

Narrator: Mildred Orphan  
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Place of Interview: Narrator's home, located at  
8922 Mango, Morton Grove  
Interviewer: Denise Rossmann Christopoulos  
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## INTRODUCTION

Mildred Orphan came to Morton Grove in 1923 to sing with Coon Sander's Orchestra (the Kansas City Nighthawks) at the Lincoln Tavern. Shortly thereafter, Mildred met and married her husband, "Murph". They decided to go into the restaurant business that same year and opened Murphy's Steak House located at Dempster and Austin Avenues. Murphy's Steak House was a prominent restaurant in Morton Grove and was in operation for 41 years.

Mildred talks about many aspects of this restaurant business including the noteworthy clientele, the décor and the menu. The interview also includes many fine recollections of Morton Grove by Mildred since she has lived in town for 60 years.

MO: Mildred Orphan

Q: Question asked by interviewer, Denise Rossmann Christopoulos

TAPE ONE, SIDE A

Q: We'll start at the top of my outline, and we'll begin with the biographical data. If you can tell me what your grandparents' names were -- their first and last names?

MO: Well, my father's father's name was John Frederick Hugg. He was born in Baden-Baden, Germany, and his mother, her name was Mary Louise Barth, and she was born in Quincy, Illinois. My mother's parents -- her mother was born in this country, but her father was from Manchester and Derby, England.

Q: Did they come over to the United States?

MO: The men did, yes, but not the women. The women were born here.

Q: I see. Do you have any idea what year they came over here?

MO: Oh, no, I don't.

Q: The 1800s?

MO: Hundred and fifty years ago, I would say. (chuckles)

Q: How about your parents' names?

MO: My father's name was Robert George Hugg.

Q: And your mother's name?

MO: Her name was Mattie Blanche Davies.

Q: What did your parents do for an occupation? Did your mother work?

MO: My mother didn't work, no. But my father was a druggist. In fact, he put in the drugstore at the Northwestern depot. He installed that drugstore. Yes, he did! When the new Northwestern depot went in.

Q: How long did he own the drugstore?

MO: Oh, he was in and out of the drug business for many, many years.

Q: Do you remember going in that store as a child?

MO: Oh, yes.

Q: And how about sisters and brothers?

MO: I haven't any.

Q: What is your birthdate?

MO: April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1898.

Q: And you were born . . . ?

MO: In Chicago.

Q: Where did you first live?

MO: On the old West Side.

Q: What do you remember about the neighborhood? How long did you live there?

MO: Oh, many years. I attended Skinner School, and then I went to McKinley High School which was also attended by Walt Disney.

Q: Who was the other person you told me you had gone to school with?

MO: George B. Petty (?), the artist.

Q: What do you remember about your early home?

MO: Oh, it was a very lovely home. We had gas and a bathroom, of course. We had a nice home.

Q: Did you play the piano?

MO: Oh, yes. I studied music all my life.

Q: Even when you got into high school?

MO: Oh, yes. That's what I took up in high school was music and domestic arts and things like that. Flunked beautifully in some of it. (laughter)

Q: What year did you come out to this area?

MO: I came out here in the spring of 1923 to sing with Coon Sanders Orchestra [the Kansas City Nighthawks] at the beautiful Lincoln Tavern, which was one of the most beautiful night spots in this part of the country.

Q: How old were you then?

MO: Well, I had to be about 25. I was born in '98 -- I had to be.

Q: how did you get the appointment to sing with him?

MO: Oh, I had sung with big bands all over. I had been in show business, see? After I left high school, I was in vaudeville and in musicals all over the country. So I was a seasoned performer.

Q: What type of songs did you sing?

MO: Musical comedy and heavy songs. I was a coloratura soprano.

Q: So you came out here in 1923 by yourself?

MO: Yes, to sing with the orchestra.

Q: And where did you live at that time?

MO: In Chicago.

Q: Oh, you commuted back and forth?

MO: Yes.

Q: When did you come out here to live?

MO: Oh, I met my husband and a few weeks later we were married.

Q: When did you meet him? While you were singing at the Lincoln Tavern?

MO: I met him on the fifteenth of May and I married him on the fourth of June. And I moved out here and I was married 50 years when he died. Which goes to show you -- you never know until you live with them! (laughter)

Q: How did you meet him? Is there any funny story behind it?

