

DB13966  
DPACASS003

[File very hard to hear at times.]

I: This interview was taken October 9, 1992 in Isabel Bilz's home in Spring Lake, which is directly behind the Bilz's Plumbing Shop and was built in 1872 by Aloys Bilz himself and she is still living there, even though Pres has died, has been dead for some time. The home itself is a museum and she enjoys showing it off. You will notice that they are a very civic minded family, the Bilz, each of them serving in their time on the city or village council and then serving also as presidents of the village. We pick up the interview, Isabel is showing me a scrapbook that Aloys put together which is quite a chronology of his life and the technique that he used in gluing the pages in were quite unique. And so, let's pick up the interview at that point.

I: It was one of those where they actually stuck it, yeah, right, uh-huh.

R: Yeah and it is all about Al's.

I: His life?

R: Yeah, uh-huh. And then he goes through, but I don't mean it this way, it had a lot more in it.

I: Sure.

R: See, this is all about Margaret.

I: Now Margaret would have been

R: That's his daughter.

I: Okay, Preston's sister.

R: No, he didn't have any sisters, his aunt.

I: Oh I see, okay.

R: Yeah, she was quite a woman in WCT knew and did a lot of traveling and she was

I: Oh I see, kind of accordion, ...

R: Yeah.

I: So you have to flip it over to see. That was a unique way of doing it.

R: [inaudible]

I: Now that's him?

R: Uh-huh. Yeah. And then

I: That is an unusual name, Aloys.

R: Yes it is.

I: I wonder where it ever came from? I don't ever remember hearing anyone with that name.

R: And this is about his family.

I: What ....

R: ...Buffalo, I think. Yeah. And it goes on with Grand Haven and Ottawa County and state and the nation and international, all the way through.

I: Yes that is something.

R: Here is Michigan, it is labeled.

I: Now he lived until the '20's, didn't he?

R: Nineteen thirty-four.

I: Thirty-four, the year that Centennial, Grand Haven Centennial.

R: Uh-huh.

I: He wasn't there for it, probably.

R: I was trying to think. When did he die that year? Seems to me it was, I believe summer. .... recorded.

I: Oh is it?

R: Look in the middle between the sections. [phone ringing]

I: Okay, oh yes there it is. But that's the section isn't it?

R: Yes.

[talking but not near mike]

I: So what year was he born?

R: It was 1934 and here it would have been 11 p.m. on Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>.

I: So he did, he was alive during the centennial celebration.

R: Yeah.

I: So, when was he born, you told me that.

R: [inaudible] He was 93.

I: Ninety-three, so ..... 74 ... [extremely hard to hear] 41.

R: [not close to mike]

I: And he was born the Netherlands?

R: No, he was born in ....., in Bohemia which is now .... Here it is, 1841.

I: Eighteen forty-one. Boy that really is ...family.

R: And we kept it up, ... [cannot make out what is being said]

I: Yeah, I wondered how old ...

R: I don't know, but .... 1861.

I: Why did he come to this, well he was, you said he was born here in this country?

R: No, he was born in ...

I: Oh that's right, sure.

R: ...

I: He must have been a very well organized person.

R: Yeah, .... Well now what are we going to talk about? I'll get my thoughts in order here.

I: Well, let's see, first of all, this house was built in 1872, when did the fire occur that destroyed his business?

R: Ah, 1871.

I: It would have been '71 and that would have been the year of the Chicago fire and it was

R: Yes, you've seen those, haven't you?

I: What are those? Oh pieces that ... Were they in his store?

R: No, ....

I: Are they from Chicago?

R: Yes. They lived in Chicago.

I: ... well they probably were Barbers weren't they. ... I don't know what that is. Just beads. ...

R: No people went around and picked up this stuff.

I: Now, was there a relationship between the fires in the third year, of course that part of it started in ... the one that took this end of the town down. I think that started in Hopkins.

R: That was '73, or '71 and then there was something called, The Great Fire of 1810, the grange that went down on the other side of the street. ... And it started at ..

I: Yeah, well that one ... Or did it start, you know, that's where ...

R: [inaudible] And this is the sticker, this is the one that everybody has trouble with. I have fun with these because every .... see the house, why I tell them they pass the test.

I: Well, .. singed, right together, isn't that something. So the fire here occurred that same year, and the building was right over there, it was not Savidge then, it was Main Street, I think it was, or State.

R: State Street, uh-huh.

I: State Street, yeah. And then I read where he immediately decided to reopen and sent out the word that it would be rebuilt, it would be bigger and better.

