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[respondent hard to hear at times]

I: This is Chuck Sikkenga interviewing Henrietta Bosch for the Tri-Cities Museum. The date is August 26, 1991.

R: My name is Henrietta Bosch and my birth date is June 19, 1914.

I: Okay.

R: I'm 77 years old.

I: And have you lived here your whole life?

R: Yes.

I: Do you have an earliest memory from this area?

R: Yes I do. A lot of little stories.

I: And that would be.

R: Well, I can start from one if you want me to.

I: Oh okay.

R: Okay, I was a small child and I went to the cigar store. I went with my father downtown in Grand Haven and it was; I think it was in the second block of Washington Street. And it was Billy Grunst's Cigar Store. I was about four years old at the time. And he got cigars for the week and then with a man by the name of Muddle Dykema, he always went in there too. And he always bought me a bag of candy for a nickel. And let's see. He lived on the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and Clinton Streets. There was a room in the back and I would peek in there and there was a man, several men, but there was two men, they would be smoking with pipes that went into a big bowl of water. And I would wonder what that was. I never could figure that one out. It must have been moist cigar smoke or cigar, well it wasn't cigars, it was smoking a pipe, but it was in moist air, I guess. And they would smoke in that. I was peeking around the corner, and it was a curtain. Let's see, I lived on Jackson Street, 419 Jackson Street, so we'd walk from Jackson Street downtown. And we didn't mind the walk in those days.

I: Right.

R: We did everything walking. That's about all that story was.

I: Okay, you lived on Jackson Street, who lived there with you as far as your family? Did you have any brothers and sisters?

R: I had three sisters. But at that time I only had one sister. She was four years older than I was and a mother and father.

I: What was the neighborhood like then? Was it as developed as it is now or?

R: Well about the same as it is now. Only the houses are more rundown than they are now. I'm kind of ashamed of the house that I used to live in. They don't do nothing to it.

I: Okay.

R: It was the third house from the park on Jackson Street going east.

I: Okay. When did you start school and where and which school was that?

R: Central.

I: Central School.

R: I had Miss Koster for kindergarten teacher. Then I went to the Columbus Street School for a couple of years. It was, well there was a bowling alley there, it was Seifert Bowling Alley, it was right near that area. It was, I guess it must be, I don't know, it was on the, I can't think of what side of the street it was on, north side of the street.

I: Okay.

R: But I can't remember what block it was in. I think that was also in the 2<sup>nd</sup> block from the corner, from the Harbor Street.

I: And what was school like? How many people were in the classes?

R: There were just about, maybe, three classes, three rooms.

I: Okay.

R: And then I didn't like it there.

I: Didn't like it, why?

R: No. The teacher gave me a lickin for something I didn't do. [laughs] So I didn't go there anymore. And then I went to Central School.

I: Was that the way discipline was approached in the schools and how did they handle disciplinary problems?

R: Well I don't know, her name was Miss Noble. And at that time, she used to go with a boy of VanHorssen. We used to go visit at the VanHorssen and every time we came there, she would go upstairs. She had red hair, Miss Noble did. What else I couldn't tell you.

I: What sort of subjects did you study in school back in say, elementary school?

R: Not much, reading, writing, penmanship and spelling.

I: Was there a lot of homework back then?

R: No.

I: No.

R: Not in the lower grades. And I didn't go a whole lot to school, because I was sickly. I went later on I went to school and then when the twins were born, I was in the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade, something like that, 7<sup>th</sup> grade and my mother had twins and she was 40 and I was 13 and 11 months. Almost 14 and she had twins. So I had to stay home and help take care of the twins. Those days, you could stay home.

I: Right.

R: You know; you just stayed home, so I would stay home on Monday and Tuesday morning, Monday she'd wash, Tuesday I had to iron and Wednesday, I guess I went to school. Maybe Thursday, Friday would stay home again and wash and iron and things like that.

I: What other sorts of household chores did you have to do then?

R: Well, helped my mother all I could. But that was when I was older.

I: Right.

R: Not when I was real little.

I: Okay, when you were younger, say elementary school aged, what kind of things did you do for recreation?

R: At school you mean?

I: At school or just after school with your friends.

R: We played out for recess, but I can remember when I was little I had round shoulders and they had me go to school real early in the morning, before school, and I walked to

school of course at Central School. And I had to go to the high school gym and take exercises. And I didn't like that; because all the other kids could play on the playground and I had to go and do those exercises. I had to do that three times a week. It was for something that I had, they told me I had round shoulders. And they thought maybe that would help, I guess.

I: How about, were there any games you played with friends after school or any types of toys or anything you played with?

R: I played a lot with dolls.