MO: No, he had a little restaurant near the Lincoln Tavern, and he used to come over there and watch the show. And he knew the manager and the owner of the Lincoln Tavern. And they introduced me and that was it. He just said, "I'm going to marry that girl," and he did.

Q: What was your husband's full name?

MO: Angel Orphan.

Q: And he was just working in the restaurant at the time?

MO: No, he had his own restaurant -- a small barbecue. So then I didn't like being a barbecue owner's wife, so we went into the restaurant business. I said, "That's enough of that," so we turned the barbecue into a restaurant.

Q: What year was that?

MO: 1923. Started right in working. (laughs)

Q: What was the name of your restaurant?

MO: Murphy's Steak House.

Q: Where was it located?

MO: At Dempster and Austin.

Q: Could you tell me about the physical description of Murphy's Steak House -- the inside and outside?

MO: Yes. It was an old white farmhouse. We lived there originally; that was where we lived. And the little barbecue stand burned down, and I said to Dad [her husband], "Well, Dempster Street is a coming street. Let's make a restaurant out of this place." It was a beautiful white farmhouse.

And so I said, "All right, we'll find another place to live, and we'll remodel this and make a restaurant out of it." And that's what we did. And we added a wing on, then we added another wing on, then we added another room on the back, then we enlarged the kitchen. Until we got a pretty good-sized place. Finally it seated about 175 people.

Q: Did you do any of the cooking yourself?

MO: Oh, Lord! I did it all for five years until I almost died. Yes.

Q: Oh, incredible.

MO: Sure. I started the restaurant.

Q: And then how long did you own the restaurant from that point on?

MO: Forty-one years.

Q: So it was a major spot in Morton Grove at that time?

MO: Oh, that it sure was. The finest restaurant out here.

Q: Do you remember any interesting stories around the time you owned the Steak House?

MO: We had the finest clientele that anyone ever had.

Q: Mainly from Chicago?

MO: Yes. We had governors, mayors, senators, judges . . .

Q: Anyone in particular you remember?

MO: Oh, yes, any number of them. Governor Green. Will Harrage (?), president of the American League baseball club. Any number of them. Curly Brooks. Any number of judges. Jacob Arvey. Mayor Daley. Oh, yes. We had the finest clientele of anyone on the North Shore.

Q: Fantastic. What was the color scheme on the inside? How did you have it decorated?

MO: Like an old farmhouse. Just venetian blinds at the window and drapes. That's all. Plain white tablecloths. Just a home atmosphere. Nothing elegant at all, but good food. That was it.

Q: What were the prices for the meals? Do you remember?

MO: The prices? Dollar and a half, two dollars. (laughs)

Q: Was your specialty steak, then?

MO: Steak and chicken. Then we added roast beef. Then we added lamb chops and pork chops and all those things.

Q: Last time I was here, you mentioned about the chickens that you had there at the time.

MO: Oh, yes, when I lived there, I raised chickens.

Q: You said you had almost 200 of them.

MO: Yes, I did. We would (makes cutting sound) kill them. And I would have company and my mother would get some and the whole family would get some, you know.

Q: How about church? You mentioned you had gone to St. Martha's.

MO: Well, we never were great church goers. Always did our part. Always helped them financially or materially -- whatever they needed, but we never . . .

Q: You also said something about putting in the fixtures in the convent?

MO: Well, I helped them when they started the convent a little bit, yes. But I never bragged about it.

Q: How about other entertainment and recreation in Morton Grove?

MO: Oh, we used to go skating down the river. Ice skating with a croup on Sunday. And we used to go horseback riding from Mrs. Haupt's, next door to where the Legion is now. She had a stable there and we used to get horses from there. And they had dances galore out here. The fire department, the police department, the Masons.

Q: Where were most of them held?

MO: All in Dilg's Hall, which was a mortal sin when that building got torn down!

Q: Yes, I agree.

MO: That's -- oh, that was terrible. That was a landmark and a magnificent structure. Magnificent.

Q: It was. It was beautiful.

MO: It was beautiful. Yes, it was. It's a shame that it had to go.

Q: What did they do for music? Where would they get the bands?

