

Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Bunker

Taped August 12th, 1975

Mrs. Bunker is the niece of Artist Louis Cross

B: Andrew Bunker E: Ethel Bunker K: Ron Kuiper

E: It went both ways and the spiles held it here. When we were kids, we walked to school across there. And when the water was high, there'd be water at this end and water at this end and we'd have to take off our shoes and stockings and wade across. Or sometimes we even had a boat that we would go across there on. Because, you know, in the spring of the year when the water was high, the approaches weren't long enough to go as far as the water went up.

K: I see. So...so it was called a float bridge not because it had floating pontoons or something under it. It was just the wood of the bridge itself. And the spiles, therefore, only held it in place.

E: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. It kept it so that it would stay in place.

B: There's still that _____ out there, ain't it?

E: Ya. When you went out there with the boat, did you see over here on Ted Roger's, they are using that for a...

K: A sea wall?

E: Well, I think for launching boats. They did. They swung that around there and that's part of that original bridge.

K: I see.

E: If you go out there again, you can look and see. I...I think, the last I knew, it was there. Ted had it on his property there.

K: Now this...cars aren't using it at this point, are they?

E: Oh, no.

K: But they did before, didn't they?

B: Oh, yes.

E: Oh, yes. Uh-huh.

K: People drove automobiles over there, didn't they?

E: Oh yes. And the water would splash up in between these boards here and you'd go across there. Now us kids, when we'd walk to school-we lived at this end of it-my dad, and we'd start at this end and we'd

be stomping so we'd scare the black snakes off as we came over it. (laughs) There's another one of these passenger pigeons.

K: Do you know where that stuffed passenger pigeon is?

E: I'm not positive whether my cousin in Muskegon has that or not. Now she might have. Or it might be in a museum somewhere. Uh...yes. But my uncle, Uncle George in Muskegon, is the one that had it after Uncle Lou died. And he's got two daughters and I think it would be Ruth that would have it, if she still has it. Or she would know what has become of it. Now this is the one that is in the school. That's how they used to roost in the trees, as he told it. And they claim at the time of these passenger pigeons, it would just darken the sky. They used to knock them down with sticks and they would fill barrels with them and ship them to Chicago for food.

K: Mm-hmm. Now that's in Grand Haven High School?

E: That's in Grand Haven High School, uh-huh. I think it's in the High, or else the Junior. One of them had it anyway. And I'm sure that there's another one out at the Rod and Gun Club in Grand Haven. They got one in the club room.

K: George Kehoe will know about that, my neighbor.

E: Oh.

K: Now, this...is...was that farm in Crockery Township?

E: Yes. No. Yes, yes. Yes, he owned on both side of the road. 144th is your division between Spring Lake and Crockery. His house was in Crockery and he owned...he had a cherry orchard and cranberry marsh and one thing and another over in Spring Lake.

K: I see.

E: So it was between the two. We can go through this and you can...if you need any of these to, you know, that you could get something out of it; I'd lend them to you. But this was his brother Charles. He was the first judge of Muskegon Country.

K: Mm-hmm.

E: This was his brother George. He was a great guy for reading. He was prosecutor of Muskegon. This is the daughter that would have that picture.

K: Do you know...

E: Now that, I'm sure that his family-him or his family were the ones that bought that log jam picture.

K: Okay. Now I should write that down. I should write down what newspaper that was in because...that's December 2nd, 1955. Now that would be the Tribune. Ray Fisher wrote that article. He might know where that painting is.

E: That might be, too.

K: I know him. I'll write that down. And it was a foot b ridge when you used it.

E: No, when I went to school...no, they were driving over it and everything. That was...everything was going across there. But we had to walk to school. We didn't have school buses at that time, you know. (laughs)

K: No.

E: See here. The Rod and Gun Club gets pigeon painting.

K: Mm-hmm.

E: 6' x 10' canvas. See, he made these things so big you couldn't have them in your house. Last year, one of his paintings was given to the High School Junior Historical Society.

K: This was done in 1950 and he died in 1951. So that was the year before he died.

E: Mm-hmm. That's Judge _____, his brother. That's showing...well, this is the same one that's back there but this is another one of them that went to the school. I'll try to find everything in a minute. I should have kept this up. Here. No, this is a different one. This is Tom Trotter and Claus Vink. Those are both dead. Tom Trotter, is he still alive? He is, isn't he? Tom Trotter?