I: What kind of dolls?

R: Just plain ordinary ones.

I: Plain ordinary dolls.

R: They had those jointed dolls with rubber in between.

I: Okay, I think I know what you are talking about.

R: And the arms and legs, I had the doll up until about 10 years ago when I sold it. The rubber was all stretched and then I had one with springs, one with springs that had white hair, I called that the Irishman and the other one, I don't know why I remember that name. I didn't have a name for it. I remember when I was real little, maybe about 5, I would take my cat and dressed it all up in doll clothes and put it in the buggy and walked around with ... it had a little bonnet on it and I can see me doing that yet. I would be walking around the block, you know.

I: Right.

R: But we made a lot of our own toys. We made um; when you take a piece of wood and make a point on each end and we had another thing we'd hit to see how far it would go. That was one of the games we'd play. We'd play jacks and played Run Sheep Run and Anti Aye Over, those kind of things, with other children, you know.

I: Run Sheep Run, how was that played? I've never

R: I can't remember that. But I know I played that.

I: Okay and the other one that's the game where you throw balls over the house, right?

R: Uh-huh, in Anti Aye Over.

I: Right.

R: Yeah, a lot other games that we played, Kick the Can.

I: Okay, that one

R: And we played under the streetlight when we got older.

I: Okay. And as you got older, say into your teenage years, then was there anything different that you did?

R: Well I can tell you a story about when I was younger, yet.

I: Oh okay.

R: When I went to the North Shore, we packed a picnic basket and my mother and my oldest sister, Hazel, and Mrs. Bradley; she lived around the corner on 5<sup>th</sup> Street and her daughter, Ruth Bradley. We all went to; well it is where the boardwalk is now, across the street from where the old Coast Guard was. We walked that far with a picnic basket. And there was a great big ring that we would have to ring and then the Coast Guard would come across with a boat, pick you up and take you over there with a boat. We used to do that. And then we'd go there for the day across the river and we'd go in the water. First time we ever went in Lake Michigan with our dresses, we didn't have bathing suits. We had dresses, and of course they'd dry quickly, kind of clung to you. And then we went in to eat our picnic lunch and then we played round games and stuff, you know, in the sand and then we'd come home same way. The Coast Guard would bring us across the river and it was right across the river where the old Coast Guard station was. And then we'd walk to your home.

I: Were there any types of organized social activities? I mean where would kids go and I mean even older kids like teenagers, like now they all go downtown and hang out there?

R: We used to go to The Barn.

I: The Barn.

R: I didn't do that, my sisters, my younger sisters went to the barn and roller skated.

I: And roller skated.

R: They had a lot of fun doing that. That wasn't there then I guess when I was little. You know.

I: Yeah, right it was the roller arena and they had dances there, didn't they?

R: I remember going to Christian Endeavor. That was in our church, in the First Reform Church.

I: And what did you do for that?

R: And we met on Tuesday nights, we'd go to Christian Endeavor. That was a gathering for children and older people. And we would go to different churches and have parties there.

I: And what sort of things would you do at those parties?

R: Oh I don't know. I don't remember that. I know we went to Coopersville, we went to different churches around the area, you know.

I: Okay, for places like going to Coopersville or out of town, did you take cars then?

R: Uh-huh. I didn't, we didn't have a car.

I: Okay. Were cars fairly common then, not too common?

R: Not too common. When I was real little, cars were very scarce. We didn't have a car until we had twins. My mother had the twins and after that we had a car. I have a story about that too. I should look it up in my—It was in June and it was after my twin sisters were born and we had a double, you know, twin buggy. And we went from Jackson Street to Slayton Street. It must be about the 900 block of Slayton Street... It was hot. That time in June. My dad, I remember he sweated right through his coat. It was so hot. He pushing that buggy you know. But the whole family went. In those days we went with the family, you know, even though I was quite a bit older. And ah, then afterwards we went down and looked at the Chevy garage, he was going to buy a car. He looked down there and he had picked one out that he thought he'd like and so my sister and I, we had to go to the bank and get the money. And we had to sign a paper from my father to get the certain amount of money. It was \$625 for a brand new Chevy, four door.

I: That would be a pretty good deal today to say the least.

R: I don't remember nothing, we felt pretty big carrying all that money home, \$625 that was a lot of money in those days, he paid cash for it.

I: Yeah, it's a lot of money now.

R: Well I don't know if it is a lot of money now, but in those days it was. It was like a, well and then I used to take my sisters out for buggy rides, you know, after school when I got home, took them for rides in the buggy. And some people say boy she is young to have twins. They are my new sisters. [laughs] And I helped take care of them a lot. And then another story about when I went to the Sunday school picnic at Fruitport, you want to hear that one?

