was involved and yet I wasn't. it finally wound up that the lawyers backed away from it and quit. So subsequently Baxter Laboratory had an attorney and Mr. Graham of Baxter

Laboratory was a good friend of mine, and so were all the rest of the people in industry in this area. Also the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce, being the head of our chamber of commerce here, wanted to know how I could hold out.

I said, "As far as I'm concerned, when they get down to the nubs, when they can't walk any more, well, that'll be time enough." "Well, can you stay in business?" I said, "I can stay in business whether they've got a __(?)__ for nothing. As long as they don't start hurting people. If they start hurting people, well, then I might have to get my shotgun out, but other than that, I'll . . ."

Q: Where did you end up getting the gas then?

CE: Well, the old truck that Topp's had, I wound up buying it. Paid a hundred dollars for it. This happened after we went into court. They went in the court and denied that they were stopping me from getting gasoline. Well, this is a blatant lie. No matter where I went with this truck, they would follow me. And I would lose them. I'd go through the forest preserve and through farmyards and through everything else, and I would lose them. By night I would do this -- then I would leave the truck at a farm somewhere, and I had a farmer's guy, tank might be half full. It wasn't profitable. It was just a case of showing these clowns that I wasn't afraid of them.

And, so, subsequently, they couldn't go into court again. If they would have stopped me, well, I 'd have gone to court and screamed bloody murder, and I'd have had the case beat right then and there. So they just left me alone. The guy who was -- and this is a little operator with a lot of guts -- had a little truck,

and he started hauling it for me. Of course, he was only hauling six hundred gallons at a time, which wasn't very profitable.

Q: Where would he haul it from?

CE: He had several sources that supplied it. They didn't know about. They did threaten him, but -- he was a hillbilly from Indiana and he didn't like people threatening him -- so he carried a shotgun in his car just in case. They never quite bothered with him so much anymore.

So we bought a three thousand gallon tank from a guy that was the custodian at the cemetery in Niles. He used it for water, and the guy before him had a service station called the Niles Service Station. This little guy that I used to buy from in the beginning -- he had a tractor and we would go down to Harlem Avenue and the Canal where all the gasoline comes in by barge and anybody can buy gasoline there. So that's how we got it after that. Of course, then they didn't dare picket that barge line down there, because they would have had a secondary boycott charge against them, and then we would have had them again. So, at any rate, we wound up in the courts, and as time went on, people were not afraid of them. The pickets dwindled to one guy or two guys and . . .

Q: How many at one time?

CE: Oh, at first they had two guys marching all the time. They'd have carloads of them sitting out there at Curley's Gas Station on Lincoln Avenue. Sometimes they'd have as high as ten or twelve guys taking movies of people coming in and all that type of thing.

Q: Is this through the winter?

CE: Well, most of the activity was during the summer -- the first months. When it got colder, then they were sitting in cars. Actually they really got to be watchdogs for me. They were watching me around the clock so nobody would bother me.

We got into court. The court gave it to a master in chancellory. Just to drag it on, to get you disgusted. We went on and on and on, and then finally it took us three years and two months to go through the courts. Finally on August 2nd, 1958, John T. Dempsey, who is now a senior judge in the Appellate Court -- he isn't sitting too much anymore. Well, John T. Dempsey got the case while he was on vacation in Wisconsin. He got into this thing and digging into it while he was on vacation. He came back from Wisconsin to give me the injunction. So he enjoyed them from further picketing me.

In the meantime, though, we were trying to get some Illinois labor law -- we have no labor law in Illinois to amount to anything. We got a bill into the senate in 1955. We got it out of committee, which would outlaw this type of thing. I call it racket picketing -- I gave it that nomenclature and still to this day they call it racket picketing. They don't do too much of it anymore, but at that time, they would just picket the people to force them to join their union. And arbitrarily go out there, just what they call it, organization from the top.

In 1957, we had another bill in the legislature, and that one got out of committee, but it didn't pass recommendation. By the time it got to the floor of the House, the galleries were full of union guys, and if you ever saw a bunch of strong arm in your life . . .. They'd call these guys out of the session and two

guys on each side, and when the vote came, we also ran. In 1959 they did the same thing. It never got out of committee, because the head of the Illinois State Federation of Labor said, "There's no problem. We'll take care of it ourselves." They never did do anything about it.

In 1958 again I went to the Congress. They were modifying Landon and Griffin, the Taft-Hartley law. It's known to this day as the Landon-Griffin Act. They put some additions in, some more teeth into the Taft-Hartley law. And they, in turn, took care of the small businessmen -- worked things through unions. When the thing first started, the National Labor Relations Board would not take the case of anything unless it were interstate commerce, number one, and number two, unless you had 50 employees or more, they would act. So, I was in no-man's land. We had no labor law in Illinois, and the federal law would not protect me because they wouldn't do anything about it. Subsequently we did do something about it in other instances. We were in court here with my case; we couldn't do much with that except drag that on.

But in Aurora, Illinois they had the very same thing happen. Bill Tracy and I -- Bill Tracy was the lawyer that handled this case -- went out there and they called me to see what could be done, and I advised them to stick together, form an association. And Bill filed a case with the National Labor Relations Board. It was an unfair labor practice that they were practicing on these people. But they filed as an association, so they had plenty of employees. They needed 50 employees as I mentioned before, and between the group, they had enough employees, the Labor Relations Board took the case. Enjoined them right now. They stopped them. Stopped the picketing. In Gary, Indiana, they pulled the same thing, and we went down there and advised them, and they did the same thing. They stopped them.

So, after we got the injunction, of course, that took the wind out of their sails, and we did organize the North Shore Dealers after this thing of mine. As soon as they found out that the dealers here were organized, they just didn't bother them any more. To this day, I don't think they've bothered anybody.

