

Narrator: Harvey Minx
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INTRODUCTION

Born in 1904 in Morton Grove, Harvey Minx was one of nine children. In high school he worked at a box factory nailing cabbage crates together and also dealt with the mysterious death of his father, who worked for the Poehlmann brothers.

He remembers the Sunday plane rides at Morton Grove's airfields that were popular among Chicago residents. He also recalled the town's first paved road arriving after the First World War, the beginning of Morton Grove Days, and people crowding the porches of the houses around Lincoln Tavern to listen to Duke Ellington's band play.

HM: Harvey Minx

FH: Fred 'Ike' Huscher

Q: Question asked by Interviewer Yvonne Ryden

TAPE ONE, SIDE A

HM: My name is Harvey J. Minx, I live at 1209 East Lyons, Spokane, Washington.
God's country.

Q: And you're in town for how long?

HM: I've been in town for about 11 or 12 days. I'll be leaving tomorrow, the 19th, for
Spokane.

FH: Harvey, maybe you could give us a little history on the family of Miller's Mill.

HM: Well, the mill I can't give you much history on, but I do know that my mother's
half-sister, who was nineteen years older than my mother, was born in a log
cabin on the foot of Narragansett Street.

Q: Narragansett near what?

HM: On Dempster. The foot of Narragansett Street. Miller built the house all out of oak. Interior was all oak except the exterior; the siding was pine and the floors were pine. He built it in reverse. And they had two by fours, exactly two inches by four inches, all made out of oak. And there was brick mortar between the studs for warmth, and the ceilings were only about seven and a half feet high. My mother was born in that house. All us children were born in that house, nine of us.

Q: What was your mother's name?

HM: My mother's name was Anna Marie Eiser. Miller divorced my mother, or vice versa, I don't know which was which. She married Carl Eiser and he was the first foreman for the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, and Pacific Railroad, section foreman. He accumulated a young fortune. Now, not to cause any reflection or animosity amongst us younger people—my grandfather was like a banker. This fellow would come over, "Could I have \$200, Charlie?" "Yes." Could I have \$200, another guy \$300, so on down the line. And when my grandfather died, lots of it was never paid back. Some of them paid back, and my Grandma Eiser didn't say what was left. So when my grandmother died, the estate was divided between two boys and a girl, my mother. My mother got the property on Dempster Street, and William Eiser got the one right next to the river. There had been a lot of

animosity between my mother and her brothers. I think it was on account of money.

FH: Now, would that have been on the east side of the river, north of Dempster?

HM: Yeah, that's where the mill was back in there. My mother told me that when she was a young girl, I don't know what age, the post office was across the street, east of the river, where Peter Heinz had a saloon, and then later on Charlie Kremp had one.

FH: Would that be the old Bridge Inn?

HM: Yeah, that was the old Bridge Inn. After the Wayside burned, Charlie Kremp continued business there. That's where the post office was and it burnt down. My mother said she ran across with her folks and they salvaged the mail. And they rode on horse to Niles Center to get the fire department. By the time the fire department came back they saved the lot.

FH: What year was that?

HM: Let's see, my mother was born in '72, so that could be '82 or could be '84.

FH: 1884.

HM: Yeah, because she was born in '72 so that could be '84. Now they talkin' about where the first post office was, but I believe if you would contact the postal department, if they still have a record of it—I'm sure they do— I think you'll find out that the first post office was there.

FH: Do you remember when the building was rebuilt then? The old Bridge Inn was that rebuilt?

HM: That was rebuilt in about 1920.

FH: Did Peter Heinz build it?

HM: I don't know who built that brick building at all. It was my uncle, Charlie Fink, and my father, had the agency for the Pabst Blue Ribbon beer that goes back to about 1890 or '92.

Q: Where exactly is the building we're talking about? Since I'm a stranger in Morton Grove.

FH: It would be what is Parfait's, Maxwell's now, on that corner.

HM: That's as close as I can remember of when that building was remodeled.

FH: Now your little log cabin, did that stand where that gas station is today, just about at that location?

HM: There's no gas station; there's forest preserve on the north side—

FH: Well, on the north side, but across from that gas station.

HM: The gas station was on the corner of Ferris and Dempster—

FH: No, there's one over this way.

HM: A little farther by Narragansett?

FH: Yes, yes.

HM: Well, I didn't notice that one when we went by. I don't ever remember that gas station; the only one that was there was at the corner of Ferris and Dempster.

Q: The one that's there now, same corner? Southwest corner?

HM: They moved it back from the corner. It was close to the corner; they moved it back a little ways in there.

FH: Charlie Kremp, did he have the tavern that was Dr. Holtz's old home?

HM: That's right, Dr. Holtz was way back there on the river.

FH: Would that be what we would call Linne Woods?

HM: That's right, that's Linne Woods. That is the spot where I remember, when Holtz moved out, my father carried some furniture. I don't know if they bought it or it was given to them, but he carried some furniture on his back over there. My father was a pretty big man and he carried some of that furniture and we still had some of it 'til I left. What my sister done with it I don't know. If she burned it or gave it away I don't know.

Q: The house you're talking about that was Dr. Holtz's, is that the one that became the Wayside Inn?

HM: That's right.

Q: So it's on the north side?

HM: North side. Charlie Kremp took that over I believe about 1916, don't think I'm far off on that date. And he also remodeled that, with just buildings additions around the outside. And that burned down about 1920 I believe.

FH: We have a picture of Dr. Holtz's home.

HM: You have? Well, that's wonderful, I didn't see that one. I missed that one.

FH: There was a big mansion-type house. It was quite large.

HM: In those days it was big; today it would be relatively small. Charlie Kremp went to Europe and then he came back again. While he was in Europe the Wayside Inn burnt down and then he went and done business at the Bridge.

Q: Which was on the south side?

HM: South side of Dempster Street.

FH: Do you remember when the pavilion was built in Linne Woods?

HM: No, I don't remember when that was. Probably was built before I was even born. I was born in 1904. I don't remember when it was built.

Q: The pavilion in Linne Woods would be....

FH: North of Dempster Street.

HM: The foot of Ferris Avenue. Across the street from Ferris Avenue.

FH: 500 feet north of Dempster Street.

HM: That's right.

Q: I didn't realize that was a forest preserve called Linne Woods that early.

HM: Well, it was called way back, uh...

FH: Wayside Inn.