I: Yes.

R: Well first I'll go to the library. I was going to the library with my sister. My mother told my sister, my older sister that I had to go with her. She had something she wanted to do and so I'm supposed to go with her to the library. And she was with two other girls her age and she really didn't want me along, because I was a tag-a-long, you know, a little sister, four years younger. And we started walking down the street and the library was 3<sup>rd</sup> Street I think it was. Right across from the Ford garage, at that time. But then the First Reform Church is next to the Ford garage. And I think that's where it was. I was pretty proud; I had never been to the library at that age. Oh it is pretty nice to go to the library. But then when I got closer to the library, I saw my father coming down the street when he'd come home from work. And I thought, I guess I'd rather go with him. 'Cause he always stopped in Kitty Colhan's Saloon for one last beer. And I thought I'd like to go with him. So, I ran up to him when he got closer and he worked for the piano factory polishing pianos at the time, rubbing and polishing pianos. And I thought, well, I'd rather go with him. So, I asked if I could come along, he says yeah. Of course, my sister, they thought that was a better idea, so she says okay, you go with him. So I went with him, he set me on the little stool, I can still see myself sitting there and I had a glass of milk, he had one glass of beer and they had little dishes of peanuts and sausages they had. They had crackers, all little dishes of that stuff. Oh I filled myself up on that and my glass of milk. Then by the time I got home I wasn't hungry anymore. The saloon was on the corner of Fulton and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street pretty close.

I: Okay.

R: And my father he took one glass of beer. He never took no more than that. Because it was hot in the summertime and he'd cool off with having a glass of beer.

I: Now, was that during Prohibition and was it real beer or

R: It was real beer.

I: Okay.

R: He used to sell beer during the times when you could sell it, but they couldn't sell it on Sundays I think it was. And so he had a group of men that came in played cards on Sunday, he always let them in the backdoor and they played cards and it would get kind of rowdy sometimes, real loud you know. He'd say, keep your big mouth shut on Sunday. And that was a thing we always had around our house whenever we made a lot of noise, my dad tell them, keep your big mouth shut on Sunday. I will never forget that, isn't that funny how you can remember all those things?

I: What about again on the sheet here, the train and the interurban, were those running when you were young?

R: You mean at Fruitport? Did I tell you about that one already?

I: No you didn't.

R: Okay, we went to a Sunday school picnic at Fruitport that was, when I was about seven years old. We planned for weeks because we did go every many places in those days. We didn't have a car. And we got the train the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and went to Ferrysburg and we got off of that and we went on another interurban, and that went, that had five wheels I think it was. And the center one was electric, could that be?

I: Yeah.

R: Okay. That's what we did and we went to Fruitport and we had a picnic there. But we didn't eat right away. We first played games and then baseball for the men and horseshoes and all different things for all different ages of people. They had it pretty well organized. We would first play games, and then we would eat our picnic lunch, and then we'd go for a walk afterwards. We would have kind of a family style, we'd take a dish along and pass it and then we would go for a walk by the lake by the Fruitport pavilion there. We'd look in that and that was kind of nice. They had a big pavilion where they had dancing. And they had big band there come on Saturday nights. Didn't have that anymore, it burned down.

I: So yeah the big one on the end of the dock there.

R: Uh-huh. Well, I can tell you that's about all I know on that.

I: Okay. What about fishing with your father in the Grand River?

R: Yeah I went fishing with my father. I was six years old, first time I went fishing he took me along. We went fishing in the Sag; you know where that is, that's near Ferrysburg. No, that was a different time. I want to read this one too. We went fishing and he first took me when the carp were spawning and they were quite thick in there. So he took and rowed the boat right in there where the fish were spawning and the fish were real thick. You know, you could see the backs of them out of the water. And one went, he had his oar down and one of them went right up the oar and right in the boat right next to me. ... But we never kept those fish, we never liked carp, we never ate it. But, I did catch them on the line already, and they would really give you a good pull, it was a lot of fun catching them. But there was another time I wrote in here about fishing. That was when we went—The first time I went fishing in a rowboat, my father rowed to a place that we fished and then would across the river from the Musical Fountain and in the lily beds there. We'd fish, we would put the boat in the lily beds, and then we fished out of the lily beds. I baited my hook up and I had a small cane pole. That's what we fished with in those days, cane poles. And didn't have no reel, just a line on it. Yeah. And we used to catch, they had at that time, across the river was before that was the sawmills and everything and you used to get your hook caught in those things that stuck up, it was wood that was sticking out in the water, you know. I don't know, they were slabs of wood that they had sticking out in the water, use to get your hook on and quite often it would break your line and you'd have to start all over again. But anyway, I caught a fish and my dad took it off and put a new worm on it and I put the line out and caught another

one. You could catch fish just like nothing in those days. You didn't have to sit and wait an hour, you know. And then I got another one, and then another one, used to get sick of always taking my fish off, he couldn't even get his line out. So then he says to me, he told me how to take the fish off the hook, showed me how and says, now you can take it off yourself and put your worms on. So that was how I learned how to go fishing. And I went fishing a lot of times with him. And, on the way home we stopped at the hobo camp that was right behind Old Grand Trunk station.