Q: I was curious about the wages at this time. What did the union have for union scale?

CE: The wages at the time were $72 a week for first-class people. The lowest guy that I had working for me was getting $75, and he was just a starter. He was doing grease monkey, little colored guy. So, there wasn't a matter of wage dispute. That was not it at all. They were just looking for money. This tells the whole story. Fellow by the name of Hansen came out from the *Daily News* one day. Young curb reporter. He was just a young fellow, and they sent him out here to get the story. Len O'Connor interviewed me. I had every newspaper man of consequence interview me to get the story. Sat at this kitchen table many times and talked to people.

Anyways this young Hansen came out, and I told him the story. He said, "You keep calling it a racket." He said, "What makes you say that?" So I told him that they don't care what you pay the people. They don't care how many hours you work them. All they care about is money. And I said, "Right in Morton Grove," and this had been going on now for two years, "right here in Morton Grove, the same guys that just signed up, you find a union card or maybe two union cards at the most in one of these gas stations in a drawer somewhere. And the name on that union card will be somebody that's not working there, that hasn't worked there for God knows when. Now you go out and I can prove it to you. Now beyond

that, I'll tell you what else you can do. You go to Chicago where there's sometimes four gas stations on a corner, and you go into these gas stations, and you'll find the very same thing exists. There'll be one union card in there. It might be in the owner's name, and it might be in John Doe's name. Somebody that hasn't worked there maybe ten years hence. And a union guy will come in there every three months and collect the dues. And this is all they care about." He said, "You've got to be kidding me." I said, "I'm not kidding you." All right.

He went out. He went out three days hustling these places. He went to Morton Grove. He found exactly what I told him. He went to the North Side of Chicago; he went to the South Side of Chicago. General plan. He came back and told me. He said, "You're right." He splashed it in the newspapers.

State's Attorney Adamowski finally woke up to the fact that I was getting close to this injunction, and he was getting his feet back in the newspapers that this was actually a racket. And there was another case in a lumber yard that they were pulling the same thing. And Adamowski finally woke up and thought there's a conspiracy that exists here that they're trying to put a man out of business for no good reason.

TAPE TWO, SIDE A ENDS

TAPE TWO, SIDE B

CE: They should go out and take a look and see what's going on. They did. They checked with the people in Morton Grove, and they checked with the people I told them to in Chicago, and they decided they had a conspiracy case. I went before the Grand Jury for an hour and told the Grand Jury my story.

They indicted them. And it wound up in the criminal courts in the County Building, and a judge by the name of Pope was the judge in the case. And they had the biggest and the best criminal lawyers in the country fighting these two little fledgling state's attorneys, and Judge Pope politely threw the case out of court, and he said there was no such thing as a conspiracy, and there we sit again. But we did get the injunction. The state's attorney's case amounted to nothing. We did get the Landon-Griffin Act passed through both Houses. Eisenhower signed the bill, and we did get some labor peace through it.

So what did we actually accomplish? Yes, it cost me a lot of money. It cost me a lot of time. It caused butterflies on top of butterflies in my mind.

Q: Within the three years, though, did business go on at the gas station as usual, other than these people picketing?

CE: The first year it was tough, because people were afraid to come in. I did get business from people who were not afraid. I got repair business. The gasoline business amounted to nothing as I told you because of the way we had to go at it. You know, when you get gas delivered to you that's one thing. If you have to go haul it and sneak it at night, you know, this is like Prohibition hauling beer. Like the bootleggers did. You don't make any money at it. It cost me money -- it was just a question of showing them that I wasn't afraid of them, that I could do it.

Q: But did you have local support?

CE: I had local support, right. What we finally did win was the confidence of the people and the people found out that they were getting hurt. We had the press with us.

Q: That in itself I think is remarkable if you could at least show people.

CE: The press was with us, and they didn't bomb me and they didn't hurt anybody.

Q: Was there any vandalism at all?

CE: The only violence that there was -- these guys hung out over at Curley's, and they got into a couple squabbles with the local kids. One of the big goons beat up one of the kids from town. A kid by the name of Peters. It wound up in the courts and made the papers.

But it didn't happen here because of me. I think the reason there wasn't any violence was because I think they were afraid of that. The first guy that I talked to, kind of this squirrely guy, this Phillipini, a real type -- would talk out of the corner of his mouth. I just never was afraid of anybody that talked out of the corner of his mouth. I figured he was hiding something. And I come by that honestly.

The day that he was going to picket me, he said, "Well, we got to picket you." This was in the office, and I got him by the shoulders and I put him up against the wall, I says, "You can picket me as long as you want. But if anybody gets hurt in Morton Grove because of this thing, you're the first guy I'm going to look for, because I can take you the best day you ever lived." And I meant it, and he knew I meant it. I, plus the story and with the Chamber of Commerce

and the firemen, was a man about town. You know, I wasn't just a punk that they could pick on and get lost. The minute that the press got a hold of it, right away -- the support I had on things, too, which kept them away form me. But we did win in the end. We won the support of the people. We stopped them. They never did get to the state line. This one says, "Hey, we got millions of dollars. We can beat you the best day you ever lived (growls), listen buddy." They even tried to buy me off.

The one thing I must tell you is how rotten they really are. The attorney that they had, a fellow by the name of Carmel, was rotten to the core, and he committed suicide while this case was going on. He committed suicide the year before we got the injunction because he was indicted, he was going to trial. The Mann Act is you support women for prostitution across state lines. This was something he did. They had him dead to rights. I know they did. I knew Bob Tiecham who was the district attorney at the time, and some of my lawyers came out of the same office, and I knew the whole story. They had moving pictures and everything else on this guy dead to rights they had him. In his own office, they had the sex orgies and whatnot, but these girls and women they'd transport from Davenport, Iowa, across the line. And he couldn't stand to stand trial, so he jumped out of the window of the Sherman Hotel on the South Side.