R: Oh yes. And he got help from Hunter Savidge ... his insurance companies were based in Chicago and they were having one awful time with all them things from outside.

I: Yes.

R: Here is the autobiography. Before you turn that on, let me ...what do you want me to talk about? Or how are you going to do this? You ask me some questions?

I: No, we'll just gabbing. He did this ...

R: Well, I don't think he did it [both talking] ...

I: It had been transcribed. He had a twin sister, Josephine. He must have recited that or .... Now have you done that? I haven't.

R: I have ...

I: Oh have you. Yeah. Well that's thoughtful. I've thought of it, at times I like to do my own sermon.

R: Oh well I ...because I've gone to so many organizations, I know Doris would have ... In fact, I've got it here ....

I: Sure, because the ...

R: Closer to that.

I: No I don't think so, I think we'll be picked up. Ah, the ...the years that you are in an organization, you have to upgrade it every year.

R: Well, yeah, there are some that I have joined and some that I have presided over since I joined and things like that, that ... the Audubon Society now.

I: Oh the new development out here on the island.

R: Yeah. ...

I: Now you and Pres must have gone to school together?

R: No, he was seven years older than I. And ah, he graduated in '24 and I graduated in '30 from high school.

I: But he went to Grand Haven High School.

R: Yes, ... I don't know, I think he went for, I think the school went to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. And then the last two years there.

I: Now that should would have been located right behind the present Spring Lake Township Firehouse.

R: Well, in that block, yeah.

I: Yeah, right.

R: Right where the park is. ...park back in there, that's where ..

I: So, how did you ever get together?

R: Well he was great friend of my brothers.

I: Oh I see. So you had an older brother.

R: Yes. And Pres had been working with his dad ... oil vendors and all that kind of thing. And, then came the depression and well he had always been .... for years and years and he had been a ...executive ...that is when it was out of Al Capone's ... And he wanted to go on and ... But that required some college, so he, things were so slack at the shop that he would go to college. And this was several years after he graduated from high school. And he ...here, and I'm teaching ... So he did and he ... He graduated in '39 and then he got a job teaching in Decatur, Michigan and we were married between his junior and senior years.

I: Now, his dad was gone by then?

R: No. He died in '40. And but that's why he didn't complete his teaching year because he died in April of 1940.

I: Okay.

R: So we had to come back then.

I: And you were married, when?

R: In '38.

I: Just before he graduated. Now, there was an older or younger brother Bilz? Now there was a William Bilz.

R: It was Pres, his name was William Preston Bilz. And then William A. Bilz is his dad.

I: Okay. It seemed to me as though looking in the list of presidents of the village, I saw Aloys, of course.

R: Yeah and you saw William A.

I: Right.

R: And that's Aloys' son. Yeah, Aloys' son, Pres' dad.

I: I see, there is the okay, now I've got it, okay. So, Aloys is really Pres' granddad.

R: Yes.

I: Okay. So and your son then was named for your granddad?

R: No.

I: Because he was I see, Pres is a William Junior, but he just went by Pres.

R: Yes.

I: ...organized there.

R: There are four generations, there is William A., alright there is Aloys, so there is William A, and there is Pres, and there is ....

I: Dick, that was your son.

R: ...

I: And you have ...frequently don't you?

R: Well I haven't had any since '37 now. Or I mean '87. I've had a lot of people go through it, but not as a ...

I: That was a desk, wasn't it? You pull it down, it's a desk.

R: ... Bill's father who was a minister ... and when this house was built he sent this, this desk, and a companion bookcase for her. So that's older than the house.

I: It's gorgeous. It's a good thing to have high ceilings.

R: Many places won't accommodate it.

I: No, that has got to be at least ...Because this ceiling is what, 12?

R: Twelve.

I: Twelve feet, yeah. Tomorrow we are going to go up one side of the street and down the other and I was just trying to get a feel for what used to be along here. Of course, this has always been here, hasn't it? In one form or another, the Aloys store or

R: Well, it used to be, his store was down next to the alley. And then came the first plumbing shop and tin shop and then the vacant lot. And then the corner building and the

corner building was the first bank in Spring Lake. It was a newspaper office and it was ... bicycle shop. ... well and then a plumbing shop. ...

I: Oh I see, I see, because that, what's on top is all new structure, of course. When you say the newspaper, what newspaper would that have been?

R: My grandfather published a newspaper for a couple of years. Spring Lake Republican I think it was called.

I: And he actually was the editor and

R: Uh-huh and owner and everything and it lasted about two years. Owned and operated a newspaper, the Spring Lake Republican, 1899 and 1880.