I: Okay, the museum.

R: No the one on Fourth Street.

I: Okay, yeah the Grand Trunk one

R: Yeah, the hobo camp was behind that. The people that were on the trains would get off and they would have a regular camp for them. They would have that there, that had a place where they'd cook their meals and stuff and go to Betty's store and maybe get some canned meat or something like that. And that is how they used to cook their meal. I mean, when we stopped there and talked with them and we gave them the fish because we had lots of fish. And they cleaned them and they would eat them. They'd tell us stories about where they were from and they were really nice people. It is just that a lot of them couldn't afford travel expenses, so they would hop the train and go. A lot of times they would, we'd have hobos come to our house. The first house was Klemple's house and he was a policeman, never stopped there. And they never stopped at the next house that was where Fisher's lived. They never got anything there, but my mother always gave them something. But when my father wasn't home, he then would have to sit on the back steps and she would bring a plate of food out to them. She would never let them in the house. My dad never allowed that. But when he was home they could come inside. Now we had a lot of hobos, you know.

I: How long until about what year were the hobos still around?

R: Oh my, during the Depression and all that time, you know. We had a lot of hobos come.

I: Did gypsies come too?

R: No.

I: No. Just hobos.

R: They were real nice people, it wasn't that they were rough looking, you know, they were, you know, people that would just travel, but they didn't have means, you know, funds to travel, so they'd take the train and they'd stop off different places and see what they could see and then travel on again.

I: Back on the train. Okay. When did you get through with school?

R: I only went through 8th grade.

I: Through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, okay.

R: That's why I'm trying to get my high school education.

I: Alright, that's great. And what did you do after you were through with school? Did you help around the house? Did you get a job or?

R: I worked at Miller's Dairy.

I: Miller's Dairy.

R: I started working there when I was about 17, around there. And at that time they had just ice cream cones and quarts, pints hand-packed. They didn't have it in boxes; you'd scoop it out and put it in a container. And I used to do that. We were very busy on Sundays, I used to hate Sundays because they would come out of church on Sunday morning and buy ice cream. They didn't have freezers, you know, and refrigerators, they just had the old iceboxes so they couldn't keep it over night. And so they used to come to the dairy and buy ice cream, a lot of churches in that area.

I: Where was the dairy at?

R: Fulton Street, 420 Fulton Street.

I: Okay.

R: And there was the Christian Reformed Church, that would be the first Christian and First Reformed, Methodist, let's see, Second Reform and the Second Christian Reform was all in that area and all those people would come out of church and buy ice cream and go home and eat it, you know, after dinner. And I didn't like that very well.

I: How long did you work there?

R: I worked there until I got married. I got married when I was 24. Off and on; I'd quit and then get a job, you know, in a factory and, of course, you are the last one there, so you are the first one off. I worked in ... Producers for a while and I worked in Peerless Novelty about three different times and I did um, spraying up above the office. I worked in the spraying department, they had what they called shoe tree, they had the toe part of the shoe tree and the heel and then there was a flexible metal band in between and I had to put them in racks and they'd spray them. John Wesley used to spray them. And later on I got the job of spraying, but they didn't let me do that very long because that was a man's job and they couldn't pay me man's wages.

I: Couldn't or wouldn't?

R: What?

I: Couldn't or wouldn't?

R: When I started working at the dairy, 10 cents an hour and I worked 40 hours, so that was \$40 a week. And, of course, in those days it was Depression, so I gave it all to my mother and she gave me 25 cents for spending money for the week. And I saved money on that. While I was working there, my sister worked at Wessel's, the father of the one that had Wessel's Garage and she got \$4 a week too, she did housework. And she gave the money home too. And while she were there, she caught, while she worked there, she got scarlet fever from the boys there and then we all got it. My two little sisters got it and she got it and I got it and my mother got very bad strep throat. So we were all sick in bed. My dad, he worked one day for the PWA and that was the government and then he had to come in and take care of us. He couldn't get a job before that. There was no jobs to be found, no place, nowhere. And he was so tickled he got the job for, through the PWA, he worked and he had to come in, so he took care of us.