HM: It was the Wayside Inn but that was called way back when we first started the Morton Grove Days. It was Linne Woods after that Swedish singer, opera singer, whatever she was.

FH: Yes.

HM: Now are we gonna go to what?

FH: Whatever you'd like to discuss.

HM: We're talking now about airplane landing. We'll talk about airplane landing now. They say it was supposed to land west of the Huscher home on Dempster Street. I don't understand how they could figure that one out when they had a great big "Airplane Landing" sign on that pavilion, which Albert Arnold painted. He was working for Charlie Kremp. Taking planes flying as low as they did in those days, you couldn't help from seeing that great big sign, pretty big pavilion. It landed there, and I was watching it land, but I can't recall just where it landed, if it hit on the end of the pavilion or... The driveway into the Wayside Inn had a row of trees on each side. And on the west side of the driveway was a sidewalk all the way to the back. I don't think it was possible that it could have hit those trees over in there because it had hit an awful lot of them. I'm inclined to believe that it hit the end of the pavilion. There wasn't really much room for that to land in, if they got little off the way they got into the greenhouses over there.

FH: That would have been in that opening that's presently there. Where he would have landed then.

HM: Does it still got an opening there?

FH: Yeah, that's still open.

HM: Well, then they moved it over to.... Your folks, grandfolks didn't have that property all in there, did they?

FH: Yeah. My grandmother owned that. Across, at the end of School Street, going north.

HM: Well, that's started taking up airplane rides. I know definitely they never charged \$50. My brother Ralph, he was curious. He saved \$15 and he went up on an airplane ride. It was \$15 for a ride. And how they would ever park 35 planes in there is beyond me. That is something I can't understand.

Q: Where did you hear that, that there were 35 planes?

HM: I read it in the Centennial. I have the Centennial paper at home that my sister sent me.

Q: The 75th maybe.

HM: Yeah, sorry about that one. I stand corrected. Correct me anytime you can.

Q: Well, the Centennial is coming up.

HM: This was the Jubilee. Anyway, the plane rides were \$15, no such a thing as \$50 that I ever know of. I spent a lot of Sundays there. I got a picture of Howard Peterson and myself taken with a Model T Ford right adjacent to that over there. If you want all of those I can give you one of them.

Q: I'd like that.

HM: I was there every Sunday, so I know definitely what the price was.

Q: Did the planes fly only on Sunday?

HM: Mostly, because people came out from Chicago to take plane rides. They were busy all the time. One plane crashed. Do they still call that Railroad Avenue parallel to the tracks?

FH: That would be Lehigh. That was Walt Meyer's airplane field along the railroad on Lehigh. West of Lehigh, west of Railroad Avenue, and north of Dempster. Do you remember that field?

HM: Yeah. Before that a plane crashed up on top on that little hill up there, which would be known as Church Street. One of the planes crashed there.

FH: Which would be west of Railroad Avenue.

HM: Otherwise it would have landed in the woods back in there.

Q: So there was more than one airfield?

FH: Yes, we had two small airfields.

HM: Yeah, very small.

Q: Not with 35 planes right?

HM: I don't think you could possibly park 35 planes on that place, when I read it. I might have read it wrong, sometimes I read pretty fast. [laughter] But I don't think you could possibly have 35 planes there.

FH: Could you tell us a little about Dempster Street as far as the two lanes or the ditches or anything that you might remember?

HM: Well, I remember a two-lane highway. I remember when Dempster Street wasn't paved. In the spring of the year the automobiles came out from the city of Chicago, they'd get bogged down in that clay road. And there was no way getting from Morton Grove to Evanston by the way of Dempster Street because we had a little lowland going farther east of... what is it, what they had the electric line from there on that was lowland going down into Evanston.

FH: That would be along where the Evanston Golf Course would be, in that area.

HM: Yeah, that was lowland in there. Is Evanston Golf Course still there?

FH: Yes.

HM: Well, that was all lowland. You couldn't possibly get through there with a team there in the spring of that year. That road was paved during the war years if I'm not mistaken. I can remember before it was open running up and down that road. [laughter] It could have been 1917 or a little before that when it was paved. The first paved road in Morton Grove was Ferris Avenue. Before Lincoln Avenue,

Dempster Street, that was the first paved road. Then later on Lincoln Avenue got paved and then they widened Lincoln Avenue. I think it could have been during the war years. Because I know my brother brought lilac bushes home that were at places on Lincoln Avenue that were tore up.

Q: The war years you're talking about are World War I right?

HM: Yeah, definitely.

FH: Do you remember anything going westward on Dempster Street?

HM: Well, westward on Dempster Street there was Lochner's place, just past the railroad track, on the south side. There was nothing on the left side. Then down a ways was Guy French's place.

FH: Where the Bell Telephone is now?

HM: That the Bell Telephone there?

FH: Yes.

HM: Well, then you'd go up a little farther and there was a little hill over there and Michael Lochner had his home set up there.

Q: Would that still be on the south side of the street?

HM: That's on the north side of the street. And that was sold to a real estate outfit back in '29. That's when they started a real estate boom. And they moved their house down lower where the greenhouses are now. I know they're still over there.

Q: Where are the greenhouses now?

FH: Lochner's.

HM: On the corner of Waukegan Road and Dempster—that would be the southeast corner—Borchard had a farm in there, were friends of my mother's. And one of the Borchard girls got married to Henry Gilt. She's the one that through childbirth went completely insane through childbirth. Doctors could never figure it out. And I don't think she ever truly got over it.

FH: Can you give us any information about the old dances like at Dilg's place in Morton Grove?

HM: Yeah. They had dances up there every now and then. My mother used to say they used to have masquerade balls up there.

Q: Where is this we're talking about?

HM: Dilg's place on Ferris and Lincoln. Up on the top floor they had dances up there. And my mother said that they'd go separately and try to disguise themselves. But then you can't disguise yourself dancing with your partner. You know how your partner dances and you can recognize that at the masquerade ball anytime. Well, we've had a lot of good dances in Morton Grove when the fire department had their card parties and dances and such and different things to pay for a fire truck.

Q: Would all those dances be at Dilg's or were there other places?

HM: Later on Miller came to Morton Grove and he built the back of that building.

FH: That would be what is now called Toscana's.

Q: The Luxembourger Hall.