I: Now 1889 to 1890?

R: Oh it was 1879.

I: Oh 1879 to 1880. Okay.

R: These are all the services, do you want to know what he did?

I: Yeah, that's

R: He did the services of Aloys Bilz. He was a town supervisor for 11 years, he organized the Spring Lake Board of Trade, he was the director of Spring Lake Pops, he was a notary public for 60 years, he was president of Spring Lake, 10 years. He was a correspondent for the Grand Haven Courier Journal, he was a ... for 18 years. ... built and put into action the steamer, Margaret, the first steamer to operate on Spring Lake. He secured two plots for the village from the Hugo farm estate. He was a charter member of the BPOA in Grand Haven. And then produced a paper. In 1913 he organized the Spring Lake .... and he became it's first president. ...

I: Oh is that right? Right here, huh.

R: Agent for the Farmers' Fund Insurance for 64 years. He was the member of the board of education, chairman of the Republican township committee, a realtor, especially for Spring Lake ... Director of the Spring Lake Hotel Company and one of the discoverers of the mineral springs.

I: Yes, I knew the mineral springs, of course.

R: He kept busy.

I: Isn't that something though. Good heavens. Well, when he was here, when he first came here and that would have been what, about 18...

R: He came in 1866. When I .... hardware store in Grand Rapids, ...Grand Rapids had the hardware store and it was too small to have two of them. So he came on down here to Spring Lake or at ...Point ... where all the sawmills were and started the hardware store here ....

I: I'm just trying to think what the size of the town may have been at that time, not very large or a village. I'll bet there weren't 200 people. Got a census?

R: I've got a census information on that, I'm sure that's where it is. I used to go up to the 7<sup>th</sup> ... here is the history of the Spring Lake ... invitation. I had a lot of that kind of thing in my notes. I was using those notes to help get the production ready for

I: Oh your show.

R: Uh-huh, no I don't know where they are.

I: Well it wasn't large at any rate.

R: No.

I: But very and heavily industrialized area with all the sawmills that were here when he was here. They were right at their prime then.

R: Yes. It sure went down in a hurry.

I: Ah, 1890, no wood left.

R: No. That's when they started in fruit.

I: Oh well in and around here yes.

R: All the grapes at the other end of town and the surrounding area. Peaches and ... of course the story goes that farmers would bring their loads of fruit and go right down Division Street here and to the river. See they had packet boats there and they'd take the fruit to the Chicago boat in Grand Haven and people in Chicago had fresh fruit for breakfast. ...

I: Now that was gone by the time you remember

R: I've been here 52 years.

I: In this home, 52. And I'm thinking when you were a youngster in Grand Haven, can you remember?

R: Well, when I was a youngster in Grand Haven, I don't know much about Spring Lake, it was before, you know, cars were just getting popular and until I could drive, why we didn't get around anywhere but Grand Haven.

I: But I think there were food deliveries in Grand Haven as well

R: Yes.

I: down at the wharf. I was told that anyway. Do you remember any of that or you probably didn't venture that far from your neighborhood, did you?

R: Well, when I was in junior high I did, because I had to walk down to junior high school every day.

I: Which was on 7<sup>th</sup> Street. No it wasn't 7<sup>th</sup>.

R: Yeah, 6<sup>th</sup>. When I went to it, it was upstairs in Central School.

I: Oh sure, yeah. And there was a teacher that, L. Jacobson and Paul Johnson talk about Miss Soule.

R: Julia Soule.

I: You remember her?

R: Yes, I had her for 7<sup>th</sup> grade history.

I: And she was your teacher.

R: Very dignified woman, very tall and she wore her hair combed up and snow white and she was oh she had a good sense of humor. The Coast Guard called her baby(?). [laughter] Because she had a cottage over near the Coast Guard Station and if she needed any help why she'd go to the station and ask them.

I: Yeah, that's right. In fact, that was perhaps the first cottage over on the north shore. Yeah. Well what else was along here? The filling station wasn't there.

R: It was a saloon, Buttize Saloon, and this I've heard about it is one of grandma's favorite stories, Buttize's Saloon was over there and one night there was a fire in there and it was a cold night, I don't know if it was freezing or not, but it was very cold and the firefighters were out there and they would come over here and get a cup of coffee and then Braaks heard about it and they sent down a dishpan full of donuts and so the firefighters could have donuts and coffee. And they were working most of the night and then the next day, one of them came down and scrubbed Karen's basement wall(?).

I: The firemen.