I: What sort of treatment did you have for that back then?

R: Well, the doctor came to the house, but I don't remember, pills I guess he gave us.

I: And how long were you laid up?

R: Oh gosh, I guess they kept you in the house three weeks then, quarantine, you know, my dad had to come in and he couldn't go out again. That was the way that worked and while I worked at the dairy, they had drivers with horses, wagons, you know, and the horses were very smart, they knew just how far to trot along. Well the man that the driver that was delivering the milk to different houses in this carrier filled with milk and cottage cheese and butter and oh all these coffee, cream, chocolate milk, whatever they wanted, you know. And he'd fill that up and go around to so many houses and the horse would stop at a certain place and then he'd go on, on again the wagon again and fill it up and the horse would trot along just so far and then he'd fill it more, see. Well, those horses were pretty smart, but when they had a customer that they lost, then it was kind of hard because

I: They'd still stop.

R: Yeah, he'd still stop. I would go along with him several times early in the morning; they started out about 3:00 in the morning. And then I would go with them when they'd go and get milk out in the country that was real nice.

I: Oh did they have to go like out to the farms and they'd buy the milk from the farmer?

R: Uh-huh, they'd go to Coopersville, as far as Coopersville and come back. And it was really nice, we'd go out about 3:00 in the morning and they had, the birds would be singing and roosters would be crowing and the sun would be coming up. It was really nice out in the morning, you know. And there was one guy I liked to visit in Coopersville that was why I went. Went on the route with him. That was kind of fun.

I: You had your ulterior motives, huh.

R: The man who used to drive the route was Jack Milford, used to do it. And let's see, they would get sour milk for butter that was a different route. I didn't go on that route, but then they would pick that up and they'd bring it back to the dairy and make butter out of that. And I'd used to have to go in the cooler and help them wrap the butter, 'cause they had a lot of ... I could do it fast. They would cut it in squares, not squares, oblong like they do now. And then I had to wrap it up. I used to do that and what else did I do? They used to pasteurize the milk and would have that set up in the second floor and then it would come down on, I guess it was filled with something that would make it real cold, it would be real hot in the vat and then come down and be real cold, like cold water in there or something. Maybe it was freezing water, I don't know. And something to make it freeze. And then it would come down and then it would go on a thing and the bottles would go down. The bottles would fill up and they would be put in cases, crates, you know cases. ... But they brought milk every day; seven days a week they delivered the milk to everybody's home.

I: Right, how many people roughly did they serve?

R: I couldn't tell you, but they had six drivers.

I: Okay, were there other dairies in town too?

R: Yeah, there a Klemple's dairy and there was... maybe more. There were smaller dairies. Oh Bremmer's, Rosema's Dairy, he ... and different ones. They would sell ice cream cones for 5 cents. I said that already. And then later on they had a soda bar and that was all made out of stainless steel and I used to work at that. I used to make sodas and sundaes and shakes, all that kind of stuff. And in those days they call them soda jerkers.

I: How did that term, jerker

R: What?

I: Do you know what the origins of the term jerker?

R: No, [inaudible]

I: Oh because they jerked the handle.

R: Handle and you put the stuff in, you know. The flavoring and stuff.

I: Right.

R: And I worked until 12:00 at night and boy we'd be busy in the summer. People would be down at the dairy bar. There was one doctor always came in and he was VerDuin and he would come in the winter even, he'd get a peach at Fortino's, come down there and want me to make him a peach sundae. And I'd charge him 50 cents. I'd peel the peach and put simple syrup on it. He always liked that. And let's see, like I said that's about all I can say about the dairy.

I: Okay.

R: Oh wait a minute; they had an ice cream war on. We sold ice cream for 10 cents a quart that was when they had it in box form. And you see when you had it hand packed, you'd squash the air out of it and you'd get more solid ice cream. You could still buy that yet. But, in those days; like now too you get more air in it. I guess they put a lot of air in it. And then everybody in Grand Haven got ice cream for supper. And they had different times and wars. One time they made banana splits and they had a chrome plated dish where three sections, you had a banana on each side and then you had three scoops of ice cream in different flavors and I guess that went for 15 cents. Everybody had a lot of those, you know.

I: Yeah, that was like a price war, you mean?

R: Price war.

I: Okay.

R: At different times they had price wars.

I: But you didn't like those, it made you have to work all that much harder, didn't it?

R: Oh yeah. You didn't get anymore pay. Of course, as I got older I got like 25 cents an hour, so.

I: How did the Depression affect you and your family?