MO: I suppose they'd call a booking agent or sometimes it was local. Most everybody played some instrument, then different groups would get together. But they used to give dances up there, and, oh, they were beautiful.

Q: I heard the hall up there was just beautiful.

MO: Oh, it was. It was a beautiful place.

Q: How about picnics in town here?

MO: Oh, they had picnics all over every Sunday.

Q: Do you remember the dedication of the monument in town?

MO: No, I don't. I think that was before my time.

Q: How about the different parades and picnics?

MO: Oh, I never missed one! Never missed one in my life! (laughs)

Q: Were you ever involved in any of the committees or working at a booth?

MO: No. I always had to work in the restaurant. (laughs) I always had to work.

Q: How about movies? Was there a local movie theater?

MO: Not here. No. There was one in Skokie. That's the only one around here.

Q: How much was it when you would go?

MO: I think about fifteen cents.

Q: How about sports -- a baseball team?

MO: I don't know. I guess they must have had a high school baseball team. I know my son played on the football team at Niles Township.

Q: What other local taverns and restaurants were there at the time that you owned Murphy's Steak House -- down Dempster mainly?

MO: Well, there was The Studio -- that was Mueller's (?). they were out here about the same time as we were. And, I don't know about Dempster Street -- Vosnos was up on the corner there of Dempster and Waukegan. And there were quite a few of them. Good restaurants. They all served good food, too.

You see, this was out -- this was in the country in those days. And people would swarm out here on Sunday and the restaurants did tremendous business. Dollar and a half, two dollars -- how could you go wrong? And they all served good food -- every one of them. German cooking, some of them, you know. And there was quite a few on Waukegan Road. There was -- Dilg's were up there and quite a few of them are around.

Q: Was this a hot spot for people from Chicago?

MO: Yes! Yes, this was sort of a melting pot.

Q: I know during Prohibition a lot of the roadhouses . . .

MO: Oh, yes. Most everyone did a little cheating on the side. Most every restaurant out here. Hoping they didn't get caught. (laughter)

Q: What were the social events on the volunteer fire department put on like? Did they sell tickets?

MO: They'd sell tickets for their uniforms. See, we must have been about 37 taverns around here. And they went to each one, and each one would take ten tickets or something. They were fine. They were in better shape then they are now, I imagine. (laughs) And they had beautiful uniforms, and they were on the job, believe me. Those fellows -- you'd blow that whistle and they were there. Night or day. They had a wonderful fire department out here -- always did have. That whistle'd blow, and everybody would get up and follow the truck. (laughs) They'd follow it, and then they had to pass a law that you couldn't follow the fire truck. It got too many, you know. They started building around here, and then they just had to put a stop to it.

Q: So it was mainly farm land in the area?

MO: Oh, yes, yes.

Q: The two main streets were Dempster and Lincoln?

MO: And Ferris Avenue. Those were the three paved streets. Outside of that, there was nothing paved, no sidewalks, no curbing, no nothing. An arc light at each block. That's all.

Q: Did you have a car at this time?

MO: Not at first, but about the second year or so -- about 1925 I did. Herb Dilg had the Studebaker agency out here. You see his brother married Mr. orphan and me.

Q: Irv, yes. Tell that story.

MO: Well, Irwin was police magistrate and had never performed a marriage ceremony until my Dad, my husband, said, "Irwin is going to marry us." And so, that was it. So Irwin had to read it out of the book. And we were his first marriage, and we remained friends all these years. And so, of course, then we became very friendly with the Dilg family. We still are. Well, that's where Herb and Elsie live, you know. Where he is now. That little white house on the corner. That's where Herb and Elsie lived when he first became mayor. And then they built that house, the yellow house, on Callie, across from the police station. You know that big yellow house?

Q: Oh, yes. During that time, communication, was . . .

MO: Was mostly word-of-mouth. Everybody knew everybody else. Everybody was a friend of somebody's, or a relative or a cousin. The population was only 1,898 when I came out here. That was the population of Morton Grove when I came out here in '23.

Q: And if you weren't related, you were good friends. (laughs)

MO: You were good friends, yes.

Q: Did you have a telephone?