R: Uh-huh

I: And that would have been the volunteer group from Grand Haven, Spring Lake. Because they felt they had tracked in perhaps and then

R: Uh-huh. And then Bill Cooper had a coal and ..so then he ...that office there, he did a lot of the bakery work and at that time he had the Railway Express Agency. And then .... And then there was Buckley's Hardware Store .... And then

I: Now we are still on this side of the street?

R: Uh-huh.

I: Okay, .....I know where that is.

R: And oh let's see, then there was the Bungalow Sweet Shop and then the bank and then

I: The bank was on this side?

R: Uh-huh. Where Fields is now.

I: Was that right?

R: Uh-huh.

I: Oh yeah, I remember reading that. And I couldn't place it exactly now.

R: And then came Bomerik's Taylor Shop, oh ....was a little German, the kind that would sit with his legs crossed and do the sewing. And so he had a dry cleaning business in there too.

I: Now that wasn't the corner?

R: Oh no. ...end of the block. And I'm trying to think what came next. Oh, it started out as a laundry and then it turned into a restaurant and now it is Stan's Bar. And that was run by Walter Ames and then his daughter, Dorothy Shlivowits, she was Dorothy Ames and then Dorothy Voss and then Dorothy Shlivowits. And she maintained the restaurant there for quite a while. And then there was Spencer's Grocery and then that was taken in now by where the drugstore is and then the drugstore on the corner. That is the way it was when I came here.

I: Now it seems to me as though there was a Nixon Meat Market.

R: That's the next block, where the new travel place is.

I: Okay. And that has been there forever, hasn't it?

R: Yes. Yes there was a grocery store on the corner, before I came it was Andy Falls. And then the other half of the building was a cloths shop, and then there was a vacant lot and then there was Nixon's.

I: Now that vacant lot is still there, isn't it?

R: No.

I: Oh I'm thinking that little parkway somewhere about there.

R: No, that's further down. See there is Nixon's and next to Nixon's was Springbolt's Hardware Store and then the park and then Braak's Bakery and then another vacant lot and then there was Mulder's feed store, oh it was groceries and feed and then the old village hall.

I: So the village hall was

R: Around the corner.

I: Yeah. And where was the township hall or did that function as the township hall?

R: I don't know, I don't think there was one. I think they met in ..in the village hall.

I: Now, the other side of the street, can you remember that?

R: Well right kitty-corner here was a big vacant lot. And then the Central House, which was a hotel and a tour de cafe net I don't know if you've heard of tour de café net that's where that was.

I: I had always pictured the Café net being up in the block beyond.

R: Yeah, you see the woman that ran it and ... Café net bought that homestead on the corner there and she opened a ....

I: Okay. So it was still a Café net, then?

R: Uh-huh.

I: Yeah and that would have been on the other side of Buchanan, across from the bank, is that right?

R: Yes.

I: Okay.

R: And next to the Café net there are some vacant lots over there and I don't remember just where they were, but anyway, there was DeVries's Meat Market and that would be just this side of where the bowling alley is. That little store out there has closed. It's been a TV repair shop. That's the area where that was. And ...bowling alley, there were businesses over there that changed hands quite a bit. But, where the beauty shop is now, was a little restaurant run by Fred Volare. Then there was a grocery store and it was run by Fran Schwab way back, I don't know anything about that except that he would watch Bill Spencer across the street and neither one of them wanted to turn out the light first, 'cause there might be another ...out on the street from where [laughter] They'd close up by watching each other.

I: So a restaurant on both sides of the street.

R: No, these were grocery stores.

I: They were grocery stores, okay. Now that takes us up to the corner.

R: ..the corner ...I don't think there was anything on the corner.

I: That later became a filling station.

R: Yes. It was Phelps.

I: Across the street, of course, was the

R: It was an interurban station.

I: Sure.

R: And then Andy Fall's and then the Highland House and the Fox House.

I: Now a couple of those are still there.

R: Yes, those two. Well, not

I: Oh they are all gone now.

R: Sam Falls house is gone, but Joiners Engineering is in one of those and I don't know whether it is the Highland House or the Fox House but they were right there together. And then on the corner was a Mulder ... There were lots of Mulders here. Grandma went to something at the Dutch church as she called it. There were 32 Mulders there.

I: All inter-related. Sure. Now what was where the bank is now?

R: Well that's the Mulder House on the corner.

I: Right on the corner. And, of course, the train depot was back in there someplace.

R: Down.

I: Oh this way. Okay.

R: Down near Miller Smith's.

I: Okay. And what was along there? Just vacant. And the interurban ran right down the middle of the street here.