R: Well, my dad didn't work, I know that. When he was working he worked in the piano factory part of the time. But it slowly went downhill. They would work like three days, four days a week, you know, and things like that. And then afterwards he didn't work at all because they weren't selling any pianos.

I: Right. Were there certain sacrifices you had to make to get through those years?

R: Well, we didn't go very many places, that was for sure. We always had food on table and we had bread. My mother took in boarders, when I was little, right from the

Netherlands. My dad new people from the Netherlands and they'd come to our house and they would be boardering there for about three, four years, five years, talked Dutch all the time when they went to school I talked Dutch.

I: Were there any interesting stories related to any of those boarders?

R: Well there was one that came with my dad. My dad went to the Netherlands. His mother was still living yet. He was the youngest of 12 children. And his mother was still living yet, so he wanted to go and see her. My mother didn't want to go because she didn't want to take us out of school. He left on December 1<sup>st</sup> to go to the Netherlands. He went on the Rotterdam, came home on the Amsterdam boat, great big boats. And he went there to see his mother and all his relation and took different things home for us, of course. And he took John VanDringen him home with him and he was talking Dutch and of course he stayed by our house for a while. Everything was Dutch, you know, I could talk Dutch just as good as I could talk English at that time. We had good times with him and my mother, they played a game they called, Kroshaft(?) and they played it every Monday night. Pete Byl would come and Eric Schippers and my dad played it, it was four of em who played that game. And sometimes one of them couldn't come and then my mother would play and then, of course, she had to make lunch for them, well then I could play the game. [inaudible] 'Cause I knew how to play it too. I don't know how to play it now, but at that time I could. Using a regular, you know, game card you could use ...

I: How about like movies or radio, were those big forms of entertainment?

R: ...about the movie. At the Robinhood Theater, you know where that was?

I: Yeah, it was right next to where the big bank is now.

R: Uh-huh. We went there. We were the first, I have a story about it. Sorry, I have so much space in between here, because I can't find it.

I: Well that's okay.

R: Went to the Robinhood Theater, every Saturday night we went. And we had to leave the house at 5:45.

I: When you say we, was that the whole family?

R: Oh yes, my older sister, myself, my mother and dad. Twins weren't born yet. And oh we left the house at 5:30 and we was first in line, we always had to be first in line. And we could get the seats we wanted. We always sat on the right side and there was a place and there was three seats, the rest were all four sets down the side and then the center had oh, a number of seats. On the other side there was four seats. And I sat in front of my dad because my dad was bigger, wouldn't see behind him. He was 265 pounds.

I: He was big.

R: And so he always had me sit in front of him, my sister sat in front of my mother. And we would always see cowboy movies and they had a good organist and his name was Lewis Briddels and he played the organ when the pictures were showing. And one time we were up there watching, we were in the movies watching and a man came out and walked on the stage and he said, Mr. Len VanZomeren, you got to go home right away. The whole family; go home. And they had a fire; there was a fire in the back of our house. It was ah, Neitering's coal dock, they had a right from their house they had a coal dock and it had kind of a shed and he had oil and they had gasoline and coal and all that kind of stuff in that big shed and they sold from there. And it was a huge fire. We came down the street we could see the fire way from there you know. And we were walking so fast from the theater I could hardly keep up with them. And I must have been about 10 at the time. And I can remember that too. And when he got there and they were putting water on our house, on the roof, you know, to keep it from burning. And the trees were starting to burn in the backyard already, in our backyard. And it was quite a fire. That burned down in the coal yard did. But our house stayed. The house next door stayed. They did pretty good at watering down the houses. And but we never went back to the show. Here you get called out, you never go back again. [Laughter] Then we used to go every Saturday night.

I: Were those like serials or were they

R: No, just cowboy movies. Tom Mix and ah, Gene Autry.

I: Before, was that before talkies?

R: No, well they had the organist playing, uh-huh.

I: So it must have been. Okay. How about radio, did you have a radio?

R: Later on, yeah. But we didn't get it right away.

I: Okay. What sort of programs did you listen to on the radio?

R: Oh in the afternoons, ..and Dale [not speaking up] .. Fibber McGee and Molly at night and

I: And what were those about, I'm not; and Flipper McGee and Molly, what were those programs about?

R: Well, things, you know.

I: Were they like soap operas?

R: Yeah, well in that order. Well, some of them were kind of not series, some just a plain program just for the night, you know. We had a lot of good movies in those times.

I: Okay.

R: Not movies, but um, programs. We didn't get a TV or either, everybody else in the neighborhood had a TV before we got one. Before I was married.

I: How long did you live with your family?

R: I was 24 when I got married.

I: Okay and then where did you move to?