HM: A fellow by the name of Katz had that. And he went to northern Wisconsin and Miller took over. He built that dance hall and that back there. I think when the Depression came up he was a little bit financially short of cash. And when the Platz bounded ahead with the greenhouses, he held the mortgage on it and he was always coming over to... I think he was about on the verge of... I think it was the Luxembourgers Platz, I'm not sure. Anyways, he was always kind of hounding you for money, and during the Depression there wasn't very much money.

Q: When did you leave Morton Grove?

HM: About '49.

Q: So you lived through the Depression and so on?

HM: Yes, I pedaled papers early in the morning, from 5:30 in the morning. Later on when I got money to buy a bike, I pedaled papers in the morning, went to Loutsch's Meat Market, and got some meat for a meal, then went to school. After school picked up the evening papers, pedaled evening papers 'til about 6:30 in the evening, then came home. I didn't have much time to do homework and sleep.

Q: When you say pedaled papers, did you go from house to house delivering them?

HM: I delivered them.

Q: Yeah, you delivered them, you didn't stand on a street corner and...

HM: You must remember, in those days, paper sold for about two cents a piece, and I got sixty cents for a hundred papers and the paper got a dollar and forty cents out of the two dollars. I think at the end of the month, with the Sunday papers and the *Chicago Herald* and the *Tribune* and the *Daily News*, I think I made about fifteen dollars a month.

Q: You hustled to get it.

HM: So that wasn't very much money. One thing I got a great big kick out of today, it's comical, the Borchards were a very good friend of my mother and we'd go up there and pick onions.

Q: Now this is the Borchards that were on the southwest corner of Dempster and Waukegan Road.

HM: So my brother Ralph, fifteen months older than I, my mother says, “Well, this money today is yours so you can buy firecrackers with it.” Oh boy, we had big ideas. All morning long from seven o’clock to one o’clock we worked out on the Fourth of July morning, what we were gonna do with that money to buy firecrackers with. At one o’clock we came in and had a nice meal—they fed you good in those days—she says to Ralph, “He’s older so he gets a little more money than you do.” She gave him twenty-six cents and I got a quarter, for some five hours work. I have to laugh every time I think of that. Can you imagine? Unless she gave my mother some money, I don’t know, which they’d probably done in those days.

Q: And that didn’t buy very much in the way of fireworks.

HM: Didn’t buy anything.

FH: Do you remember... did you used to hang around the highway garage years ago?

HM: At times yeah.

FH: They used to have a light out there for the police. What was the deal there?

Q: First of all, let's talk about where the highway garage was. It was on the south side of Dempster.

HM: There was nothing on the north side of Dempster Street except old Poehlmann's greenhouses.

Q: Oh, so everything we're talking about is going to be on the south side.

HM: Well everything was on the south side of Dempster Street but if you went east a little farther there was an old Gunther's farm over there.

Q: And Fred Huscher's grandparents were on the north side.

HM: Yeah, but that was a little farther east. That was east of, what was that road?

Q: Now it's called Austin.

HM: It wasn't called Austin then was it?

FH: No.

HM: Then you went down a little farther where Gunther was. But just before that there was, on the south side of the street, there was another Huscher. Elmer Huscher that I went to school with. Woulda been your cousin, remember that?

FH: Which one?

HM: Elmer. I went to school with him.

Q: Did you have a cousin Elmer?

FH: Wouldn't have been Edward.

HM: No, Elmer.

FH: Elmer, no.

Q: Where are you talking about when you say Elmer Huscher?

HM: He was on the south side of Dempster Street a little farther east of Austin Avenue.

FH: In a brick home?

HM: I don't remember brick or not.

FH: Quite away off of the road?

HM: It wasn't too far off the road, and there was another house in there. I can't remember them people's name, but he accidentally died of gas leak in the house. I can't remember that party's name, that one kind of left me a little bit there.

Q: But this was on the south side of Dempster?

HM: Yeah that's where that Huscher place was over there. And there was an old brick building right across the street from your grandmother's place, back in there.

FH: Was it a home?

HM: Yeah it was a home.

FH: That was Willy Huscher.

HM: That was Willy Huscher's?

FH: Yes.

Q: Is that the house your parents moved?

FH: No.

HM: Now you're talking about we're going back to School Street on the corner where William Sonne had his big house there.

FH: Dempster, School and then on the southeast—

HM: Southwest, and then across the street... And then on the other corner, was another Sonne, I think they were old maids. Wasn't William Sonne and his wife cousins? I'm almost positive of that. I wouldn't say for sure, but I'm almost positive that they were cousins the way my mother talked.

FH: William Sonne—well, his wife was Frieda, and that was the sister to my dad. I don't know if they were related or not, that I don't know.

HM: Well, I had been told, but you know how stories go sometimes, which are not always true. And then see what was east of that one. That was that big place...

FH: Lincoln Tavern.

HM: No, Lincoln Tavern was across the street. The old Lincoln Tavern was across the street.

FH: Almost where the Legion is now.

HM: Yeah.

FH: The old Lincoln Tavern.

HM: That coulda burned down in 1914. It could've.

FH: And then the new Lincoln Tavern was built across the street, which would have been at the corner of Dempster and Georgiana.

Q: On the south side.

FH: On the south side.

HM: The building was between School Street and Georgiana and that was Doctor... I know him... Doctor...

FH: That wasn't Drostenfels, was it?

HM: No, no. There was a doctor—I can't remember his name now—that one slipped my mind. Drostenfels was on Lincoln Avenue next door to where Hoss came in, and then Mylam (?) in there was next to Dr. Drostenfels, and then 1912 Loutsch came in and built there. 'Cause I remember old man Mylam there had... we were here and then all of the sudden Loutsch comes along and builds right through the street! [laughter]

FH: That's the brick building that he put up.

HM: Yeah, it's still there. I was inside the other day. I went by there and I walked in and my curiosity got the better of me, so I went in and the woman said "What can I do for you?" and I said, "No, I just want to come in and look on the inside of that building." I said they remodeled it. So she said, "You remember this building?" I said, "Oh yeah, it used to be a meat market." I said the steps went up on this side and they put a glass door in there now; the door always was in there. And I said the cash register was over here. It was not cash, but whatever they had—I don't know what they called it—it was a register of some kind. And I said where the counter was and so on and this and that, where the cooler was. I said I used to come in here everyday and get meat in this place.

FH: Do you remember anything about the Doughboy, when it was put up?