But the one thing they pulled on me was -- it never got into the court record -- but, when you come into a court of equity, a court of justice, you must come with clean hands. This is a doctrine of the courts -- canon of ethics is what they call it among lawyers. I think I could pass the bar on this because of the experience I had with these people. Any rate, they always try to discredit the witness; they try to break you down, you know. If they catch you lying or discredit your testimony in any way, well, they can go and say, "Look. This

guy's a damned liar. I want his testimony stricken." You've heard this many times, "disregard this. I object, and disregard that."

Well, at any rate, here I am, "Mr. Clean," coming into the court, and I'm coming with clean hands. So they got to do something. They couldn't break anybody down, any of my witnesses, they couldn't break them down, so they came and picked on me then. They came into court one night -- we had a night session -- and they got my attorney into a side room, and they bring out a profile of a criminal -- a man who did time in the Connecticut State Penitentiary. He was in there on a bank robbery charge for robbing a bank in Bristol, Connecticut. His name was Albert W. Meyer. They had a profile on him, a picture and all of the dope. "This guy that you're defending isn't Carl Eckhardt, Mr. Clean at all. This is him."

Q: Oh, no. (laughs)

CE: Yes. This they pulled. It was just before the trial. So Tracy said, "We'll just watch it go by." He didn't even know whether he should show it to me or not, because he was afraid I'm going to blow my top and start beating the tar out of somebody, you know, for pulling a stunt like this.

Q: Yes.

CE: And yet he doesn't know me all my life. So he gets me in, and he starts talking real easy like about had I ever been in Connecticut, had I ever been here or been there? Uh-uh, I've never been to Connecticut. Had I went through on a troop train or something, then, but I knew nothing about Connecticut. "You ever been

in Bristol Connecticut?" I said, "What the hell's Bristol got to do with me? What's Connecticut got? Come on, get to the point! What's the matter with you?" Then I see he's fidgeting and trying to get something out, so I said, 'Come on. What the hell's the story?" I said, "You've got to tell me something?" He said, "Well, I might as well shoot square." I said, "It's the only way to go, buddy." So he brings this thing out. He says, "they want to bring it out in court." I said, "Let them. You know, I haven't got anything to hang my hat on." He said, "You got me."

Q: You mean they were that desperate to find something?

CE: It cost us $75 to get a detective agency -- got to the secretary of state in Connecticut, and got this guy's profile and got a full history of the case, and he did spend two years in the state penitentiary. He actually drove the car. He never did take part in the actual robbery. He drove the car.

Q: It's a three-year thing. I realize it's a lot to go through.

CE: There's a running history of it in here. [refers to scrapbook]

Q: Good.

CE: I've got newspaper clippings for one thing. There's letters to the president of the United States. I had letters from senators, even John Kennedy and Bob Kennedy. John Kennedy and Bob at that time were in the Labor Committee in the Senate, and the McClellan Committee were having hearings, and this is all at the

same time. Including my testimony to the committee in Congress. I was just putting this thing together. And this is Mrs. Church and I when I went to Washington. Marguerite Stitt Church was a congresswoman. This is Congressman Huffman, and this is Congressman Ahrends of Ohio. He's from Michigan. This is an attorney, Owen Fairweather, and this is me. This is when I went to Congress. These are other people who went to Washington with me. This woman, who was from Peoria, Illinois, and this guy here with the laundry, he was from Peoria also. It would take you weeks to go through these things. This is some of the picketing pictures, and I'm going to put it together unless you want it. Let me put it together first, and then . . .

Q: Yes, give me a call when you get it together. I'd love to look it over. You know what story I've read about that I like. When you went to get the gas the one night in the truck and it conked out right over the tracks. (laughs) That was so good.

CE: Well, they were driving Oldsmobiles at the time, and this truck -- nobody in their right mind would drive the thing. It belonged in a junk yard. In fact, I think that's where it came from. Topp and Gabrielson got it. And it wheezed and steamed and whistled and everything else. Phil Frisk, my neighbor just passed away since then, he drove a laundry tuck and he carried a union car. He would get so mad at these guys because he was always afraid I'd get hurt. He wanted to ride with me in the truck and I wouldn't take anybody with me for the simple reason that if they did catch up with me, they'd want to run me off the road. All I would do is head it for a ditch and walk out of it, because it wouldn't go fast enough with a load on it -- I didn't dare drive it more than twenty miles an

hour with a load on it because I couldn't stop it. So, if I'm going twenty an hour and some of these goons would catch up with me and want to run me off the road, I'd just make a right-hand turn and step out of it and let the truck go because it isn't worth anything anyway. But if I got somebody with me, I got him on the right side of me on the front . . ..

One night in particular, I used to go down this alley here and then I'd start up one alley and down the other and get them confused. When I'd get across Dempster Street and get up to Harrer Park -- at that time it wasn't all fenced in and stuff like it is now -- I'd chase up and down through the forest preserve, and I'd wind up over on Harms Road.

I'd always get one of our policemen over there. Bill Frieder was one of my best ones, and I'd tell him, "Get over on Harms Road and I'll be coming out so and so. These Oldsmobiles back here, just kind of detain them until I get out of sight." But I'd lose them. I'd lose them every single time, and I used to laugh at them when I come back. I said, "You guys better get yourselves some new cars. You better get them tuned up. This old clunker, I'm losing you every night." And I did. I would lose them. They were just dummies, essentially stupid. So I used to get the biggest kick out of driving it because when I'd come home, she'd be like this [referring to his wife's nervousness over his activities at night sneaking gas]. So I finally had to quit, and when we finally got into court and they said that they weren't following me and everything. They never bothered me any more. And, of course, Art got into the picture -- the guy with the shotgun -- he hauled the gas and I didn't do it any more. And then everything quieted down. We finally got the injunction.