R: I moved to where the community center is now. We had a three apartment house and he was in the back apartment and we paid \$14 a month rent. It was small and the walls were like tissue paper. Well my son; we stayed there until he was about 2 ½ years old and I can remember the park was being fixed with the fountain in it. And first time he saw the fountain, my little boy, we spoke to him and oh mother, pretty all dark he called it, pretty all dark. I never forgot that. So whenever I go past it, I think of that. It was kind of nice, it was dark and then they had the different colors, you know, just like the fountain. Let me think about it, I've got one that you ... all over.

I: So, you got married in 1938. Did the war affect your life at all?

R: ...between here and Muskegon. I remember. And he worked in the part where they cleaned out all parts, tools and stuff, ...that need them; that worked there. And he worked; there was times he worked seven days a week. ... You had to work when they told you. Otherwise

I: Uh-huh. And you were living?

R: Our house was on Monroe Street, we lived at 431 Monroe Street. We lived there about 34 years.

I: And was that neighborhood more or less the same as it is now or

R: Yeah, the house I lived in on Monroe I was not happy with. I mean the house I lived then was not the way it looks now. But they don't keep up the houses like they needed, you know. Of course, some are being, you know, refinished I would say. There is Kwinkles(?) on the corner on Jackson Street, that first one by the park there, that looks nice and the Dehaan's in back of that one on Monroe Street that looks nice. There are some houses that are okay.

I: What sort of things did you do for social activities after you got married? What did people do to keep themselves?

R: Went to church. We went on dates. We got a car later on. We didn't have a car when we got married. We didn't do very much on vacation time. ....when the children were little. Not very much until we got older. Then we'd go on vacation. We went to Niagara Falls and things like that. Up north a lot and to the Island and go to the zoo, that kind of stuff.

I: Did a lot of people take trips like that? Were those pretty common things?

R: When the children got older, yeah.

I: For people to do?

R: It wasn't as expensive to go as it is now, of course.

I: Yeah, obviously.

R: But when my husband started working, he was making 85 cents an hour at a Michigan Brass.

I: Was that pretty good in those days?

R: Eight-five cents an hour.

I: Okay. You have something on here it looks like Breem Church?

R: What?

I: It is under

R: Breem(?) Church, I went to that church with my dad on Sunday morning and they taught, they preached Dutch. So I sat and listened to the Dutch. Then I would run from that church to the First Reform Church and went to Sunday school. I always went to Sunday school as long as I can remember at First Reform Church. We were custodians when we got married ...custodian for the First Reform Church, my husband worked in Michigan Brass and that was a full time job, and a part time job as a custodian. It was during the time when we put that new wing on. It faces Washington. And that had, the parsonage was right where part of the wing is now, years back.

I: Okay. I forgot what I was going to ask.

R: ... facilities ..custodians ... [cannot hear] ... And we worked with at Park Lane, .... and I lived there for about a half a year and then I moved here, been here 11 years.

I: Eleven years.

R: That's ...

I: Yeah, I was going to say I didn't think this was that old, so—Okay, do you have any other stories from your stories that you'd like to relate?

R: I had my appendix removed. I was 22.

I: Twenty-two. [phone]

R: Where was I?

I: We were going to start another story?

R: I was 32 years old when I had my appendix removed. Dr. DeWitt was the doctor and about three weeks before that; he kind of didn't want to have to ..... so he kind of gave different medicines, you know. It did not help. Finally I had to have it out. He went away, so I went to Dr. VerDuin and he wanted to take it out the next morning, but I said no I'll wait until Dr. DeWitt comes back and take it out. So I suffered for a while more. And then I was in the hospital and I started feeling better after I had it removed. My husband, he always went, he was my boyfriend at that time, he went rabbit hunting and he shot a couple rabbits and he took them to my mother and she cleaned, he cleaned them first, then she fixed them and she took them down to the hospital for me to eat. I always liked rabbit then. Wild rabbit was really good tasting and they couldn't figure out where the bones come from. They were on the tray, because I didn't know what to do with them, so I'd put them on the tray. Then while I was there, the triplets were little, the Wildron triplets, I was at that time, I wasn't 32, I was 22. And they were, they are about 50 years old now, because I'm 77. And my mother was there to sick; she stayed in the hospital for a month and a half or maybe two. Of course, there were three of those babies, plus the other babies that were born and there was quite a few babies in the nursery at this particular time. And when one cried they all cried. You know how that goes, so they had to go downstairs and take a cast off Mr. Bolt's leg. He worked at the NBD Bank at the time. What was his first name, I don't remember. Anyway his name was Bolt and the nurse says, upstairs, she worked upstairs. She had to go downstairs and she said, will you have one of those little triplets in bed with you? And I says, sure I wasn't married, but I still took care of that little triplet. I gave him his bottle and burped him and ...and then he went to sleep, he went the bed. And she left him there for about two hours. And she said that helped, because then the other babies could sleep too, you know. And but they wouldn't do that nowadays. That they'd bring someone else's baby in your bed and that was the NBD Bank that was the one that was across the street from the First Reform Church.