HM: Yeah, we used to have a street dance, out on Lincoln Avenue. They roped off the street, and all cars coming through, you had to come on Lincoln Avenue to get into the city of Chicago. They had to go down to Georgiana and come back of Meyer's printing place, back through that way. And we'd take a rope, stop the cars and ask for donations. [laughter] And one guy he was kind of, well, he was too ornery. I said it's a good cause; it's for erecting a monument for the doughboys. And we get ten, fifteen cents, or whatever they want to give. That's where that started to be erected.

FH: What year was that?

HM: Well, that could have been after the war, when the boys were comin' home. Could have been around in the year 1920, '21. I don't know just when it was erected. They should have a record of that. When it was erected, am I close?

FH: Yes, very close.

HM: I can remember that having those street dances out there.

FH: Well, after that, did Morton Grove Days start a short time after that? After those street dances that they had?

HM: Yeah. The Morton Grove Days started about 1925 I believe, 'cause I worked at the Benjamin Electric in Des Plaines in 1926. So it started around 1924 or '25.

FH: So where did they hold it at that point?

HM: In Linne Woods, at the foot of Dempster Street. Then they'd have the barrel fights. They'd have the telephone company or the electric company put up two big poles and they'd string a cable across and they had a barrel on there and they'd have water fights with the different towns.

Q: The idea was to move the barrel back and forth?

HM: See who'd get it to—

Q: To the other pole?

HM: Yeah. The funny part of it was, it was good entertainment, but they overdone it, too long. Because after they got through there, that thing was all saturated with water you were walking like in the swamp. They overdone that on the barrel fight

but they had a lot of good entertainment. They had a lot of people coming out from the city of Chicago. They said they enjoyed coming out there; it was kinda nice. But at one time they had about 39 taverns in Morton Grove and a population of about 2,000.

Q: Was that because Evanston was dry?

HM: Yeah, that was because Evanston was dry. They'd all come up. Well, not only that, in the summer months it was hot in the city of Chicago. It was cooler out in Morton Grove, so they'd come out there and drink beer. After World War II the American Legion had about five thousand dollars in the treasury and they'd put on a great big dance and food for all the veterans, their girlfriends, their mothers, their sisters and brothers. They put on a great big feed. It cost the American Legion five hundred dollars cash, plus all the donations was given, and food and so on down the line.

FH: Where was that held?

HM: Miller's Tavern, or nightclub or whatever you want to—yeah I think you would call it taverns in those days already. They forgot the saloon business.

Q: Was that the place on Lincoln Avenue about where Georgiana comes in? What became the Luxembourger Hall?

HM: I never knew it became that.

FH: Yeah, that would be the same one.

Q: It's called Villa Toscana now. It's where the bend, where Lincoln Avenue bends, not too far from where the Doughboy Statue is?

HM: Where the post office used to be.

Q: I don't know where the post office used to be.

HM: The post office was right at the foot of Georgiana.

FH: At one time.

Q: Not in my time.

HM: That was when the post office was taken away from the Dilg's and given to Bob Lutz after World War II.

FH: And Henry Phillips used to run the mail back and forth.

HM: Yeah, Henry Phillips lived across the street from Meyer's, way back in through there. They lived back in there, way off of the road those roads were in there. And had about 39 taverns in Morton Grove, they had number jars out.

Q: What's a number jar?

HM: Well, you had tabs in there and you'd take it out and you had winning numbers. They called them the tab jars.

Q: Sort of like taking chances?

HM: Yeah. You may not believe this. Arthur Loutsch could probably bury out a little more on that. But I believe when they started the American Legion, they had around fifty or sixty thousand dollars in the treasury with those number jars. And Joe Goggle (sp?) was the Chief of Police at that time. And he knew just when he was gonna make raids, come out to check on illegal gambling. Morton Grove didn't have that anywhere. [laughter] Well anyway, he'd get ahold of I think it was Carl Eckhardt at that time or whoever it was and they had their signals: you call

this guy and you call that guy and so on. It went pretty fast. When they come out to make a raid, there was no number jars.

Q: You mentioned some system with the highway garage, that there was a warning system?

HM: No, there was no warning system.

FH: The police, wasn't it something, that they needed the police, there was a light there?

HM: Peter Schuetz was one of the councilmen at that time.

Q: What name?

HM: Schuetz. They didn't pronounce it 'shootz' at that time.

Q: Well, what was the first name?

HM: Peter.

Q: Peter Schuetz, he lives in Skokie now right?

HM: He had the liquor warehouse in there. Before that he had the highway garage. He started to work for Henry Dilg's garage over there and Matt Gutman and Herb Dilg were friends and there was a little trouble there. And Matt Gutman got mad and he built the highway garage.

Q: The one on Dempster?

HM: On Dempster Street, to give Dilg competition.

FH: Now Dilg's garage was on Lincoln Avenue.

Q: Where Schuetz's house is?

FH: No, on Lincoln Avenue.

HM: Where the bank was.

FH: Right next to the old bank building on the corner of Callie and Lincoln.

HM: So to give Dilg competition. [laughter]

FH: Well, because Dilg had the Studebaker agency at that time.

HM: The funny part about it, what I laugh about these other things, the way he sold that automobile. I know he sold Matthew Yehl the Studebaker, and it stayed in the shed of that place for a longtime without ever being run. He said—I can remember something like this—this would be a good car to buy for your kid, and the kid was about this high. It was asinine! Why buy a car? Why not wait 'til he gets old enough to buy a car instead of buying it now. And Yehl bought that big car and I know when the boy got old enough he run the wheels off of it.

FH: That would have been Howard.

HM: Yeah, he run the wheels off of it.

Q: Is Howard the one that lives in Chicago now?

FH: Yes.

HM: He run the wheels off of it. What else you want to ask me?

Q: You told me you came back to check the cemetery, which was St. Matthew's Cemetery.

HM: Yeah, I'm sure I remember. It was south of Dempster Street. And I found out that there were stones for my father and mother and my brother and my nephew. But my sister Della, who died during the epidemic in 1917, '18—she was 12 years old—she was buried there, and my brother Denny who died in '28 is buried there, but those two don't have any stones, and I couldn't figure it out. Because Esther wrote to me, or Elmer told me, that they put stones out there. Well, when I got out there I didn't find those. I tried to locate from the sign out in front, the Wilken who is in charge of it, and we get an answer on the telephone: "Your car is illegally parked, move it" [laughter] How did they know who we were! I couldn't get those numbers from no-how. My niece last night, Doris Anne, my brother Ralph's daughter, we stopped at the fire station up on Shermer Road and he said contact Simpson Funeral Home. So we have an appointment tonight to check the plot everything there. There's an old stone there—it's so old that you'll probably have to use acid to put in there a little bit to see if you could get the readings off of it. Whose it is I don't know.