R: I rode on that lots of times. My aunt would take me to Grand Rapids on it.

I: You know, I've commented on so many times what a remarkable mass transit system there was here. You could walk from here with two bags to the interurban and go literally anywhere in the world.

R: Yeah, I guess if you can get to Grand Haven on the interurban, then that would take you on the Chicago ferry and that's pretty much the hub wherever you want to go.

I: Yeah, right. Or go to the boat. Go to Chicago on the boat, pretty remarkable. Then the automobile came along. Now who was the first, oh, McClure, this would be Betty Moore's, .... It was one of the McClure's supposedly built the first automobile.

R: Oh yes. At the time of the Spring Lake Centennial, I had the nice job of having an antique show in the Masonic Temple. And we got ...that old car.

I: You are kidding, is that right? He was still around.

R: Yeah.

I: Now that would have been ...

R: I don't know that it was Steve or whether his son did, but then anyway there was a Mr. McClure that did it.

I: Sure ... See and I can't recall what the relationship is. Grandfather, perhaps.

R: Yeah, she was ...

I: Oh was she. I figured you'd have that Mary Pitch's book someplace.

R: Oh you bet.

I: Boy mine is all tattered and torn now. I'm going to have to get another one.

[inaudible]

I: 1914. I think, 1914 that was the year that the bank went in.

R: It started in 1913.

I: Oh did it.

R: Fortunately, I did some research and asked Del Mulder who had worked at the bank for years and I asked her about it and she looked in her records and I have her reports. ... And she told me that Clinton Trotter, of course, was a foundation of information and said something at a meeting ... He says, now let me see, who was at that meeting and he goes and names the people that were there.

I: Sitting right here?

R: Yeah.

I: How old was he when he died?

R: He would have been 95 the next day.

I: And he has only been gone two, three years now.

R: I think so, he was ...

I: A couple of years I think is all it is. You hate to see people like that go.

R: I think we got some of his information on tape. When I was taking that course on industry at Spring Lake, we got him to, he got quite interested in it and one day when he had the equipment there and George Donner started asking him questions, we got all that on tape.

I: Oh great. You know, you had a note in there that the Thum property, Thum or something like that. Now is that where the yacht club is now?

R: The yacht club and the tourist park.

I: Those were both is properties. And he just gave them to the city or the village.

R: Yeah. Marshall McClure, 1859-1928. And his horses carriage built in 1891 using an engine borrowed from a Grand Rapids shop on Front Street. It wasn't he. It was somebody in the [both talking] ... that brought it to the ...

I: But the fact that it is still around, might not have the engine in it anymore, but it still had the wheels and the carriage. What did Bill or did Pres ever relate to you or did you gather from Aloys about the mineral springs?

R: I never ....

I: Oh you didn't. That's right. That's right.

R: My brother knew him 'cause he would come over here with Pres. And I remember my aunt, Ethel, worked in the county ...agent shop, that was right, you'd have to go through her office to get to the title office. And one time there was this tall, distinguished looking man there and I said, who is that. She said, oh that's Mr. Bilz from Spring Lake. But that's about the only time I ever saw him. So I didn't know, I never heard Dean talk about it. ....

I: Of course that burned down, the hotel in '16, I think.

R: ..mother .....to the fire.

I: Oh is that right?

R: Uh-huh. ... He was 10 years old.

I: So you can remember seeing it. You remember seeing it?

R: Oh yes. Right they were about the water tower, they were afraid that everybody would get scalded because the fire was so intense and the water tower was wooden. ...getting down it was bone dry.

I: Well sure they'd probably used every once they could get.

R: Well yeah, it is already evaporating and with all that heat.

I: Sure ... boiled itself dry, sure. Well that's quite a story. I have always felt Fruitport discovered it first, then Spring Lake was next with

R: Did you know they had it at Norton, Nortonville?

I: No, I didn't. They had the mineral springs up there.

R: They had the mineral springs there too.

I: Didn't know about that. What is the detail on that? Now where do you define Nortonville?

R: Well, Nortonville, it is out near Jefferies School.

I: Yeah, okay.

R: And the Nortonville Church is across from the school.

I: Okay.

R: And that was the first sawmill.

I: Yeah, out along what we call Pruden Road now.

R: .....down there near the river.

I: Wasn't it near the river the first sawmill?

R: Probably.

I: Yeah.

R: Because after all they get them ...

I: But they had a, now do you remember the details on that? I've never heard that story about the mineral springs.