I: Right.

R: So when I see the triplets now, I wonder which one was in bed with me. We had one of them that sings in our choir, he goes to our church. So quite often I think about that when I see him. They were about 1 ½ months before they went home, the triplets. There mother was so sick that she couldn't take care of them.

I: Uh-huh. Back, I don't know, as far back as you can remember. When people got sick say with a cold or the flu or something, what sort of remedies did they use? I'm assuming it is not like now where you can go to the store and there is 300 different cold tablets you can pick up, did you do anything?

R: Well, we had certain medicines the doctor would come to the house, of course. And give medicine.

I: Were there a lot of home remedies for different things back then?

R: Yeah. You use to wear a rag around your neck a for sore throat, we used to have that and ah, I remember when I was real little, I was born, I was only 3 lbs when I was born. And they couldn't get food to agree with me. My mother said they tried everything. Of course, in those days they didn't have formulas like you got now. They had barley water, rice water that is the kind of stuff they give me. They cooked the rice and then that was the water they gave me, you know. And barley water and all things like that she would give me. But nothing would stay down, I had a weak stomach. So I was puny and I didn't sit up until I was about a year and a half, because I wasn't strong enough. I didn't walk until I was about three. From then on I started gaining, you know, weight. I went way up to 230.

I: Wow.

R: And then every time I would get sick different times and then kind of be sick, some of the pounds would come off of me. I had half of my stomach removed, a lot of my intestines and I lost quite a bit of weight at that time and it never came back.

I: Okay.

R: You want to know about medicine. Well, when I was real little my mother always gave me cod-liver oil. And she'd put sugar on the back of the spoon, cod-liver oil, and I had to take it. I believe I had a whole room full of it. [laughs]

I: Did that taste like?

R: I couldn't eat anything with oil in it, even you know, like you take ...oil, I didn't like it. And I didn't like anything like oh fish packed in oil, tuna fish. I like it now with water, but then I didn't care for it with oil, just because of that.

I: What did cod-liver oil taste like, is there anything you can compare it to?

R: Yeah, it was bad tasting stuff. I really can't say. I didn't like it. But I had to take it because that's what the doctor told me I had to have. At that time, they had a lot to say, they just pushed it down you, oh well.

I: What was it supposed to do for you, do you know?

R: It was supposed to make me healthier.

I: Make you healthier.

R: At that time I was puny and skinny.

I: Sort of a cure all.

R: They had a lot of different remedies for different things, but I can't think of them right now.

I: Okay. Any other stories you would like to add?

R: Oh when my mother had the twins. Dr. DeWitt that was his first set of twins. He was so proud of them that he took his whole family down to see the twins. Because they had never had seen twins, you know. And they brought two layettes for my mother, so she could have them for the twins. And they wanted to charge you \$25, that was all they charged for; he just charged the single amount, instead of double the amount. I remember that. I was almost 14 at the time. She was very sick for a month after that. She didn't do anything; my aunt was there all the time. And I remember that when I went to school, when the twins got a little bigger then I used to have to give them their bath before school and feed them their bottle. And then I had to go to school. And I had to get up pretty early.

I: Yeah, they keep you pretty busy.

R: [inaudible] when they got bigger I could handle them. So I ended up taking care of babies. I use to have to iron clothes, used to get so mad, she had all ruffles and all that kind of stuff on the dresses, you know, lace and all that kind of stuff. And you iron one; you got to another one just like it. In those days you had to iron everything. They didn't have slats or anything like that. Boy they sure are a lot more better clothes than they had in those days. What else do you want to know?

I: Whatever you want to tell me at this point.

R: I can't think of anything else.

I: Okay, then I guess just to sum things up, having lived in this area all your life, how would you say it's changed and do you think the changes have been for the better and do you think it is a better area to live?

R: For the better. I can remember this area where I am now. My cousin used to own this land, his name was Elmer Klop, he had celery here. And my uncle, he had celery where the D&W is now and he had four acres there, that was his, you know, that is what they

lived on. They had money that they ... My uncle worked with his son, Elmer Klop, his son, Arie and Elmer and with his wife and they had celery. But they took all that nice black dirt off and they had put it back on again. If you know what I mean? They sold it for something else.

I: Okay, I think that about wraps it up then.