Now, the only other thing we were going to talk about was the police commission. That's what you wanted, wasn't it?

Q: I'd like to have it on tape.

CE: Well, I mentioned to you before that the reason that I got on to the Police and Fire Commission was at the request of the then Mayor Schreiber. The reason for it was that having had the experience as a fireman, he wanted to have me on. He said they were going to integrate the two departments, and so I got started in that thing. And we wound up hiring six men at the very outset of the fire department.

Of course, the Police Commission hires, disciplines and protects, and sets the rules for both departments -- both the fire and police departments. That's their function. They don't operate it, I would say, hire, fire, discipline and protect them. To protect is one of the main reasons for being on there. You just can't get fired arbitrarily by the chief or by a politician.

So at the outset it was kind of a hairy experience. Every guy that was on the volunteer fire department wanted to be on the new department or else he wanted to get on the list. They only had six jobs to start with; we got 45 guys. Well, some want it, and some don't. so, the first problem we had was with that those who could not take the job they wanted to get on the list and if it dragged out ten years, they would have priority over anybody else.

That could not be done because that's not the way the law reads. The law reads that you have to pass a written examination, you must be under thirty-five years of age, and you must be able to pass a physical and auxiliary testing, and so on. At the initial appointment, we could waive the age, we could waive the written examination, but you still wouldn't have passed an auxiliary and the physical. The guy that's forty-five years old is not going to pass that auxiliary test, and he's not going to pass the strict physical for a fire

department. So this was our big to-do, you know. And I had two guys pretty mad at me for a while. I was supposed to be their Father Confessor on the police commission, and it obviously did not work.

It took some time until it finally wore itself out, and they finally realized that I was just doing the job, and I was being as fair as I possibly could for everybody. And last but not least, that I was trying to build a fire department and not giving all my friends jobs. So that was the first hurdle we had to climb, and it took about two years to get over that one. And then finally, it did move on, and there were die-hards who got out of the department because they couldn't get along with the new guys. And we now have a very fine, professional fire department.

I'm the police department as well. During my administration, the fourteen years I was there, we had no scandals whatsoever like some of the other departments around us. We have a good, honest, dedicated department. We have two chiefs who are local boys. This, I think, has a lot to do with the way the department is run. We have brought people up through the ranks, have not gone outside to bring in top personnel. Unless you have a real rotten situation in your department, I think you should stay within the department. If you have a rotten situation, then you picked the wrong people to start with. So we were criticized by the then administration for not going outside. For what? You got people who are capable, and if you pick someone from the outside, the morale of the department goes to zero. And as long as you have people here that are top-flight, and everybody moves up. In the case of Vollner, if he was a captain, everybody'd be moving up. We made a lieutenant and we made a sergeant. Everybody moved up. We had another captain. In the fire department, when Chief Hildebrandt

retired, we made Huscher, who was a captain, a chief, and we brought everybody up in a line. So it makes for a better department all around.

Around us we've had all kinds of problems. And I think, I think that some of these commissions, rely too much on psychiatric examinations and the lie box. We have never, in my time, used a lie box. We've never used a psychiatric exam. Chicago has discarded it a long time ago because they found out it doesn't mean anything. And I've seen it done; I've watched it. I belong to an association, and in the fourteen years that I was there, a few years I've watched them do it, and I just can't see it at all. They're depending on a couple of long-haired, fuzzy-whiskered kooks, as I call them, to tell you if this guy's not going to be a cop. Now how does he know?

If their recommendation is that they feel in testing this guy with a written examination for four hours and then they question him for an hour or two -- and then they decide whether this guy is police material or fire material. And if they say no, then this commission takes their word for it and they give these guys $75 for it. And the lie box is the other one. They put them on a lie box and they ask them some stupid questions, and they get these kids riled, and they wash them out in the lie box. They leave, the fellow says, "He's shaky." A damned liar can beat it. I know a liar can beat it.

Q: I've heart that.

CE: That's right -- he can beat it because he's cold, he's got that cast-iron nerves. He lies like heck, he lies from force of habit. He can beat it. Secondly, the lie box will not stand up in court. So if you can't use it in a court of justice, what good is it?

Q: Yes, right.

CE: We have never used it, and I don't know if my successors will use it. I doubt it. The guys that are in now, I don't think will. But I've seen it happen all the way around.

And Skokie right now is having a problem. They tested two hundred and some people and couldn't pick one. There's something cockeyed because they took the word of those Oakbrook shrinkers and the lie box to do their work for them. You find among kids -- I call them kids anyway; they're all kids -- I'm seventy years old -- you find that they all have some kind of an arrest record. Frequently, we all got heavy feet. I've been stopped by the police because my foot was too heavy, and so has everybody. You run through a red light at some time or an accident, minor accident, or even a serious one. That don't make them no criminal; that don't make them dishonest. That doesn't mean that he can't be a decent person.

Q: Right.

CE: There are other qualifications beside that. And this is another thing they're hanging their hats on. One of the questions in the interview -- first I'd try to get them mad at me, then if I could get him mad at me, well, I don't want him because he's a hothead, you know what I mean?

Q: Right.

CE: I was always the bad guy. Then, after the interview, I would apologize to them, and shake his hand and say, “Look, man. I really am not as bad as you think I am. I was trying to find out your personality.” And I’d always tell them after it was over with. I would put on the act; I’d make it real rough on them.