MO: Oh, yes, we had one of those coin phones on the wall. And the telephone office was on Ferris Avenue. One of those little old shacks alongside of Dilg's building there. One of those old frame houses. And the operators had to sleep there. They'd work 24-hour shifts. They had a cot there and they'd get a call in the middle of the night. They had to wake up (laughter) and answer the phone and get your number for you.

Q: And they had to relay the message?

MO: Yes.

Q: What do you remember about the airport in Morton Grove?

MO: Oh, that was something.

Q: Where was that located?

MO: That was across from Val's Restaurant. The boys used to have their planes there -- "one lungers." And they'd go up from there. And Charles Lindbergh flew from out here, too.

Q: You were saying something about Dick Boettcher last time I was here -- where he kept his place.

MO: Well, Dick Boettcher kept his plane then in a hanger on Austin and Crain Street. They'd run down Dempster Street with the plane and turn the corner and into the hanger. Sure. Some of them left them on the field all night. Nobody touched anything. I never had a key for the front door. As long as I lived there, I never had a key for the door. We never had any trouble. We had one policeman -- old man, used to be crossing guard at the school.

Q: What was his name?

MO: Henry Hylleberg. Little old fat fellow. He'd go along with his cane, or his nightstick and rattle on the fences. And he'd stand and watch the kids cross the street. "Come on. That one's going." You'd want him in the night, you'd have to go, call up, get him out of bed. But nothing ever happened.

Q: Did you ever go up in any of the planes?

MO: Oh, goodness sake! Did I! Loop-the-loop.

Q: Oh, no, you didn't! (laughs)

MO: Oh, yes, I did! Oh, yes I did!

Q: Did you ever get sick?

MO: No. I was a friend of Vita Schumacher's (?), the woman flyer at that time. And I wanted to learn to fly, to be like Vita. (laughs) And I wanted it in the worst way, but, of course, I was forbidden to do it, so I didn't do it. (laughter) Yes, but we went flying off every chance we'd get.

Q: Did a lot of people go over there just to watch the places take off?

MO: Yes, just to watch them take off and come down. I remember the first Milwaukee train that came down the, what was it called? The Zephyr?

Q: The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul?

MO: The one that went so fast, you remember? The people used to come out -- oh, it was lined up for miles. It would have to be the Hiawatha, didn't it? Well, anyway, they used to come and they'd put pennies on the track. And the train would smash them. They'd keep the pennies. From Dempster all the way up to Church Street they were lined up. All on either side of the track. That was quite a thing!

Q: Do you remember Poehlmann's over there?

MO: Oh, do!! They grew the finest roses in the world. The most beautiful. They used to have migrant workers just like anyplace else. And we never had any trouble with them. They'd finally get a dollar or so, and they'd go out and get a bottle of booze and go on back in the haystack and go to sleep, and get up and get another job tomorrow. There was no Social Security, no withholding tax, no

nothing in those days. No income tax to pay, so they just got work and get enough for a bottle of booze and go sleep it off. Nobody ever bothered anybody.

Q: I realize that a lot of people in town worked at Poehlmann's.

MO: Oh, yes. You see, there was a plant on Lincoln Avenue where Baxter's is and one by where Harrer Park is.

Q: When the Depression came, all these people were out of jobs. What were your feelings about that? Did it affect your business?

MO: Well, it didn't affect us too much because there's a certain element that's going out to eat. Whether or no. We always had to work anyway. Dad and I -- we were always in the restaurant. We had to work, so it didn't make any difference to us. We were still working. And we never had an abundance of help. We'd work with a minimum amount. And so we just got along as best we could.

Q: Did it have any other drastic effect on Morton Grove? The bank closed and . . .

MO: Oh, yes. Oh, and how!

Q: Were there a lot of your friends that (reference to the bank closing and the loss of money) . . .

MO: Yes, and us included! If we were late with a deposit, we'd go over and knock on the door. They'd come and they'd take our deposit anyway. There was (laughs) no

system or nothing out here. And it was a friendly -- holler, "Hey, Ernest.

Here! Would you take this?" And Ernest Kluse (?) was his name; he served time, which he should have.

Q: What was that all about?

