

AMELIA JOHNSON

AJ: Hello. My name is Amelia Johnson. I live at 18800 Northville Road, Northville. I've lived here all my life with the exception of the day I was born which was in Goodlettsville, Tennessee when my parents were visiting my grandmother. My father's name was Fred Sutton. He bought this property from Cass Benton, who had a farm, we called it a small rural farm, for sale. It was four and a half acres and my father bought it from Cass. Cass Benton was the man who gave Cass Benton Park to the county.

Int: You said that was in 1911 your dad bought the property?

AJ: Yes, 1911. Cass Benton was a lawyer and also on the Road Commission, and a farmer. He owned a lot of land, over to Sheldon Road.

Int: You said last night he did some farming across Northville Road on what is now Cass Benton Park.

AJ: Well, this is Rouge Park, which Cass Benton Park is the hill down here where the forest is.

Int: That's south of what is now King's Mill.

AJ: Yes, right next to it. In fact where King's Mill is now was where his house was and the hill that has all the maple trees on it was his sugar bush. My father and my uncle used to work it in the spring. It took a barrel of sap to make a gallon of syrup after it's cooked down.

Int: Did you sell the syrup?

AJ: We sold the syrup.

Int: It wasn't just for home use?

AJ: No.

Int: What are some of your earliest memories about living here?

AJ: Well, I remember that there was no one here on our side of the road as far as Seven Mile and to the other side of Rouge Creek we were the only house. My father decided we needed a new house and so he built another with an acre between. We moved into that. I grew up there and went to Northville High School, graduated from Northville High School in 1940. I married in 1941 and my husband was in the Second World War While he was gone I lived with my parents and worked as everybody in this locality, and several other localities, did at the Ford Bomber Plant.

Int: Where was that? Was that down in Romulus?

AJ: No, that was in Ypsilanti.

Int: So you drove to Ypsilanti every day to work at the Bomber plant?

AJ: Yes, we drove to Ypsilanti every day. My father even got a job there and he was 75.

Int: There was a shortage of manpower.

AJ: Yes, and most of the workers there were women except for the men who were waiting to be drafted, and older men.

Int: Did they call you "Rosie, the Riveter"?

AJ: Well, that was a famous song at that time. But, that's what I did. I was a riveter. We manufactured B24s.

Int: When your husband came home from service you built your own house.

AJ: Yes, my father gave me a lot and we built our own house. I've lived here and raised my family.

Int: How many years have you lived in this house?

AJ: In this house 42 years. I've lived on the property 66 years.

Int: You were telling me the other night about the interurban.

AJ: The Interurban was a street car that ran in front of the house right next to the road. It ran between Northville and Plymouth and to Detroit. It went Seven Mile to Detroit. It went Eight Mile on its circuit to Farmington. It was a real help because anyone could hail it in front of their home and go

wherever they liked, and it was five cents.

Int: Now how long did the Interurban stay? Do you remember?

AJ: They finally stopped it, I think, when I was about four years old. The tracks stayed for a long time afterwards.

Int: Northville Road was a gravel road?

AJ: It was a gravel road. When I was very small I can remember they were paving it because of all the big machines, and the men working, and the cement bags. And since then the road has been raised and widened and the curve taken out. That changed it a lot. And they tore out the old tracks.

Int: You said that you started driving when you were fifteen years old. Can you tell me something about that?

AJ: Well, my father had a Model A Ford at that time. It was a stick shift and I wanted to drive, of course. Just like now every kid wants to know. And so, he was very upset. He didn't think I ought to even try. But, I really taught myself how to drive. I would drive back and forth in the driveway and turn around. And then I'd go to town and back which was no big deal then because there was hardly any traffic. When I went to high school there were only five or six kids that had cars to drive and they were usually one their dad had scraped up from somewhere to allow them to come to school, because they came from a distance where they couldn't walk. There was no busing.

Int: You also told me you went from first grade right to graduation right on a main street.

AJ: Yes, Main Street Schools.

Int: In three different buildings.

AJ: Two different buildings. They built the newest one when I was starting high school. I didn't go to that because it was a grade school.

Int: And you walked until you were old enough to drive.

AJ: Yes. Well, I'd catch a ride once in a while and my father'd take me occasionally when it was really raining or snowing. And it seemed like every years when we had exams, it was always the coldest day of the year. The coldest two days in the year. One girl that lived in the neighborhood froze her hands going to school. But you made a real effort to get there because it couldn't be postponed.

Int: How many were in your graduation class?

AJ: 54.

Int: Are most of them still living?

AJ: I imagine there's probably a third of them that are gone.

Int: At what time in your life did you start at the Methodist Church? Was that when you were very young?

AJ: Well, my parents left it to me to do as I thought about religion, mostly. My father was Catholic. He would have been very happy for me to be one. I used to go with him. Our Lady of Victory was built in 1922 which was the year I was born. They had no Catholic church here before. However, my mother was in disagreement because she wasn't Catholic. So, they decided that I should go to whichever church. I went to the Presbyterian for a while. I went to the Methodist.

Int: Was that the one over on Dunlap St.?

AJ: No, the Presbyterian was on Main Street. The Methodist Church was the old church that is now the Open Door Church. I went there for awhile and also, for a little bit to the Baptist. But I decided that I really liked the Methodist the best.

Int: Is that where you were married?