Q: Your parents are buried there?

HM: Well, my grandmother is buried under my nephew's grave, Terry Yunger, and grandmother underneath there, and it's been there so long they said it was okay. Now which one that was I don't know; I'll probably find out at the funeral home

tonight. That property, that cemetery lot, belonged to William Eiser, my mother's brother. And when my father died he gave that to my mother.

FH: That would be Emil Eiser's father?

HM: Yeah. He gave that to my mother.

FH: Emil Eiser is a member of our society.

Q: I keep trying to interview him.

HM: The Eisers are buried on that cemetery on Harms Road, right off of Lincoln. Am I right that's Harms Road?

Q: There are two cemeteries on Harms Road, just a north of Lincoln.

HM: This would be on the west side. That's where the Eisers are buried in there. I didn't get a chance to get out there. I'd never checked with Emil on that, just where they are buried on that. But the one on St. Matthew's, I told Doris, I can walk right through it, after 41 years. It's a small one.

Q: And you did.

HM: Sure, I walked right through it. I know where it was at.

TAPE ONE, SIDE A ENDS

TAPE ONE, SIDE B

FH: Zeitman, who lives at Georgiana and Capulina in Morton Grove, he's the caretaker over at that cemetery.

Q: St. Matthew's?

FH: No, at the one on Harms Road.

HM: I know my grandparents are buried over there, I'm pretty sure of that, but I couldn't find anything out at all about anything else like that.

TAPE STOPPED AND RESTARTED

FH: Do you remember anything regarding some of the nightclubs like the Dells and the Lincoln Tavern and those that were along Dempster Street?

HM: Yeah, when the old Lincoln Tavern burnt, they took and went across the street and added on to the building. Duke Ellington would come out there, and being a colored band, these people from Evanston used to come out there, the black people would come from Evanston and go across the street. Peters built houses along there on that street. They'd come along and sit on the front porch of his house without even asking! That was kind of rude I thought. The fact is that they'd have police come over there and chew 'em off. They'd just took it for granted that they had a right to come over and sit on someone's porch and listen to the bands.

Q: Oh, listen to the band, I see.

HM: Yeah, so finally the city went and put up signs there: no parking, stopped 'em. Well, I lived right in back on Crain and School Street. I enjoyed that music when I went to sleep at night as hot as it, but I'd have the windows open and listen at night and fall asleep with it! And Dave Fielweber lived on the next street over there, let me see that was... Georgiana. What was the next one? West.

Q: School Street.

HM: No, west. Georgiana...

FH: Oh, Fernald is there.

HM: Is that Fernald?

FH: Yeah. But Fielweber is in a big brick house?

HM: No, he didn't have a big brick house. He had a frame building there. And he says he couldn't sleep at night. And if I came home late or something like that then I'd probably stop at the highway garage for a minute or two. He'd be out there saying he couldn't sleep on account of the band making so much noise.

FH: Do you remember anything about the Dells?

HM: Well, the only thing I can remember is when I delivered papers at your grandmother's house in the winter months, she'd always ask me to come in and stand by the stove there, warm up a little bit, give me a apple.

Q: Would that be your grandmother?

FH: Yeah.

HM: I know it was Emma, and the Reimers was brother-in-law to the Poehlmann's and Sid Denley was son-in-law of the Reimers.

FH: Do you remember the little show? You might tell us where it was.

HM: Yeah it was right on the corner of Capulina and Ferris Avenue at the alley. I forget the people who had the name. A German fellow had it. And they'd heat up the building in the afternoon sometime for the show and they'd warm a brick for Mrs. Stern her name was, Storm or Stern, so she could keep her feet warm in the theater. I collected the tickets in that show, come to think of it, for a while. I got free admission sitting up there clicking the tickets and watching the picture.

Q: That's the building that's just been rehabbed as sort of a house now right?

FH: Yes, well, no, it's a—

Q: Frame?

FH: It's a brick—they have a little garage in there.

Q: Where are we talking about then? Let's identify this. He said Capulina and—

FH: Ferris.

Q: Ferris, right. Which corner?

HM: On the south...

FH: Southeast—

HM: ...east corner!

FH: Stands right at the alley.

HM: It wasn't a very big place. You know what my brother Ralph did? He'd wait for the second show and they were going out the door over there, he'd sneak in there, come in on the second show. [laughter] I think it was only about fifteen cents admission.

Q: Who ran it?

HM: Rummel I think his name is.

FH: Rummel owned the building.

HM: Yeah, he ran it. You see these names come pretty fast.

Q: What kind of shows?

HM: Oh my God, they'd play some jokes like that. They had a player piano in and the music never corresponded with the picture at all, it was just music. It was a lotta noise.

Q: So they were silent films?

HM: Well, there's one picture I can remember very very clear what they had. The name of the picture was *If Winter Comes, Can Spring be far Behind?*

Q: Was the name of the movie?

HM: Yeah. How about that huh? If I wait a little while sometimes some of those things come to me. I'm psychic to a certain extent. Not long ago we were watching, while my wife was still living, we were watching *Grand Ole Opry* and they had a trivia question on there and if you could answer the question you could get a pair of boots. I didn't have the telephone number. They said, "What is Dolly Parton's middle name?" Do you have any idea? I didn't know her middle name anymore

than I would know yours or yours. I says to my wife, I said, "What is Dolly Parton's middle name?" and she said, "I don't know." And the minute she said that, I said, Rebecca. She looked at me and said, "Where'd you get that?" and it was right! The following week they had another trivia question on there, "Who was the only president that sang in the Grand Ole Opry?" I said to her, "Who sang in the Grand Ole Opry? She said, "Truman!" I said, "No, Nixon!" Just as she said Truman I said Nixon and it was right. I didn't know that either. I do that every now and then, and I'd like to know how I could do it when I want to do it, but I can't. You know my voice carries, like mad. I don't need a mic. Really if I get any place. My wife always told me that too. She said, "Your voice really carries."