MO: Well, anyway, they knew they were going to close. They were way overdrawn or whatever it was. And I went over with a deposit. They knew they were closed. And he opens the door and took my nice fat deposit. Knowing that they were not going to open any more, which he should not have done, and we were out -- there was no chance of getting it back. So anyway the bank closed. That was too bad. And then Walter G. Poehlmann (?) and Rollie Dilg started a currency exchange there. And insurance business where the administration building is now. And they sold change. Instead of running all the way over to Skokie, they'd charge you a nickel a roll for nickels and a dime for dimes and a quarter for quarters. That's the way they did it. And you could go over there and get your change. You didn't have to run all the way to -- a lot of restaurant owners didn't have cars. Then it started building up around here, and people needed the change and they had it. There was a big safe over there, you know, because the bank was still intact the way it was when it closed. And so that's how Rollie got started in the bank.

Q: When the Second World War came around, were any family members involved?

MO: Oh, yes. My son was in law school. The day after Pearl Harbor, he went down and enlisted in the United States Marines. He was assigned to the Second Marine

Division, and in three weeks he was on his way to San Diego. And eventually he was sent overseas to the South Pacific. He was in the Battle of Tarawa. And he was gone for over two years in the Pacific. And he came back. After the war he was dismissed, and he finished his law career in record time and opened up his law practice up here. He served as Village Treasurer for four years and Village Attorney for ten years. And he's still out here after practicing law for 31 years.

Q: Was he married after or before he went to the war?

MO: No, he was married after the war. After the war. A very, very beautiful girl. Very lovely girl. They have three children, three sons.

Q: And what are their names?

MO: Ronald, Robert and Raymond.

Q: Do you remember any particular reaction of the German-American community here toward the war?

MO: Oh, yes, you'd hear stories. You don't know how true it is. They said there was a lot of Nazis out here and all this, that, and the other. But whether there was or not, how do you know? But they said this one was investigated, and this one had their wire tapped and all. But I suppose there was some pro-German out here. Like everywhere else. Yes, they said this was a real pro-German town. But, how do you know?

Q: Were you ever involved in the American Legion?

MO: Oh, yes. I was president in 1953.

Q: What type of affairs at that time did the Legion carry on?

MO: Oh, we had dances. Occasionally, we'd have a dinner. I believe they did start fish fries around that time -- those Friday nights.

Q: Did you and your husband travel much?

MO: Oh, yes. Not for long years. We were quite older people. We decided we better start slowing down a little bit. Then we'd go to Florida for a month in the winter and kind of rest up, and then come back and start in work again. (laughs) Always working! Then he had a stroke and that was the last of it. So then I couldn't carry on alone and take care of him, so we -- Jimmy [her son] didn't want the business. He was an attorney. He had his own life to lead. So, I closed up the place and tore the building down. So that was it. That was the last of Murphy's Steak House.

Q: It was there a long time. It was like an institution almost, you know.

MO: Yes, it was. It was 41 years.

Q: What other recollections do you have of Morton Grove? Are there any stories of when you first came here to live?

MO: Everyone was friendly. It was like one big family. There weren't any snooty people. There was a certain group and they, oh, they'd have the different parties and things. And everyone was invited. There was no -- it wasn't like Democrats and Republicans and all. The trustees were a mixed group. They didn't go around stabbing you in the middle of the back. They were your friend whatever they were. And that's the way it was. Everyone was friendly and nice. No snooty people.

Q: When did you move here to your current home?

MO: I came here seven years ago. I sold the big house when Papa [her husband] got sick. And then he died five years ago.

Q: Would you like to elaborate a little bit more on your singing career? I think it's great that you started out that way. Didn't you say you sang with Guy Lombardo?

MO: Oh, yes. At the Dells.

Q: And how long was that engagement?

MO: Oh, that was just for free. We'd just go over there and they used to have their dinners at our place every night, and they knew I had been a singer. Every time we'd go over there, they'd get me up and sing the songs. I had been in vaudeville and had been in concert work before that.

Q: Do you remember any interesting stories from vaudeville? Where did you stay?

MO: Oh, always in hotels.

TAPE ONE, SIDE A ENDS

TAPE ONE, SIDE B

MO: . . . (conversation joined in progress about wages earned in vaudeville) . . .  
about \$75 a week was a lot of money, you know.

Q: And you got \$125.