B: No. Ernie is.

E: Ernie Trotter is alive. Oh, Ernie might...but this was down here at Nortonville at the _____ lumber mill.

K: How old is Ernie Trotter?

E: Ernie Trotter? Oh, he's getting up to 90 or something. He lives just this side of the...uh...uh...oh, the Presbyterian Church on 104 there.

K: I wonder if he would know anything about the lumbering period.

E: Oh, I think he would.

K: I'll write his name down.

E: Oh, I think he would. He's old but his mind is alright, as far as I know. Tom Trotter...or, no, it's Ernie. This one is dead.

K: Well, he would live on Savidge?

E: On Savidge, the first house this side of the Presbyterian Church.

K: Mm-hmm.

B: Do they still call that Savidge?

E: Well, 104. Well, Clinton, I don't know how much Clinton would remember about that stuff. He probably wouldn't, but Clinton is getting close to 80 though. He's 70...in the top 70's because, well, he was older than we were. I mean he lives right in there, too.

K: Did you ever take the Fanny M. Rose to the Fruitport pavilion?

E: No. No. I was always going to but didn't make it.

K: But you saw it. You saw the Fanny M. Rose.

E: Oh, yes.

K: You remember it.

E: Mm-hmm.

K: Do you remember the May Graham?

E: Oh, I got pictures of that. Here. My dad used to have a fruit farm and we had berry pickers out there and at the end of the season, he used to take us all for a ride on the May Graham.

K: Oh, really?

E: Yes.

K: Up the river?

E: Mm-hmm.

K: Now, your dad had berry pickers right on Deremo Bayou over here?

E: Well, it was on the Grand River, on the road that went...well, 144 went across the bridge. Then we went east from that. My dad's farm was right down there on the river.

K: That was Ira Cross.

E: Ira Cross. Yup.

K: And the May Graham picked up a lot of his fruit.

E: Oh, ya. Oh, yes. Always.

B: All the way up the river.

E: Ya, all the way up to Lamont.

K: All the way up to where?

E: Lamont. It stopped every so often. You see, the Bunker place was up just a little bit farther east from my folks. And then they had a landing near there and they would pick up, and then down by our place and...

K: How did the May Graham know whether or not to stop? Was there a signal, a flag, or...

E: I guess they had stuff piled up there.

B: Well, but I think there was a flag there.

E: Oh, there could be.

B: I'm pretty sure there was.

K: They would signal with a flag?

B: I am pretty sure they did. But the fruit would be out there.

E: They could see it standing there.

B: I'm pretty sure there was a flag down there. It would be put up by the first one down there.

E: That must be that picture over there on the wall...

K: Oh, I see.

E: ...This one that he's got the write-up about.

K: Well, who is he?

E: Stanley Worthing? Oh, he's an old-timer. But he didn't come here to Michigan...he was about 40 years old when he came here. He must be getting close to 90 now, isn't he, or over? But he was a young fellow before he came here from Wisconsin. He's getting awful close to 90, I know that.

K: Do you remember any of that business in the 1920's when...

E: The Central House. Oh, I remember the Central House down here.

B: _____ I remember there was two.

E: Fon's, that was the Central House.

B: They used to call it the Central House. Well, it was kind of a hotel.

E: Ya, it was a hotel and saloon.

K: Where was the Central House?

E: It's about where that corner there by...

B: The Wash and Dry...

E: Ya, the Wash and Dry place, Robbins.

B: On that corner.

E: On that corner.

B: And then...

K: You mean in Spring Lake or Grand Haven?

B: Spring Lake. That was Fons and what was his name-Butz?

E: Ya. Jack Butz.

B: The other one was where that Texaco station...well, where that restaurant is now. The Texaco station used to be there.

K: That Chinese restaurant?

B: Ya. There used to be a filling station on the corner there.

K: And that remained open? That is, you could get something there during the 20's during prohibition when it was supposed to be...when the place was supposed to be dry?

E: I wouldn't be surprised if you could. (laughs)

B: Well, I...I...I think they closed down, didn't they?

E: I don't know.

B: They must have.

E: Well, you probably could get some on the side there, but I don't know.