The other thing that I’d ask, “What’d you ever steal?” “I didn’t steal anything.” “Oh, come on! You swiped an apple in an apple stand.” You asked them, and they always, “Did you ever see a watermelon?” That was always a joke. But some kid along the line did steal something. If nothing else, he stole a lead pencil off the guy’s desk, or some . . .. That doesn’t make a criminal. Or he might have taken some kid’s bicycle for a ride without asking him, you know. That don’t make him a criminal either. So these things that they ask them in a lie box. So he’s all uptight anyhow because of this damn lie-box thing, all being wired up, and because he don’t answer these silly, poofy questions, they wash him out.

So overall, my experience has been that in a half hour’s time, you can talk to this kid -- in the meantime, we’ve had a background check on him and we only interview those that pass the written test, so you only have thirty people or so that you have take a written, and half of that. This last time we interviewed twenty-six; that was the most we ever did interview. We also interview their wives and sweethearts. We’ve done that in the last six or seven years.

Q: Oh, really? Why is that?

CE: Well, the divorce rate in the police and fire department were very high. So, that being the case, it behooves us to see this guy’s wife, see what she looks like, she knows what the job entails, the ramifications, the danger of it, the hours

And so on. For the first years that I was on the commission, I used to do it myself. I used to go out and visit those people. And her husband would be home, but I would talk to her alone. With her alone -- if the two of them are together, you don't get the full picture. I made an appointment to see them, and this was a case of a fireman, and the young woman knew I was coming.

Q: Do they know what you are coming for though?

CE: Yes. She knew what I was coming for. She knew I was coming to interview her in an official capacity. She showed up to meet me in a negligee.

Q: Oh, really.

CE: So, I did talk to her, but I got out of there as quick as I could, and I go to the next meeting and says, "That's enough of this garbage." (laughs) "I'm not going to do any more interviewing. We're going to call them in." Why should I do this myself? If the guy wants the job bad enough, why shouldn't he bring her? And it was one of the best things we ever did. We have told the state association about this some time back, and they've adopted that policy: We usually talk to the girl about ten minutes at the most. See how nervous she is. You can tell the type of woman she is, and we've had some very interesting experiences of people that brought their mates.

Today we have kind of a permissive society as they call it, and we had one young man and woman, and when she came in, I thought it was his mother. It was the woman who was keeping him and putting him through college. That's the truth. The dummy, he didn't have to bring her, but he just felt that she's keeping him

anyhow, so, well you know he got the job. (laughs) Like heck he did! Then we've had others who were three-time losers and two-time losers and bringing the third one in, and she's a two-time loser . . .

Q: That makes sense, though, because it affects their work, too.

CE: Absolutely. Certainly, as soon as you have problems at home, it affects their work. So when you got a happy home life, you got a happy employee. And he's not in the courts with divorces and he's not having children's problems and that type of thing. So I always felt that in that half hour we interview these people, plus the background check that we have on them, plus the application that we have, we could find out whether the guy, his personality comes out in an interview. If he's a smiler, if you can't get him mad because he don't wear a necktie, things of that nature, he turns out to be a pretty decent guy. And we've proven that because we haven't had any problems with our guys. Some of these guys got divorces since they're there anyway, but that's the nature of the animal. They come in contact with a lot of people, too. Girls in particular. A guy in the squad car, and the fire department, too, come in contact with . . .. I guess the temptation is greater there than anywhere else. Get ye behind me, Satan, pushing them. It's that type of thing.

I feel very strongly because I ran the commission for six years, that a personal interview is much more important than some psychiatrist's opinion, some lie box opinion. I like to take the policeman that's at least 5'10" -- we've got some shorter, but we don't know what to do about it. I like a policeman that's at least 5'10" and goes about 160, 70 pounds. Can't shake, but can smile. That's smart enough and not too smart. The guy with the degree is too smart.

You can't teach him anything. You get a guy that's getting some schooling somewhere in between and you can teach him.

Q: What about women?

TAPE TWO, SIDE B ENDS

TAPE THREE, SIDE A

CE: We appointed one, that's Debbie McEnerney. She's now married -- I don't know what her married name is, though. (laughs) She's Irish and she married a Polish boy. She's exceptional. And we qualified another one, Miss Susan Hodge. She's a local girl. I knew she'd never accept the job. She was just trying to see whether she could make it or not. And she did. She had the personality, everything going, a very attractive young lady, and . . .

Q: That's interesting that she at least gave it a try.

CE: Yes, she tried it. I think she would have made a good policeman, but she's twenty-five years old and a very attractive kid and come from a big, lovable family. When we interviewed her -- I knew her since she's this high. I kept looking her in the eye, and says, "Susie," I says, "what about when you get married? Then what happens?" "Oh, I'm not going to get married." So, within a year she got married. I was going to appoint her in place of McEnerney. She was ahead of McEnerney. She says, "I want to talk to you." I wrote her a letter telling her there would be an appointment. "I want to talk to you." She worked

at that time at the Skokie Valley Hospital as a technician, radiologist. So she says, "I'm going to get married." (laughs) "What did I tell you?" (laughter) She said she couldn't take the job as well as. . .. "You better write me a letter," I said.

Q: What happens in a case where they do get married if they're already on the force?

CE: The problem there is a personal problem. Does her husband put up with it, number one. And number two, if she gets pregnant, then what happens to her? I was kidding Debbie the other day. I says, "You told me you weren't going to get married." She said, "No, I didn't say that at all." (laughter) Not going to get married for a while. She had the same boyfriend for a long time, and they have an agreement. But she came through this as an applicant, and she didn't pass the physical test, the agility test and so on. In the meantime, she kept after me that she wanted to get in, wanted to get in. So I gave her telephone number and address to the chief . . .

Q: Is she from town here?

CE: No, she's from Skokie. I gave that telephone number to the chief, and I says, "You got to __(?)__ somebody __(?)__ in the case, so give this kid a whirl. Check her out." She worked out perfectly. She took to the job. She had desire, and she caught on real quick. And she knew how to handle the guys. This is one of the problems with a girl getting in there, particularly if she's half-way attractive. That's human nature -- boy meets girl and boy loves girl, girl loves boy . . .