R: No, but it came out and wasn't the reports that we had, it had something about ... presentation and I don't know where the information came from. I think I remember reading it, but I couldn't put my finger on it right now.

I: It never got to the state that Spring Lake was.

R: Oh no.

I: That really was quite a place and the Pomona House was up in Fruitport, that was a huge thing. And then, of course, the Cutler House was too.

R: Several places where ...

I: Oh yeah, but I still ..it was a hoax. I don't think that because they were springing up all over the place. I had never seen a complete story written about it, although I've seen accounts, but I'd like to see the whole, have a document to the entire state the numbers that popped out. I know, Charlotte had one, St. Louis had one, St. Louis being north of Lansing a little bit and there were many, many others.

R: Well there is ... and then there is Detroit.

I: Yeah true.

R: They had a priest that was upstairs ....

I: Well now, over on Spring Lake at that time, was it lined with cottages as we know it today? It couldn't have been.

R: I have no idea.

I: Yeah, yeah.

R: All I know is

I: When you got here though it probably was. There were cottages when you and Pres, did you and Pres move in to this house?

R: Well yes in 1940. But back then, the Robbins house was there then and there was not a lot of cottages along the Farmer Street there. There were a few.

I: And who was next to Robbins? That was a ..wasn't it?

R: Well that was the big house ....

I: Who was that, the one that the miller finally bought and tore down.

R: Yeah, that was the Stabbage.

I: It was, yeah, yeah.

R: And a beautiful place and then it was, then it was eventually ... home. And then they had no restrictions as far as finances were concerned and anything they wanted to, that had beautiful parquet floors and that kind of thing.

I: Yes, right, that's what I remember. But they had installed those, had they?

R: Yes, oh yes. And Pres was on the council at that time when they wondered what was going to happen to it, that was ...questions about that. ... And they wanted the village to buy it for a heritage home. But the village couldn't, see it is right there financially or at that time couldn't figure out how they would manage anything.

I: I know, just the money to maintain it.

R: Yes.

I: Probably \$10,000 a year just to keep it up.

R: And the insurance would be tremendous.

I: Oh yes.

R: So, it was a sad day when it came down, because it was such a historic thing and in such beautiful condition.

I: Yeah, you know, it is too bad that there can't be, that public funds can't be used to maintain something like that, the city to maintain something like that.

R: Well when Doris was here helping me unpack ... I said, well I guess we've got everything taken care of, except the house. She said some people have been trying to get renewal approach the village and see if they would buy it for a historical home .... And she said don't be in a hurry to sell that house, we have to have a place to retire to.  
[laughter]

I: Now how old is she?

R: Doris is now 52.

I: That worked out about right.

R: ....birthday Monday, is 53.

I: Now this would be Doris.

R: My daughter.

I: Your daughter. Okay. And she lives where?

R: Portage, Wisconsin. He is a Presbyterian minister.

I: Oh I see.

R: That's why they don't have a home.

I: Sure. It must be perfect for them.

R: For them, my granddaughter came to visit me one weekend and she and her husband and she went back and told her mother ... [laughter]

I: Oh yeah.

R: Got her plans all made.

I: Yeah, right, but you know, so often you will see that that's the way these places are finally saved and maintained.

R: Preserved that way.

I: Yeah that's right.

R: To come to the boarding house. That's pretty.

I: Oh it is. Yeah, I'm sure glad I can see it. Well it didn't come around soon enough for the Savidge home. And the other one that really disturbs me, the other Loutit home in Grand Haven.

R: Oh the one who was in the corner ....

I: Taken down and a filling station.

R: Yes.

I: That really ...

R: And the woodwork and things like that in those places were

I: Never duplicated.

R: Now up here on the main street the old Parket house, and

I: Here in Spring Lake?

R: Ah-huh.

I: And where was that?

R: Well,

I: When you say Main Street, you mean well Savidge?

R: Yeah.

I: Yeah. Is it beyond up near the Catholic Church?

R: No, not quite, it is a block before that.

I: Okay, across from Christ Community.

R: Not quite. There is a house on the corner there right across from the Catholic Church, that's Bill Spencer's house. And then there is another big house ... and then there was

another house and that was, I forget the name now. But then the next one is the one I'm talking about.

I: That's ...

R: And that has a marvelous staircase, it has been made into apartments ....

I: What Harbeck would that have been? Not Herman?

R: No, I don't know which one, but I think it is some relation to Betty Moore. I think some contact, I don't know what relation ... or whether somebody worked for somebody or what. But anyway, the connection ...

I: Pres was ..... for three, four years ...

R: Yes,

I: It is in there in the back ...