FH: In your younger years what did you do mostly?

HM: Well, when the box factory came to Morton Grove—

FH: Which one was that?

HM: On Lincoln Avenue where the pickle factory used to be over there.

Q: Where's that? You've got to tell me, I'm a stranger.

HM: That's south of Dempster Street right off of Lincoln Avenue, back up by the railroad track. They had a place where they used to unload beer in there.

FH: A railroad sighting.

HM: A railroad sight and they unloaded beer in there at one time and then this box factory was in Evanston and they'd come, a vegetable grower supply company.

Q: I was gonna say it's south of the studio restaurant.

HM: Vegetable Grower Supply Company was named later on. Arnold was manager after a while in there. I went over there and I started nailing cabbage crates. My brother Ralph got a job in there and he was telling me about it, about how they needed someone nailing crates. So I went in and nailed crates. And these kids were nailing crates for \$2.20 a hundred. And they were making 240 crates a day, which was pretty good salary in those days. When a truck driver was getting \$32.50 a week for 9 hours a day, six days a week, and these kids were nailing crates... oh boy, this is gonna be good! I think I nailed 90 the first day and my fingers here looked like they went through a meat grinder or a chopper from missing the nails and hitting the fingernails instead. A rickety old bench I had, so I decided I was going to make my own bench, an angle iron chair. The headers were made in the winter. They were fourteen and a half inches by fifteen inches,

and I made my an angle iron down there and slats on each side, one by two, where the header just fit in, and then had three slats up here: 36 nails in the crate, 12 on each side, 36 in there. So I finally worked it down to a perfection you would say. I could nail 350 crates a day.

Q: You called it a box factory, but they really were making not cardboard boxes, but crates, wooden boxes for shipping produce in.

HM: They made for tomato boxes, lettuce boxes with a cover on top, and cabbage crates. One cabbage crate would fit in one like this, because fourteen and half, fifteen and a half, they would fit in, and three were in a bundle. I could nail 450 a day. In the afternoon I'd get on my bike and I was just a little ways there, go home for lunch, have an hour for dinner. In the afternoon I'd get all set. I could nail one crate every minute.

Q: How old were you at this point?

HM: About 17 or 18 years old. I could nail one every minute. I could hold thirteen nails in my finger like this—we had a chute and I could hold thirteen nails like that. One tap and one blow, turned it over and those slats later on were so accurate that you'd think they were measured. You get so used to it it's repetition. You get so used to it. I could practically nail with my eyes closed. I had it down to a science.

Q: You worked hard didn't you, as a child?

HM: I got so that they probably lowered the price to \$2 a hundred. Which they generally do on anything... So I think, well, I only nailed 345 a day. [laughter] Cut myself down again.

Q: Did you go to Jerusalem Lutheran School?

HM: No, I went to the public school on School Street.

Q: Morton Grove Public School.

FH: Did you get a chance to visit the building now that it was remodeled?

HM: Yeah I was in there. I had too much work piled on me when I was a kid. I got to the point. I was a very good student when I first went to school. I excelled in everything when I first started at school. I had a teacher on Waukegan Road, her name was Mrs. Bixby. She was a beautiful, wonderful teacher.

Q: When you say on Waukegan Road, is that where you went to school?

HM: When I first started over there—

Q: At Waukegan and Church?

HM: Yeah, when I first started over there.

Q: Then did you go over to the Morton Grove school in town?

HM: Yeah. Mrs. Bixby had a wonderful personality. She was good. And we had spelling classes at the head of the room, practically every day. You have eight grades in one room and probably two kids in one grade and probably one in another. When there was a graduation, if you had three it was big, or four. That was a big deal! [laughter] I know Joe Gottle went to school up there and some of the other ones over there. They'd go out there and get one of those field mice and put it in the teacher's desk. [laughter]

FH: My aunt told me there used to be a lot of snakes in that area.

HM: Yeah, right on there where Fred Fuer built that big house right on Crain Street there was a lotta snakes in there.

Q: What big house on Crain Street, where on Crain?

HM: Between School Street and Georgiana.

Q: Is that house still there?

FH: Yes.

HM: Great big two-story. Fred Fuer built that house over there.

FH: He owned the Morton Grove Lumber Yard.

Q: How many children were in your family?

HM: Nine.

Q: Where were you in the nine?

HM: Let's start, my brother Carl was born 1898. Now this is gonna be odd when we get all through 'em. My brother Paul, he was born the day after Christmas. My brother Paul was born the year 1900, February the 17th. Elmer was the next one, he was born in July the 9th, 1902. Benny was born August the 30th, 1902. And Ralph was born in July the 15th, 1903. And I was born November 4th, 1904. And

Della was born November 1st, 1906. And Esther was born, March the 13th, 1910.
And Mabel was born February the 20th, 1911. So my mother was pregnant practically for six or seven years, or practically all her life.

Q: The girls at the end. Was it mostly boys at the beginning?

HM: Six boys in a row.

Q: And then three girls in a row.

HM: Yeah. So we say from '98 to 1904, she was pregnant all those years. My mother had a pretty hard life at that, coming to think of it. I didn't realize that 'til sometimes later on in life. You get a little more sense I guess, I hope. But then from 1906 to 1907 there was a rest period for her. See Mabel and Esther were only eleven months apart. And Ralph and Benny were only 11 months apart. And Ralph and I were 15 months apart, so we were all really close together. My father worked for Poehlmann brothers 'til he died. I'm still inclined to believe that my father was murdered.

Q: What?!

HM: Yeah, I had that feeling. My father accrued a few enemies and—

TAPE STOPPED AND RESTARTED

HM: It may be the truth, there's no way to prove that. My father did do quite a bit of drinking and he did get in fights and all this and that which I was told. You can't tell me that anybody could walk from Morton Grove through Niles Center up through Tessville to the drainage canal, you know where that is? How many miles is that, three?

FH: Oh it's more than that. I'd say it's five.

HM: You mean to tell me a man can walk that far and still be drunk? It's impossible. They found my father in the drainage canal. Downtown towards the city of Chicago someplace, he was drowned. They could have knocked him on the head and threw him in there. They didn't find him 'til long after they could do the autopsy. They couldn't find it because on account of the body was starting to decompose. So I still believe that he was murdered.

Q: How old were you when this happened?