Q: The rest is history, huh? (laughs)

CE: Right. The rest is history. So, they tried to get familiar, this was obvious, but she knew how to handle them. She was there for two years, then she took the exam again and she passed with flying colors.

Subsequently we had a fire there. We had to get a girl to humanly handle it; we had to get a woman for several reasons. One being that you arrest a lot of women for shoplifting and so on, and they have to search them. Well, you can't have a guy search them, so you get a woman policeman with authority. Sure we have matrons, but you get a policewoman in uniform, you have more authority. They respect them more, so we had to have a girl, and she fit the bill perfectly.

In fact, I talked to one of the guys this morning. There'd been an accident out in front here and I happened to walk over there. Said, "How's my girl Debbie doing?" "Well," he says, "fine." And the guys generally accepted her because I think they knew her because she had two years of apprenticeship, as I say. And they'll take her as a back-up as well as any guy, so she fit perfectly. Those that we've had subsequently were some real dandies. Oh, some real floozies. Some three-time losers and that type of woman. The live-in thing, report this thing, too. Your residency, who you reside with. John Smith is a hypothetical thing.

Q: And he obviously isn't related.

CE: Roommate or friend. So this you don't need. But I hope that they get some more of the type that Debbie is. In a larger department like Chicago, I guess you can

absorb some of this, but in a small department -- it takes $20,000 for the first year to put this policeman or policewoman on the job.

Q: You mean training?

CE: Training and salary and so on. That's the probationary period. If you know going in or you feel going in that this, the woman or a man, is not going to hack it, why put them on? Why bother? This is many times a decision that we'd have to make. Sure they can pass all the exams and everything, they're smart enough and everything else, but when we hire this guy or this woman, is there a possibility they'll stay with us twenty years? That's what you have to look at when you're going through this. Like I said, if they got three strikes on them going in, you know darn well they're not going to make it, so why even bother?

Q: You're so interesting. Well, we're kind of to an end here, and when you get a chance, maybe I'll go through this -- did you want to organize it more or? [speaking of the collection of papers and articles concerning Mr. Eckhardt's fight with the union] This is going to be nice when you get it all together.

CE: Yes, it'll be compact. I'll put it together and you can take this with you if you want. Let me give you something to put it in so it don't fall apart on you. I built the first ball diamond, and I have a picture of that here somewhere.

Q: You built the first ball diamond?

CE: Yes.

Q: Where was that?

CE: Harrer Park. It's still there.

Q: Which one? That one in the far corner?

CE: No, the big one. The one that's as you come in -- the first one.

Q: On the right side?

CE: As you come in Harrer Park. This is all fire department history. That's another -- I'm going to put that together. That's some municipal budget.

Q: Director of Civil Defense for six years also?

CE: Yes. This is February 11th of '62 -- this proposed budget that I . . .. I'll put this together if you want to . . . (laughs) Some fire budget as compared to what they have now.

This was a blood drive that I ran in 1953. You know we have the blood program in Morton Grove now. I started that way back in the year before that. But in 1953, during the Korean War, the vet's hospital at Hines ran out of blood, and they were appealing for blood to all veteran's organizations. So I organized a blood drive, and we took three bus loads of people down. And we called it the James J. Barrett Day. [showing newspaper article] This is Mrs. Barrett, the young man's mother and this is his father. We called it James J. Barrett Day -- we borrowed badges and buttons and whatnot and had radio publicity and newspaper

publicity on it. We took all these people down to Hines for a blood drive, and that's how the blood drive got started.

This is 1957 when I ran for mayor. That's another story.

Q: Ran for mayor in 1957?

CE: Yes.

Q: In this midst of all this?

CE: Yes. The union got me. They financed a group. This is Bob Schreiber. We got beat. They beat the pants off of us. But the following election I got in back of a group and we put Bob in as a trustee, and two years later he became mayor and was mayor for eight years. Flickinger, who's presently mayor, was involved with Bob.

Well, I just want to see if I can find that picture of the ball diamond.

Q: How it originally looked?

CE: Yes. Originally, it was just before Morton Grove Days. That was a hay field, and we had bought that from the . . . well, it was tax distressed, and we bought it from Mack Falknor who engineered the deal. The Morton Grove Days Committee bought the property. It was a hay field, so we were running Morton Grove Days to build a park, and here this thing looked like a hay field.

So, I borrowed a tractor from the village and I borrowed a sickle-bar mower -- a sickle-bar mower's like a hay mower -- and a rake from an old guy that lived

back over on where is now forest preserve. And we mowed the grass and raked it up, and then I rented a golf course mower from Roseman Tractor Company. And we kept lowering it and lowering it each time we moved it until we finally got down to where we're hitting stones. Then I got a bunch of kids with bushel baskets to pick up the stones behind it, and then we dragged it and made a playing field out of it. That's when we started the Little League. Then we built the ball diamond so Little League would have a place to play. That's the first diamond. I've got the picture. I thought it was in here. It's mixed up with something else.

[Mrs. Eckhardt is interviewed.]

Q: All right. We'll go back in time a little bit when all this was happening with the gas station.

HE: You mean when the butterflies were getting butterflies, huh?

Q: Yes.

HE: (laughs)

Q: When your husband was taking on the union out there, how did you feel about all that?

HE: Nervous.

Q: You had written a letter concerning all of this. Who was that to?

HE: That was the one to President Eisenhower. Is that the one you're talking about?

Q: I believe so.

HE: Yes, that one took me all of about, I think, a half hour because I was just saying exactly what I felt.

Q: Did you get a response from that?

HE: Yes. Gee, I've forgotten just what it did say, but we did get a response on it.