R: Picture in here and I noticed it before.

I: Yeah, right ...

R: ... the village. He was on the council three different times. ..picture of ... the river.

I: Let's see, I'll come over. Oh sure. The main ...

R: Yes it is.

I: Yeah. Right.

R: At women's club, Farm Bureau was talking and she showed this picture and said does anybody recognize anybody on that? I said yes, my husband.

I: Oh is he in there?

R: Right there.

I: Oh, I'll be darned. Is that right and he was what, probably looks like he was five, six years old.

R: Something like that. ....

I: Sally Buckley.

R: Yeah.

I: Now let's see, Buckley, Buckley, that would be Marge Oaks was a Buckley. Marge Buckley.

R: Yes and ...sister.

I: Okay.

R: Valerie Buckley ...

I: Okay, alright.

R: The other woman in that, knows a lot about history of Spring Lake is Esther Burchy. Esther Acome, she is now. And she lived up on Prospect Street and her father was Fred ... that had the ...

I: Oh my gosh, yes. The brick, now where, okay, that was located on one of the bayous here.

R: I think so.

I: Yeah, there is a picture of it in there.

R: There is something in that ...

I: Oh you've got headlights flashes.

R: This house used to be the place where people would come for information.

I: Here?

R: Yeah. College kids, in fact, write about their own town, you know, this kind of thing. And I was so worried because the ...weekly that I had was all in shreds and I had stitched this together on the sewing machine or it had one copy of it. And I said what am I going to do? These things are to pieces and I went upstairs and ... I found 70 copies of this in mint condition.

I: That very same one.

R: And this is what we got in Holiday Inn, you know. [something chiming] Can you ...

I: Sure, sure. That's one of those, you gave it to them, didn't you?

R: No, I didn't give it to them, I don't know where they got it.

I: Now there it is, that's the picture of it, sure. That's quite a place.

R: And Esther said that some of the buildings in Grand Haven

I: You know, that was quite an operation. In fact, I think the original county building was made of those bricks. Yeah.

R: Don't you have one of these?

I: No, I don't. Okay, you got 70 copies.

R: Well this is .... I don't know how many of these there were. But, I had been to the libraries, ... and different groups that are interested, anybody that was interested in the history. ... this area, the Spring Lake beach and they have all those lots up there. Why they didn't save one for us I'll never know.

I: Yeah, they were old sold off. Now where would that have been located?

R: Well you know where the ... beach is, you go down

I: Sure, Strawberry Point.

R: ... at Strawberry Point, right in there.

I: They owned all of that and sold it all off. Of course, you know, probably at that time living back here ... Well, but I'm thinking it was probably, this was more of the, the proper place to live here. Down there, that was kind of slummy. I just wondered, you know, it is reversed now, of course. Beach property and they tore down those old places and put up beautiful places. Well, tomorrow when we take our walk up and down here, it will be on television, we are going to put it on tape and of course, George is a great one for that sort of thing.

R: Yes and he knows what he is talking about.

I: Yeah. Always lived here. And Bolt House too. Yeah. Now John had the filling station right over here.

R: Oh yes, uh-huh.

I: Sure. And he tore down ...

R: He and Steve Bottima were in it together.

I: Now that, the saloon was there first, then they went in.

R: It was a filling station when I came here.

I: You know one thing that I always wanted to ask, I know that in looking at this house there had to be, you had to do the wash and I know in our house, when I was young, my mother did the wash once a week.

R: Every Monday.

I: I think it was, that's right, it was. Now is that the way it was here?

R: No, 'cause grandma .....

I: And how about you? Did you

R: Oh I still do mine.

I: But you've got a machine now.

R: Oh yeah, a washer and dryer.

I: Sure.

R: And then of course with the fabrics as they are now, it is not cotton and it used to be.

I: No and I can recall was a Maytag. We had an electric Maytag. You know, you switched back and forth the agitator. And if it was cold out, we would hang the clothes in the basement. And was that the way you did it too?

R: Yes. ...when Doris was small, we had .... electric machine when we remodeled the pantry to make room for them there, so that's where I do it now.

I: Okay, now those are the machines you have today. Yeah. But what did you, did you have a Maytag?

R: No.

I: What did you have, in the basement, I mean?

R: Well I don't know, ....and it just had an agitator, but that ...what kind it was. And

I: Was it electric driven?

R: Yes, uh-huh, but before I had that, there was a curious thing that grandma had. And it was like a big cooking pot almost, it was about that high and round and then you put the clothes in the water and that and you'd have to get the water from the sink. Because I had to do it in the kitchen and then the top part of it, the motor part, I'd have to turn upside down because that's where the agitator was. But I had to do all the wringing by hand.