MO: Yes. Oh, that was big stuff!

Q: What was Guy Lombardo like? Did you really get to talk to him?

MO: Oh, terrific gentleman! Terrific gentleman! So was Coon Sanders -- they had a  
beautiful orchestra, beautiful music.

Q: Was the Dells the most elite establishment where most of the band leaders and  
orchestras came?

MO: The Dells and the Lincoln Tavern were on a level, on a par. They were both  
elegant! You'll never see anything like it again, honey. Never.

Q: What did the Dells look like inside? Was it real ornate?

MO: Just beautifully done. Carpeted and tiers and tables and beautiful drapes. A beautiful lobby when you came in. and the ladies' room on one side and the gents over there (gesturing). And a, uh, what do you call it where you hang your clothes?

Q: A cloak room?

MO: Cloak room is what I'm trying to say.

Q: Who owned that at the time?

MO: Who owned it? Sam Hare. And it was just beautiful. You know they used to come out and they would line up their cars on Austin Avenue as far up as you could see and as close as you could see. We didn't have air conditioning then. The windows were open and they all opened out, and that beautiful music came out. They would sit there, car after car, and they'd listen to that music.

Q: Did they have food at the Dells, too?

MO: Oh, elegant food. Elegant food. Whew! Elegant. I imagine their dinners ran around three, three and a half. But ours was a dollar and a half and two dollars. You got a good dinner. (laughs)

Q: Did you ever have entertainment at any time?

MO: Never.

Q: Did you ever sing in your own restaurant? Did you ever consider it?

MO: No. Never. I was busy cleaning radishes and peeling potatoes. (laughter)  
Frying chickens and cleaning. In those days they didn't come eviscerated like they do now. You had to chop the heads off and chop the guts out and draw 'em. Holy smokes, yes!

Q: Quite a chore, huh?

MO: Yes. You clean a couple dozen of them a day, and you're doing something! And . . . (makes sound of distaste) . . .those guts smelled!

Q: What kind of conveniences did you have in the kitchen at that time?

MO: Oh, gas -- gas. Great big huge long range and then two big broilers where you could put about 20 steaks on at a time.

Q: Where did you get the name Murphy's?

MO: That was a nickname, honey. Dad had an impediment in his speech. And somebody said, "Gee, what kind of nationality are you? Chinese?" He says, "No, I'm Irish!" Out of a clear sky. And they said, "What's your name?" And he says, "Murphy." And that's how it stuck to him.

Q: Oh, and then you named the restaurant?

MO: Yes, sir. And they always called him Murphy.

Q: When you were first married, did you go on a honeymoon?

MO: No. we just started (laughs) to work! (laughter) I just started to work. I painted the building outside. The building was in a state of disreputable repair. It was dirty. I got myself a pair of overalls and five gallons of paint, and I went and painted it.

Q: It sounds like you were really a mover.

MO: I was, I was a worker. I was young and ambitious. And I wanted things nice and I wanted to get somewhere in the world and I did. And . . . I was glad. See, my mother didn't want me traveling on the road anymore. I wasn't home. My mother was getting older.

Q: Did you travel by yourself on the road?

MO: No, I was with an act. There was five or seven of us in the act. And we traveled all over. That was a hard life, too. You'd play a week here and a week there and a week someplace else. You'd be living out of a suitcase. It wasn't the most alluring thing that there was.

Q: Did you find it a lonely type of life?

MO: Yes, it was. Well, it was lonely at times. I was more of a homebody. I liked my home. I liked my mother's cooking. (laughs) I liked my own cooking, too. And so . . . it was exciting, though. I saw from one end of the country to the other.

Q: Were you in almost every state?

MO: Yes. I saw all the mints and all the art galleries and everything that the city was famous for. And we'd get up and we'd have rehearsal. Then we'd have two, three, four hours off, and we'd just go out and we'd see something and went out as far as Denver. Went up to Lookout Mountain -- saw Colonel Coty's grave and all those things.

Q: What was your first job?

MO: Oh, I answered an ad in the paper. (laughs)

Q: For a singer?

MO: Yes. This booking agent wanted singers. And I said, "I'm going to answer that ad." So my mother and I went down, and he took us to a music publisher. I sang a song, and he said, "Okay. I'll call you." And in a few days he called me and he said, "You start to work -- twenty-five dollars a week."