Q: Did you have any people voicing their opinions to you about the whole incident at the gas station?

HE: Oh, yes.

Q: Did it bother you?

HE: Not too much really. But I can remember one night when we were coming back from a shower over at Skokie and I was taking another girl home -- Mrs. Schlenz over on Elm Street -- and dropping another gal off. And they asked at the time, "Aren't you afraid to go back alone, Nell?" I said, "No, I don't think so. They didn't hurt Carl all day. They're not going to hurt me."

Q: That must have been something then. To live through that for three years?

HE: Yes.

Q: Did you go on many of the trips when your husband went to speak to different people?

HE: I did go to Springfield with him one time, but not to Washington.

Q: So what's it like being married to a celebrity of sorts? Local, Morton Grove (laughs).

HE: There are times. (laughter) Well, it's been a busy, busy time really. Been a lot of fun along the way and a lot of work. Worry. But, generally speaking, not too bad. We still look at each other. (laughter)

Q: You do, huh? You still eat together at the same table.

HE: Yes. (laughter)

Q: What was your maiden name?

HE: Hoetzer.

Q: And where were you from?

HE: Niles Center at that time, Skokie now.

Q: How did the two of you meet?

HE: Well, I worked over at the garage. It was Heinz Motor at the time, and he used to come in there. One day he walked through once too often. (laughs)

Q: You nabbed him, huh? (laughs) Where did you attend school when you were growing up in Niles Center?

HE: St. Pete's, the Catholic school over there. And after that went to Alvernia High School for two years. At that time they had the two-year business courses. I got to be a bookkeeper.

Q: So you did that when you were young?

HE: Yes. As I said, I worked at Heinz Motor for seventeen years, and since then been his bookkeeper. (laughter)

Q: Full-time job?

HE: Yes. (laughter) Well, it wasn't at first, of course, but after that it got to be pretty much full time.

Q: So what year was it that you got married?

HE: '42 Valentine's Day.

Q: Was it?

HE: Yes. And the only reason it got to be Valentine's Day . . . couldn't get the hall on the 7th, so we got it for the 14th. Got to be Valentine's Day.

Q: Where'd you live in Niles Center?

HE: On Niles Center Road. The Catholic School has since gone over into what used to be our property over there. The house is gone now. 81500 on Niles Center Road, right across from the cemetery.

Q: Anything interesting you used to do? The stores in the main part of town?

HE: There was a blacksmith shop right next to us. Lohrke's Blacksmith Shop. And we used to have fun just listening to Mr. and Mrs. Lohrkes hammering away on the horseshoes. Yes. That was always a pretty sound, and somehow it's the nostalgia, too. I can still hear them occasionally.

CE: Can you believe that I sold gas over there for eleven cents a gallon and made two cents a gallon on it? When I first started, before the war. Talking about prices, when I bought that from the bank, that corner there with the gas station. Not like it looks now, but you got a picture of it on the dresser. . .

HE: Yes.

CE: . . . I'll show you what it looks like. I bought that corner for thirty-five hundred dollars. I have them five hundred dollars down and forty dollars a month at four percent interest. Can you believe that?

Q: Was there a building here when you bought the land, or was this just land?

CE: It was just a little gas station. It had been closed for some time, and Mr. Brown, who was with the Niles Center Bank, it was Skokie Bank then already, kept at me to buy it. They wanted $6,500 for it. I finally bought it for $3,500. That's the original gas station.

Q: Are there houses back there on the lot where you're on?

CE: No. There was nothing back there. The only house that was within miles of it is the one they just tore down where the condo is now. That big house that they tore down. That's the only house that was around. [looking at photo] This pump here, this was out in the street. This pump here I sold gas for eleven cents a gallon.

Q: That's incredible.

CE: Made two cents a gallon on it.

Q: (laughs) Look at it today.

CE: I'll tell you another cutie. When the kids come in with your dates, you know, and they'd say, "Fill her up." Wasn't nothing but a dollar's worth, but for a

dollar's worth you could get a lot of gas, you know. But they'd say, "Fill her up," and impress the dolly that he was with. "Fill her up." (laughter) With one buck, you can't even get out of the gas station now.

Even real estate in this town, well, all over, has mushroomed. It's gone sky high. Residential property -- I had bought this for $30 a foot that we're on now, and that was in 1950 from Jim Orphan. As I mentioned earlier in the interview that most of this property was all tax distressed and mortgages -- banks foreclosed on them, and so on. Today, I don't think that you can buy any residential property for less than three hundred dollars a front foot. And I bought this for $30 a front foot.

HE: Couldn't afford it either, but we thought we'd better because the sewer from the station ran across the front of the lot. (laughs)

Q: Now look at it today.

TAPE THREE, SIDE A ENDS

TAPE THREE, SIDE B

HE: . . . (conversation joined in progress) . . . how times have changed. There were two payments left on the station yet when Carl was ready to come home, and we knew he was about to come home. So I went over to the bank and asked them if they would allow him the privilege of making the last two payments. And they did. (laughs) There was enough in the savings account, and they knew it, so

they gave him the privilege of making the last two payments. (laughs) That wouldn't happen today.

CE: Well, you know, a lot of people say, well, you could have bought all this property. Why didn't you buy it? We didn't have any money. It's just as simple as that. Sure, today if somebody offered me that with the kind of money that we have today, obviously you'd buy. So would everybody else. But at the time that I bought the station, Mr. Galitz, that's the father of the present Mr. Willard that's there now, he had took a shine to me anyhow, and he knew Hel, you know, "Butch" [affectionate nickname to his wife]. And he says, "You going to marry that Helen probably," he says, "why don't you take that house there on Callie Avenue." The house I'm speaking of is the one that Schaul is in. It's going to be torn down now. Schaul's Bowling Alley is going to be a McDonald's. There's a house behind it. A white house. Well, I could have bought that for $4,000, and I could have bought that for $40 a month with no money down. And I was afraid even of the forty bucks a month I was paying there, you know, so . . .. And then the war was on, and so Bob Lutz bought it, the former postmaster. Finally he got into it, but I could have had that for no money down, for forty bucks a month. And afraid to take it. So I rented a place for $25 a month. (laughs)

Q: Twenty-five dollars a month!