I: Was that electric?

R: Yes.

I: You had a drain down there, of course, so you could probably just ...on the floor.

R: Yes when I was washing in that, I'd have .... electric machine with the wringer on it, that was downstairs. That was the next step. And then when I graduated from that, I did it with the modern one that's upstairs.

I: Yeah, what did you use for soap? Fells Napa.

R: Sometimes or soap flakes.

I: Oh yeah that's right, I had forgotten about the soap flakes. I remember my mother cutting up the Fells Napa and boiling it.

R: Oh, I never boiled clothes, but I know a lot of people did.

I: Well didn't boil the clothes, but got the soap all ready to pour into the water.

R: Oh I see.

I: You didn't do it that way, soap flakes. Well it was all done for you then.

R: Yeah.

I: Maybe the Fells Napa was for heavy duty.

R: Oh yeah, that's what we had to rub the dirty spots with, something like that.

I: Yeah. Right. We didn't go through clothes like kids do today. You wore things.

R: I was fortunate because my mother was a dress maker and designer. I was in high school before I knew that they sold patterns.

I: Isn't that something.

R: Uh-huh, because I also remember catalogs and say I want the back like that and the front like that and sleeves like this and she cut out the newspapers and cut the patterns and make the dress.

I: And did she have a foot treadle?

R: Yes.

I: Yeah. Where is that?

R: [inaudible] ... that is an old Singer there, 1874.

I: Right here.

R: Yeah. You've seen that, haven't you?

I: ...I have, yes. But I guess maybe I didn't get the entire tour.

[inaudible]

I: Oh yes.

[not close to mike]

I: Well, I'm going to be on my way, I'm going to meet with I told you, Steve Sloogold. Your old pal, Steve.

R: Oh yes, he was in my brother's graduating class in high school and he had been, he had gone to the University of Illinois and he went to get a teaching certificate. So, he came down to Western to get his teaching certificate and he and I got a teaching certificate.

I: Oh you did. And where?

R: At Western.

I: Oh okay, but I mean

R: In Kalamazoo.

I: Okay. Now you say that your dad had a store in Grand Haven. A food store?

R: Yes.

I: Okay, now I'm trying to think of the name of the food store that was out there, it begins with an S, out by the Knights of Columbus.

R: Oh Whitten Gets was two blocks further, in the 1300 block, well no, once it is Columbus it is in the, yeah, .... Yeah, one block. So you are thinking of Strausberg.

I: That's it, Strausberg.

R: That was strictly meats. See my dad sold all meats and he sold them groceries. And they were right next to each other.

I: Oh is that right, they were.

R: Yeah and the buildings are still there. And then, and the house that is just east of that is where I was born.

I: Still there.

R: Yeah.

I: 140

R: 1314.

I: 1314.

R: And the historic address was 1310.

I: Yeah. What was your maiden name?

R: Smith.

I: And what was the store's name?

R: Smith's Grocery.

I: Smith's Grocery. And it was there from until the '20's or '30's.

R: Yeah, ..in 1980. And mother and dad were married in 1907 and he worked in Douglas, Michigan in a grocery store for a year and then ....

I: Now out behind there was a vacant lot, out behind where you lived and wasn't there a ball field out there or just a

R: There wasn't a vacant lot where I lived.

I: Oh is that right?

R: But at the end of the block, there was a vacant lot. And we used to go down there and play. But there were some houses out there. That whole block south of ... down at the corner there were a couple vacant lots. We lived there until I was about six years old and then we moved a block west of 1200 block in the old ... ..

I: Okay now that's right, right along there, well Jean ...Jean ... John Constant, Jack ... they were all here in the Crescent Theater area.

R: Yeah. .... A block and a half.

I: The other way. I'm thinking of .. downtown, um, the ...store, right near the, past Hostettters.

R: Oh ...

I: Yes okay, that was the Bolt home then. Yeah, I was

R: No, no, that's a different Bolt.

I: Oh it is a different, okay.

R: Uh-huh.

I: Okay, got you.

R: Didn't you ever know Ted Bolt?

I: Oh sure. He was born right down there

R: Well that's where he lived and he was brought up. In fact, somebody wrote their name in the cement down in the basement. But, this is Donna Meeusen's family.

I: Okay.

R: Her father was, is that on?

I: Sure.

R: Can you turn it off, and I'll tell you something.

I: Okay. [laughter] Okay.