K: I see.

B: And then when they came back with it, you could buy it anywhere.

E: Here's the Highland Park Hotel that burned. _____ place that it shows.

K: Sam Rymer owned that?

E: At the time when...

K: And today?

E: Ted Rogers.

K: Ted Rogers.

E: Mm-hmm. Harold Rogers-they call him Ted.

K: Those I would love to copy.

E: Here's the old May Graham.

K: Oh, yes.

E: This was in 1920 when I started this book.

K: Mm-hmm.

K: That's when the May Graham was Indian (??)?

B: At one time (noise on tape)

K: That was on what's called Battle Point?

E: Mm-hmm.

K: And that's right on the Grand River.

E: Mm-hmm.

B: That's state _____ now.

E: And then the...

K: Was that burial ground on the island or was it on the other side of the channel?

E: No.

K: If it were Indian Channel...

E: No, no. This side of Indian Channel.

B: On the north side.

E: I mean on the north side. It was accessible...you know, you could drive from Sam's place right down there. But you'd never know it was there now, would you? No, I don't think there's anything...In fact, I guess they...someone dug up some stuff or something around there years back.

B: We used to always...of course, that didn't mean anything in them days but we should have kept the arrow heads we picked up on our farm-we had some good ones, too. Boy, we had some nice ones.

K: Did you find the arrow heads on both farms?

E: Oh, yes. Well...

K: On both sides of the bayou? Or mostly on the...

E: Mostly on the south side.

B: Well, we were east.

E: Ted's folks lived east of there.

B: We was out by 138th.

E: Well, and on dad's farm down there between Grandpa Cross's and where dad is, that was...they had a battle field there. We used to find a lot of them in there. But all through that country, you could find all kinds of arrow heads that people...well, when we lived out there yet, we used to go scavenging around.

B: I don't know what ever become of...

E: I don't know if I still have that...

K: I wish I knew the precise site of that burial ground. I know where Indian Channel hits the Grand River. Now it's up river from that, isn't it?

B: Ya, up north.

K: But far?

B: No, no. Well, to tell the truth, I don't know exactly where it was myself. But the way it was told to me anyhow, it was just between Indian Channel and where that house is built...you know where that house is?

K: You mean the first house that you see?

B: Ya, from Indian Channel. It was between there.

E: Ya, it was between Manley Chittenden's and...well, when Grandpa Cross lived there-of course, you can't tell now, the old house is gone. Bill VanderWall built a house there. But grandpa used to have a house here and then down farther was a dryer where he used to dry apples. He hired people to peel apples and dry them. And just on the other side was the Indian burial grounds.

B: I thought that they told me it was beyond where Manley's house was.

E: Mm-hmm. It was in between Manley and...

K: In between...

E: Manley Chittenden's house and where my granddad Cross used to live.

K: Not in between Chittenden's house and Indian Channel?

E: No. No.

K: But it was father inland then.

E: Mm-hmm.

K: It wasn't right on the river, it was...

E: Well, it was...it was...it went down to the river, but...just...not...it went back this other way. I mean, more inland. The frontage wasn't too much on the river. The...

B: It had to be.

E: Huh?

B: It had to be on the river.

E: Well, ya, it had to be right on the river. You rode. 144th comes down here. Well, then my granddad...well, at the time when he was farming and stuff, he owned clear from-what is that? That ain't Cypress. Let's see, what do they call that. It's...well, it's the only one that goes right into Ted Rogers. You follow this 138th right there, and he used to own that whole section in there. And then his house was down here. And you'd go down 144th here, and then here's your Indian burial grounds and then Manley Chittenden was down here, and the Indian Channel down here.

B: That's funny. I always thought it was beyond Manley's house.

E: Mm-hmm. I've been there lots of times.

B: Well, you lived there. I didn't.

K: Can you still drive to it?

B: Ya, but today there's...

E: Well, there's no signs. You can't tell where it is. I don't know whether any of them living there because there are all new people living there. Well, the only one that could tell you where it is is Sam Rymer. I think he could tell you where it was. But he'd be the only one I know of. _____ the old May Graham and then you'd go to Lamont.

K: Did you ever go beyond Lamont? Did the May Graham go beyond Lamont?

B: No, they couldn't. There wasn't water enough.