HM: I was about eleven and a half years old. I remember that distinctly I was about eleven and a half years old. And there were nine of us kids at home. Carl worked

at the greenhouse and Paul worked over on the south side and he had a great big abscess on his leg like this here. Dr. Drostenfels cut that and he didn't do a very good job. They should have taken him to the hospital at that time, and he probably wouldn't have had that. Paul was short when this happened. He was about sixteen years old when he worked there when that happened. He was not much taller than you, maybe 5'6" or something like that. And he didn't grow 'til he was about 17 or 18 and he got to be over six foot. And that's why this leg didn't grow and he had to stand on his toes like this in order to walk, and he still walked with a limp. Dr. Drostenfels also caused Harvey Brooks to have a stiff leg. That's where Harvey Brooks got that. What the operation was I don't know.

Q: Bernice Yehl had a short leg too didn't she?

HM: But he was a good baby doctor. But he didn't deliver any of us kids. I'm trying to figure out the midwife that was in Skokie, Niles Center.... It's the old building in Skokie right next to where the mercantile was down there. Just off of where the funeral home is at, that big two-story building right alongside.

FH: That wouldn't be Dr. Klem...

HM: No, it was the midwife that delivered us. I know Dr. Klem where their place was over there. No, this was a midwife that delivered all of us.

Q: If you're talking about Haben's Funeral Home. The building next door to it was a meat market at one time. But there were apartments upstairs.

HM: They had a big sign out in front for "Midwife". She's the one that delivered all of us. I'm trying to figure out... Metzger, I think her name was. I got it on my birth certificate. My birth certificate is wrong.

Q: How is your birth certificate wrong?

HM: Well, the fact is that it stated my mother was 32 years old when I was born and my father was 47. That can't be right. My father was born in '66 and I figured it all out—that can't be right. There's a mistake there someplace along. That the midwife probably made a mistake on the age. But all births had to be registered in Cook County way back when. It was the midwife or whoever it was. If you didn't, there was a jail sentence and a fine if it wasn't recorded. I have it at home and I think her name was Metzger or something like that, I'm not quite sure. The writing isn't very good.

Q: You talked about meeting your wife. Had you met her here in Morton Grove or did you meet her on the west coast?

HM: My first wife was born in Racine, Wisconsin. A Danish family, there was no mixture in the family at all. Her mother came over from Denmark by herself and her husband-to-be followed her here. I guess she was in love or something. He followed her here and they got married here.

Q: What was your wife's name?

HM: Viola Olivia Amanda.

Q: Where did you meet her?

HM: I met her at a doing someplace with some friends. Chemistry or whatever you want to call it—

Q: Where? Where was this doing?

HM: On the north side of the city of Chicago. And then we got married and she studied to be a beautician. And then when the war came I went into the service. I was 37 years old when I went into the service. She went down on the north side and took a course at Precision Inspection. The man said, "It's going to take you eight weeks to finish that course." She said, "I'll finish that in two weeks." She talked him into it. She says, "My husband went into the service and I'm gonna..."

We had doorbells. She said I'll put paper or something in there so it won't ring and they won't know whether I'm home or not. I'll finish that in two weeks, and she did. And the guy was amazed that she could do that in two weeks. When she made up her mind to do it and she wanted to do it, she did. She told me after I got out of the service they had some relays there that were the government inspector rejected. They were no good. And when the government inspector left, the boss says, "Put your stamp on there." She said, "No, I'm not putting my stamp on there." He said, "We've got to get so many out." She said, "I don't care, my stamp's not gonna go on there." She's the only one who wouldn't put a stamp on there: "Put yours on there not mine." Why put a stamp on there if that relay is no good. That boy up at the plane is relying on that relay for a bomb, a flare, or whatever he has to have, and it don't work. She said, "Why don't we just send a bag of potato sacks, have them drop those." I said stick to your guns, don't let 'em corrupt ya. They couldn't do anything about it because she was in her rights.

Q: Where were you in the service?

HM: Camp Livingston, Louisiana. I went to Camp Roberts, California, then I went to Camp Livingston, Louisiana. I never was so sorry in all my life to be in a place as Louisiana. I figured if I ever got out of there, I'd never go back to Louisiana.

Q: That's why you went up to God's country right?

HM: Well, not only that. All these pictures you were showing last night about the Stanton Hall. They didn't show Oak Farm down there. They showed Fort Lake. And Stanton Hall, he had his big home there and he built another big home for his wife. I been all through all those places down there.

Q: So have I. The same week as those movies were made last night, same week.

HM: What do you mean?

Q: We were in Natchez, Mississippi, my husband and I, exactly Easter week, the same week that they filmed that program last night. So I saw all those, Rosalie, Stanton Hall, and the burn.

HM: Well, Stanton Hall, when you were on the inside of it, this whole wall was mirrored and the other wall was all mirrored. You could stand on the inside, you would go in to look in it.... [laughter]

Q: So you agreed to never go back to Louisiana, and I agree with you. I hate hot muggy weather.

HM: I did too. I never suffered so much in my life as I did in Camp Lousy-ana, I called it.

Q: When did you move to the west coast?

HM: '49, after my mother passed away. We went down through the southern states. We went through the Okefenokee Swamps. You've been there?

FH: Yeah.

HM: You know the Okefenokee Swamps, they cut paths through there. They got the cypress out of there 'til the federal government stopped it. And when you go in there on a boat it's all marked, because when you get in there with a boat, you could get lost and you're never going to get out of there.

And we toured Stone Mountain, Georgia. Have you been to Stone Mountain, Georgia? Isn't that something? That Stone Mountain, Georgia, that solid granite. I always miss one of the fellows out there when I say it: Jefferson Davis, Stonewall Jackson, Lee, who was the other guy? I can't remember that fourth one. I always miss one! It's amazing. I've seen Mount Rushmore, but this puts Mount Rushmore to shame, this one down there.

Q: But it's a different kind of carving.

HM: Yeah, it's solid granite. It started in '23, did you know that?

Q: No I didn't.

HM: And finished about 1970. The last time they used laser beams in there to break up the granite. The man standing in back of the horse is as tall as a nine-story building and you could drive an automobile around on the horse's back. A man could stand in the horse's mouth. Then we toured the New England states, the White Mountains of New Hampshire. You ever been up there? Oh, it gets cold up there too in the winter. Four boiler rooms in that great big place.

Q: What's the weather like in Spokane?