CE: Then I got chased out of there after the war. We kept it during the war, and I got chased out of there because Pollex wanted it for his family, for his mother and father. I had to move. So Mr. Brooks let me have the apartment here where Luke Meier is now. We moved into there for $45 a month, which he furnished.

HE: (laughs)

CE: Forty-five bucks a month. (pauses) But who had money?

Q: But today things have sky-rocketed so high.

CE: Well, it's all come about in the last ten years. It started with that ruckus in '68 with that convention that, with cops and firemen all getting double wages and whatnot. That's what started the whole shot.

Q: [looking at other photos] This is really something. Look at the cars.

CE: Yes, that's a 1940 Pontiac. That car was the first car I owned that cost more than a thousand dollars. I'd been working for a brewery as a salesman, and I bought that down in Decatur, Illinois, because my Chevy went out on me and my dad was in the hospital and I had to get home. I bought that right off the transport wagon. Transport wagons at that time used to carry four cars. Boy!

HE: Fire engine red. (laughs)

CE: Fire engine red. Ten hundred and forty bucks.

HE: He called and he says, "I got a new car and it's fire engine red." (laughs)

Q: What kind of specific local support did you have here in town during the fight with the union?

CE: Oh, we had support. I had the lawyers come to me through Baxter Laboratory, and then I had all kinds of other support from the Industrial Association, Illinois State Chamber of Commerce, even the National Chamber of Commerce. The Illinois State Chamber of Commerce was the toughest. They just decided they had to get behind something that -- every time when something like this would happen, the party would succumb to their demands. They couldn't get anywhere, and they were trying to make some headway through the courts, and so we went the whole route. We took every avenue that we could possibly go, we went. And so, to hire the lawyers that I had, I couldn't afford it. I couldn't afford it because, well, at today's prices, they're getting $50 or $75 an hour in court. At that time, Bill was a $25 an hour man, and he was Baxter's labor lawyer. Bill Graham, who's the chairman of the board, and Faulk (?), who as a matter of fact may own the place. They were customers of mine, and they asked me how I felt about it, and I says, "I want to go all the way if I can, but I can't afford to. I can't afford the court costs. As far as the rest of it's concerned, I can survive." It's easy come, easy go. They steal it and they blow it. And then to fight a case in the Cook County courts where the unions are so strong politically that everybody thought I was fighting a losing battle, but . . .. And that's why it took so long. They kept knocking it around, kicking it around. The court record is that deep. [gesturing]

Q: Well, what happened to the $12,000 pending for damages?

CE: That finally was thrown out of court. There's where the politics got hold of it at the tail end. Judge Kluczynski, who is now on the Supreme Court for the State of Illinois, was then an appellate court judge. And he said he didn't have

jurisdiction, and he threw that part of it out. That $12,000 thing was something that the lawyers dreamed up as something I didn't care about. They did that. We had a hell of a time even proving $12,000 in actual physical loss in dollars in cents because the business kept going, you see. So all they go one was a financial statement, and the financial statement didn't show an actual loss after that. The first year, yes, because of the loss of gasoline sales. These auditors, couple of lawyers did that, an auditor who wanted to -- in fact, I told him, "If you get it, you can have it."

Q: The lawyers actually thought you could have gotten it?

CE: Yes, right. They did. But that was an addendum, that's something they added to the case later on. In fact, the last year they put that in there.

Q: And you know, I was rather confused with one other thing here. I read, in October, this was over with in August, is that correct?

CE: Yes.

Q: Then I read in October of 1958, "Teamsters Local Seeking to Life the Injunction Barring Its Picketing." Did they go back to court trying to . . .?

CE: Well, that's as confusing to you as it is to me, because they never did come back. I never went back to court. This was after we were out of it even. Well, this was the politics, you got to remember. They had to get their record clean. I was never informed of it, so as I say, I'm as confused as you are, put it that

way. I was never informed of it in any way, shape or form. They never bothered me. I never had to go to court. I wasn't informed of it. It must have happened or they wouldn't have put it in the paper.

Q: Did you have a big celebration when this whole thing was over?

CE: Oh, boy!

HE: (laughs)

Q: You could just sleep for weeks.

CE: Not only did Damon get drunk, he let Pythias get drunk. (laughter)

HE: I think the eyes were red for three days. (laughter)

CE: I came back from the court, and there were some people waiting for me at the station. And then here's a guy with earphones on and whatnot. And it's Len O'Connor, and he was interviewing me on this thing. And the next thing you know, he's on the remote control unit. He's sitting on Edens bridge that crosses Lincoln Avenue, and he's reporting this thing on the newscast direct. They had a camera and the whole thing, interviewed me here -- and here I'm listening to this. The radio's blaring, and I just got through talking to the guy, and I listen, hearing it on the radio. I said, "What the devil is this here?" So somebody came through and says, "Hey, there's a news guy sitting there on the bridge." Then I put two and two together. He wanted to get back in time, but he

couldn't, so he just stopped his automobile, and he broadcast it direct from his car. He put it on the radio, and then that night it came over the newsreel. We had a lot of fun with that. That was a tremendous celebration, I can tell you. We just shut it right down. I says, "Come on. That's enough of this -- let's go!" (laughter)

Q: I better go. I've kept you way too long. The interview was really good.

TAPE THREE, SIDE B ENDS