K: I see.

B: They're talking now about dredging that out way up to Grand Rapids. But I don't know if they ever will or not.

K: They'll do it only if it is useful. You know, to boat traffic. And I don't know who is ready to invest in...

E: Well, unless it would be these pleasure boats. You know there are so many boats around here.

B: And you know that bridge around Eastmanville would have to be taken out and build a new one.

E: Yes, and that was built just two years ago and you couldn't get under that.

(Noise on tape)

K: No, I don't. Do you?

E: Well, certainly. We went every year. My dad had a boat and one thing I remember about it was I had a new pair of shoes. And when we come home, I was tired, and took off my shoes and some way or another, one of them went into the drink and I never got it back. (Laughs)

K: Oh, you lost your shoe?

E: I lost a shoe on that trip. Oh, ya. We always used to go to the farmers' picnic over there.

K: And you went by boat from here?

E: Ya, 'cause see, we were on this side of the river and it wasn't too far to go and my dad...

K: And you'd get in a boat on Deremo Bayou...

E: No. On the Grand River.

K: On Grand River.

B: She lived right on the river.

E: Uh-huh. And we'd just go up to the high banks.

K: What did they do at that farmers' picnic?

E: Oh, they had these little concession stands and they had games.

B: Baseball across the road. I remember that.

E: Ya, they had baseball games on the other side of the street.

K: They played baseball on the other side of the street?

E: Uh-huh.

K: What is now Mercury Drive?

E: Yes. Uh-huh.

K: And the baseball then was where the Hope Reformed Church is or Holiday Inn?

B: Well, it was right along in there somewheres.

E: I think it would be more by the Holiday Inn than the Hope Church although I wouldn't say for sure.

K: That's what I heard.

E: It just seems to me...now I wouldn't say for sure.

B: There used to be an open field there.

E: Ya.

B: Well, they didn't use it just for ball either. A lot of them parked their horse and buggy there. A lot of them come by horses too, as far as that goes.

E: Oh, yes.

K: Did...did the baseball teams from downtown come-Story and Clark and...

B: I don't remember.

K: The Beaudry team, they had a baseball team.

B: I know they had a baseball game there, but who played in it, I don't remember anymore.

K: Did they have...at those picnics, did they have alcoholic beverages? Were people drinking beer or mostly soft drinks and stuff like that?

B: I don't remember. I suppose they had beer, but I don't know.

E: I don't remember that either.

B: I know they had stands, refreshment stands.

E: I don't think we ever took our dinners either, did we? We just went like in the afternoon.

B: No, I don't think so.

E: That's when we went. I don't know what the others did whether they took their dinner or not. But it was always the farmers' picnic and they always had a big crowd there.

K: Now the Germans in the area used to have picnics there too, didn't they? Didn't the German Arbitrator Union or something? Remember anything of that?

E: Could be. I don't remember that.

K: Do you remember anything going on on the high banks north of Pottawatomie Bayou? Those banks are even higher, a little bit higher and an old Dutchman named Jake Ammeraal or...

E: Ammeraal. Ya. Oh, Ammeraal...wasn't it Ammeraals that had an old boarding house there or something? We could always see that house from dad's when we looked across the river. Or else going in the boat, we'd see Ammeraal's house.

K: But you mean on the high banks north of Pottawatomie Bayou?

E: I don't remember just exactly where that was, but it don't seem as if it was on the high banks.

K: I was just curious because that's where I live.

E: Well, I haven't thought of any of that stuff for so long and when you were just kids, it don't sink in too deep but sometimes some of those things come back to you. But I remember dad talking about Ammeraals.

B: I'll tell you a good story about when I was a kid. My dad, of course, we always went in a horse and buggy. And we had a dog, a nice shepherd. And when my dad come home, he didn't have the dog. I don't remember now whether that was two or three years later.

E: It was a long time.

B: One morning, here come our dog home. He swam the river. And boy, was he beat. And a guy had a tag on him, you know, one of these tags...

E: A license.

B: A license. And so, in the meantime, we got another dog. I don't know if dad went to see him, called him up or what, but anyway, he said, "No," he said, "he won't stay anyway. Besides that I hate to keep him tied up all the time." And that dog was gone that long and he swam the river. Instead of going up the way he got there, he swam right straight across the river. That was something.