Q: And where was it? Where did you sing?

MO: At 63<sup>rd</sup> and Halstead Street.

Q: Was it a restaurant?

MO: Yes. Beautiful.

Q: Did you play the piano and sing?

MO: No, no, just sand. They had an orchestra. Twenty-five dollars a week, and out of that I had to pay five percent commission and my car fare every day. (laughs)  
Seven days a week. (laughs)

Q: So I can imagine what it came out to in the end?

MO: But I stayed there six months and then I left and I went downtown. I didn't like it. (disruption -- tape stopped and restarted; reviewing outline and notes)  
Here. Let's see here. And I had a nice home -- we had gas and a bathroom. And I was taught to cook. My mother said to me, "Mildred, we hope you'll never have to work. But you're going to learn how to do everything." You see, she was English. And I had to cook and keep my room clean when I was ten years old. And she said, "If I don't find your clothes hung up, I will put them on the floor and walk on them." That was the way she talked. She wasn't a loud speaker or anything. When she said (lowers voice), "Mildred, I want you to sit down," you just automatically sat down. There wasn't any argument about it. You just sat there until she'd tell you to get up. Beautiful woman, just beautiful.

Q: Your father was from Quincy?

MO: Yes.

Q: What made him come here?

MO: God only knows! I often wonder how the hell they ever got up this far. I don't know. My father came up here to go to pharmacy school. That's how he got up here. And my other uncle he was a dentist. He went to St. Louis. The other one was in the Navy, and my grandfather from Baden-Baden was in the Civil War. Bugler in the Civil War.

Q: Do you have any of his things?

MO: Oh, yes. Betty's [her daughter-in-law] got them. Betty's got them all.

Q: Were any stories passed down about this?

MO: Yes, I have a copy, but I've got to find it. All about him. He was injured in the Civil War. He was with the Missouri Cavalry. And a horse fell on him and broke his hip, injured his hip and he walked with a cane. I have the date; I think he died in 1902.

Q: Where's he buried?

MO: Quincy. I went down there. I told you I got all the dates and all.

Q: Do they have a special kind of a marker on the grave for being in the Civil War?

MO: Yes, an iron thing. And let's see here, what I got here. (Reviewing her interview outline notes again) I had a nice home. And I was taught to cook and sew. I went to Skinner School, McKinley High School, which was also attended by Walt Disney.

Q: Did you know him personally?

MO: I probably did, but I don't remember him. I studied music and we lived in a beautiful neighborhood. You know who lived in our neighborhood?

Q: Who?

MO: John M. Smythe furniture people.

Q: No kidding?

MO: Oh, sure. Hines Lumber Company lived around the corner from us. Shettler (?) Wagon. Remember they used to make big carriages? Shettler's (?).

Q: Everybody made it big from that neighborhood?

MO: Yes, they sure did. . . . I never missed a parade in Morton Grove. Went ice skating down the river with the ice man. Tango Jonas (?). Oh, gee, we used to have fun. I tell you, there was no discrimination. It was the ice man and the

carpenter and the, you know what I mean . . .or anybody else -- the barber, anybody. We were all just friends.

Q: Oh, that's great.

MO: We all used to go down the river -- Joe Gabel and all, a bunch of us.

Q: Were there ever any accidents down there?

MO: No.

Q: I would think it would be kind of dangerous.

MO: We'd fall down, they'd pick us up. (laughter) . . . I always helped the church. And I joined the American Legion -- World War II. I became president in 1953. We had no sidewalks, curbs, streets -- except Lincoln and Dempster and Ferris Avenue. Well, as I say, being a performer, you had to have things perfect. That's why you have rehearsals. Because the show has to be perfect. You have to time it and everything else.

Q: Do you sing any more at all?

MO: No. (pauses) No.

Q: Do you have a piano here?

MO: No. Sold my piano and everything else when I -- where would I put it here?

Q: Yes. What did you have?

MO: I had a full-size grand. My uncle [Dr. J. Louis Browne] was organist and choir master of St. Patrick's Church [located at Des Plaines and Adams Streets in Chicago] for years and years.

TAPE TWO, SIDE B ENDS