HM: Well, not much different than the weather here. We get between fourteen and seventeen inches of rainfall. And the snowfall varies. I think the first winter I was in Spokane we had 42 inches of snow on the ground all winter.

Q: What year was that?

HM: 1968, '69. I've been retired 23 years. It was right after I retired. I moved from Beaverton, Oregon to Spokane, because my second wife's children were up

there. My first wife died with lymphatic leukemia when she was 46. I had about 18 months of it. Not only that, I fell and broke my ankle on both sides and dislocated it, so I was laying up at the same time she was. I didn't have all the insurance with me I was supposed to have at that time. My cash flow, there wasn't any. [laughter] I had property, I had the beauty shop, and I had the home where I was at. I had some property down in Phoenix, Oregon, but people would say, "Where's Phoenix, Oregon?" It's not all the time in Arizona; it's in Oregon too.

Q: I didn't know that.

HM: It's between Ashland and Medford.

Q: Oh I've been in Ashland and Medford.

HM: And then you've got Phoenix in there, you got Calumet there, another little town.

Q: Ashland is where you have the Shakespeare Fest.

HM: Oh yeah that's right. And then they got Lithia Springs down there. The water is supposed to be very good, but you know you can't take that water home and

refrigerate it? It's no good after that. It's not poison or anything, but the water after there is no good.

Q: Well, does Spokane get as hot and muggy as it gets here?

HM: No, we don't get humidity. We don't get any humidity at all. But our weather, if we get 90 degrees it may, on one or two rare occasion might get 100, but very subtle. But anytime you're in Spokane, when the sun goes down in the evening, like this time of the year it gets cool and it's always gonna be cool.

TAPE STOPPED AND RESTARTED

Q: When you were a child and you lived in Morton Grove, where did you live? Where was your home? Or did you live in several?

HM: Nope. Dempster Street was the first one.

Q: Where on Dempster?

HM: At the foot of Narragansett, right across—

Q: Oh, that's right. That was your mother's home?

HM: Yeah. The house where my mother was born, all of us kids were born in that house, all nine of us. Then about '28 or '29, after it was sold to the forest preserve, I think it was about \$5,500 my mother got for that house.

FH: Do you remember when the county bought most of that property for the forest preserve?

HM: Yeah that was after World War I. That should date about 1920, something like that I believe. Landwehr, something like that, in Skokie, he was a real estate man. He was buying this for the forest preserve. He was being paid for the forest preserve and later on found out that he charged my mother a commission for that, for selling that house.

FH: What did most of that property sell for in dollars and cents when the forest preserve bought it?

HM: We got \$5,500 for that little house and that out there. I don't know just what it sold for, but the lots on School Street were \$500. My mother bought those about 1916 or '17 something like that. And then we built the new house about '28 I believe it was.

FH: Who built that for you?

HM: A fellow by the name of Borge.

Q: And where was it?

HM: School Street and Crain.

FH: That was a nice house.

HM: It was a six-room brick bungalow.

FH: I guess you'd almost call it Chicago-type bungalow.

HM: Yeah it was.

Q: A Chicago-type bungalow, usually you go in and the living room is sort of behind you. You don't have to walk through the living room to get to the—

HM: You walked in the front door and there was a hall and then there was a door that went into the bedroom and then there was the French doors that went into the dining room. The living room was up in front.

Q: Yes, that's a Chicago bungalow.

HM: Then there was another hallway, one went to the attic, one went to the basement, one led to the bathroom and one went this way to the bedroom that way and the other went to the bathroom this way. Then you went to the kitchen and then there was a bedroom back in the back over there. There was three bedrooms and then the back porch and a full basement.

Q: It sounds like a beautiful home.

HM: It was at the time. All glass doorknobs, which was the style then. But I think the house cost \$9,000. A lot of people say, "How did your mother build a \$9,000 house? And they had all nine kids." Well, I gave all my money home 'til later on when I paid \$20 a week board and room, which was pretty good price. I caddied on the golf course after I sold the paper route. I didn't get to school 'til in October sometime. And I used to bring home carrying doubles, 36 holes and more.

FH: What golf course?

HM: Glenview Country Club. That was the only good one around there. I used to bring home as high as \$70 in those days when I was a kid. I'd give everything to my

mother, tips and all. I never held anything back and we got paid cash. If we had a little piece left over we raised vegetables and stuff. And Willkie had a farm up north there across from the Geweckes. He'd bring on 30 bags of potatoes we'd put down in the root cellar we had down there for the winter.

Q: You said Willkie. That's an easy name, but who did you say next to that?

HM: Geweke. He was the pickle king out there. He raised a lot of pickles.

Q: How would you spell it?

HM: G-E-W-E-C-K-E. What a memory.

Q: That was the fellow over at Harlem and Dempster? Further west?

HM: Yeah, yeah farther west.

Q: I think Sylvia Engel mentioned him.

FH: Yeah, they're related to him.

TAPE STOPPED AND RESTARTED

Q: I'm ready when you are.

HM: What is meant by this word hell?

Sometimes they say it's cold as hell,
And sometimes they say it's hot as hell.
And when it rains hard it's hell they cry,
It's also hell when it's dry

They hate like hell to see the snow,
And it's a hell of a wind when it starts to blow.
Now how in the hell can anyone tell,
What in the hell is meant by this word hell.

This married life is hell they say,
And when you come in late it's hell to pay.
It's hell when the kid you have to tote,
And when he starts to yell it's a hell of a note.

It's hell when the doctor sends his bill,
For a hell of a lot of trips and pills.
When you get this way you will know real well,

Just what is meant by this word hell.

Hell yes, hell no, the hell you do, the hell with you, the hell with this

But the hell of it is we don't know what in the hell is hell.

TAPE STOPPED AND RESTARTED

FH: One thing we didn't ask you about, whether you knew about the old hobo camp in Morton Grove.

HM: There wasn't any hobo camps in Morton Grove like they talk about. I never saw any.

FH: Like over by the....

HM: They'd sleep in the railroad cars up along the little hill up on Church Street on the siding, but there was no... Back of Poehlmann Brothers they had some old shanties back there. They lived in there, some shanties. I know Jack Clark... Clarkinon?

FH: Clarkens.

HM: Clark? Clarkens, whatever it was, he went and burned one of 'em down!

Q: What was that name?

FH: Clarkens.

Q: All right, thank you!