K: Yes, it was. About what year was that?

B: Oh, gosh, I don't remember.

E: About 69 years ago. (laughs)

B: Pretty close. It must be pretty close to that. It was a long time ago. If he had went out, you know, the way he got there, it would have been a little different. Well, a cat will too, I guess, always come home.

E: Oh, ya. We've had cats come home from way north of Nunica. We'd give it away and it came home. _____ The approaches didn't float. See, they were solid.

K: I see.

E: And that's how you would sometimes have a boat get across there because you'd go up and there'd be a space between there. I mean, that approach wouldn't float.

K: And so when the water was high, you'd take a boat to get from the approach to the bridge.

E: Ya.

K: Oh, that's interesting.

E: But then these boards would wear out. Now on this one, these are just planks lengthwise in the wheel tracks over the other ones where they had worn out and stuff. Then instead of doing the whole thing, they'd just put about three planks so that you could go across on it. You couldn't meet anybody there.

K: Now did you go to the Jeffers School?

E: I went to Jeffers and my husband went to Patchin.

K: And where is Patchin School? Is that in Spring Lake also?

E: No. In Crockery Township. He was a little farther east than what we were. That's converted into a house now, what was Patchin School.

K: but because you went to Jeffers, which was on the other side of Deremo Bayou, you had to walk across that bridge.

E: We walked across the bridge, yup.

(There is a great deal of noise on the tape at this point. Unable to transcribe large portions of it-possibly from equipment working outside the home)

K: I don't know where she lives. _____

(Mr. and Mrs. Bunker speak but I'm unable to transcribe because of the noise in the background)

K: Some of them lived in Grand Haven too for awhile. Then they ran that Vos Drug Store which is Kooiman's Sport Store.

E: John Vos ran that. Then there was Claude Vos. He's dead. Well, then there's Elizabeth Vos. She married...

B: She never married.

E: Oh, that's right. Ya.

K: There's Elizabeth and there was Lizzie. And I don't know...

E: Lizzie, she married a Fisher. No.

B: Yes. Elizabeth Fisher.

E: No.

(More noise which prevents transcribing)

K: Ya, ya. I've been reading about that. Now about when was that when you were walking across that bridge? About what year?

E: Oh, about (laughs) Well, I started school, I guess, when I was about six and I'm 72 now so it must have been about 66 years ago.

K: I see.

E: I was born out there.

K: (noise)

E: Well, we were married in '27 (More noise for a large portion of tape)

K: Straight down from where 138th turns into Garfield. If 138th continued, it would take you right to the May Graham landing.

E: Yes. Right.

K: Then there was a gangplank? (Another stretch of noise preventing transcription) Right on the corner of 144th and Garfield.

E: Yes.

K: If 144th ran straight through, it would go right across...

E: Right across where all that brush is. See, this is Sam's old house here.

K: And there's a big barn behind that then, isn't there, a little ways?

E: Uh-huh. A couple barns.

K: Then he no longer lives here.

E: No. Ted Rogers does.

B: Sam lives over here on the corner now.

E: The first one to the left, that little house there.

K: Then you were a child when you knew those burial grounds. What told you that it was? Did you see mounds or something?

E: No. No. It was all flat then but it was always...you know, they said that was always the Indian burial grounds.

K: You were told that.

E: Ya. (Noise) Raspberries, black caps, beans, tomatoes, grapes. All that stuff they loaded on the May Graham.

K: And they went by May Graham down to the Washington Street slip?

E: Yes. And then it went on the boat to Chicago and Milwaukee.

K: Like the Nyak and Naomi, and ships like that?

E: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

B: Robbins Dock.

E: Ya, Robbins Dock. Old John Lex that lived up here was the buyer for some of those wholesale houses over there. One company he worked for was Love (?). Dad said when they shipped to them; you worked for love because a lot of times you'd go in the hole with them. By the time you paid your freight and pickers, commission and everything, why you were in debt. (laughs)

B: It wasn't like nowadays.

K: There's the tannery over there, isn't it? Back in '36 when that big strike occurred, the tannery used to get people to work from Spring Lake and they'd take them across by boat.

E: Oh. (laughs)

K: What bayou is this?

(End of Interview)