AJ: No, I was married in Ohio when my husband was on leave. But, I joined the church in 1946. Right after the War. Yes. All my children were raised in the Methodist Church and baptized there.

Int: Would you tell us your children's names?

AJ: I had a son named Charles Frederick. He's 42 now. I had a Barbara Antoinette. She's 36. And Mark Clark who is 34. Charlotte is 32. They all went to Northville schools and graduated from there.

Int: You must be proud.

AJ: Well, it makes kind of a tradition, doesn't it?

Int: Yes, it does.

AJ: My father also went to Northville Schools.

Int: Is that right?

AJ: Yes.

Int: Did he graduate from the high school?

AJ: They didn't have a high school then.

Int: I see. That is interesting. So you're really Northville people.

AJ: Yes.

Int: Tell us more about what the Methodist Church in town was like at that time.

AJ: Well, it was very warm, very nice people went there.

Int: Can you tell me who the minister was at that time?

AJ: When I started going there regularly his name was Hughes. He was there for a number of years. And then I can remember that we had a Reverend Johnson. I can't think of the names of all of them, they changed them so often.

Int: And then, of course, that church was probably too small, so they built the new one?

AJ: Well, they had two services a Sunday and we had other activities that went on constantly during the week. That made it quite a busy place. And there was choir practice, of course, and then there were meetings and the young peoples' societies. They had dinners. We had, oh, many activities that went on there. And there were more and more people beginning to come and the parking was bad. There was hardly any place to park. And, of course, the building was getting old, although it was a good building yet. And, of course, it is still being used, so that you can see that it must be. But they decided to build a new one where they would have more expansion area. So they have. And that's on Eight Mile Road.

Int: Near Taft.

AJ: Yes. And I want to say, too, that three of my children were married in the Methodist Church since they moved.

Int: You also indicated that you'd like to talk about the Women's Society. Have you always been a member of the Women's Society?

AJ: No. I joined it when I joined the church. And I worked at it – oh, I supposed I belonged about fifteen years. My mother broke her hip and there were many things that they did that I couldn't join in any more I had so much to do. She was a bed patient for several years. She lived next door to me and I took care of her all the time. But that limited my activities, so then I just gradually let that go. I was treasurer for it one year.

Int: What sort of activities did the Women's Society do?

AJ: They had bake sales. They had bazaars. They did the business and Professional Women's luncheons and dinners. The dinners were once a month. Some missionary work. Of course, they drew from them for the teachers for the summer Bible School. I taught them for two years.

That's about all I can think of. Just general church work that women do. Of course, in the early days it was called the Missionary Society, I think, but they changed it and it was called the Guild for awhile and they changed it to the Women's Society.

Int: I'd like to go back to something. Can you tell me what it was like when you were at the Bomber Plant and how long were you there?

AJ: I worked there nearly three years.

Int: And your husband was overseas?

AJ: Yes, my husband was in Australia and then he was in the Solomons and he was in Guadalcanal. Just all over the South Pacific.

Int: I don't think we mentioned his first name.

AJ: His name is Charles.

Int: So, while he was gone – were you married at that time?

AJ: Yes. We were married November the 5th, 1941.

Int: I was married November 30th, 1940...

AJ: Oh, were you?

Int: So, you had to drive to Ypsilanti every day?

AJ: Yes, and gasoline was rationed at the time, and you had a card, an extra allotment if you drove to work. So most people took riders. And I rode with different people.

Int: That was the beginning of car pools, wasn't it?

AJ: Yes, it was. A nearly everybody took a car load, because everybody couldn't get a ration card for that. And then when the shift changed usually you were looking for another ride because everybody didn't work in the same department and their shift would change at different times.

Int: So, were they working around the clock?

AJ: Yes.

Int: During World War II?

AJ: Yes.

Int: So it was a three shift day?

AJ: Yes. Usually I worked days or afternoons.

Int: What was the morale like?

AJ: Very good. Very good. Everyone was interested in doing all they could. We had older women there with sons in the army that would work and work. Everybody told everyone about every time they got a letter from anybody. And another thing is we had posters all over telling about how our aircraft had done. There was one that came into England with the tail shot off. Only the rudder on either side were hanging but they made the trip. And that gave everybody a good feeling that they'd worked on it. They always had things of interest that the B24s were in..

Int: Every once in a while, as I recall, President Roosevelt would come and visit the various war plants. Did he ever come to yours?

AJ: No, he never came when I was there and I don't recall him being there. But one of the French generals was there.

Int: Oh, is that right? That must have been quite an occasion.

AJ: It was, it was. They walked down through the center of the plant and looked at everything on either side. Henry Ford used to come.

Int: Oh, is that right? That must have been quite an occasion.

AJ: It was, it was. They walked down through the center of the plant and looked at everything on either side. Henry Ford used to come.

Int: Oh, is that right? I suppose security was very tight.

AJ: I thought so. They used to check our lunch pails going in, check our badges. We had a badge with out picture. You had colors on your badge for a certain department and if you left that department they wanted to know why you were out of it. I worked in final assembly and that was green.

Int: Were you working at the time peace was declared? VJ Day?

AJ: Well, I wasn't working at that time. My husband came home.

Int: Was he in the army or navy?

AJ: In the Army Air Force. They were beginning to rotate men and he got back. He was stationed at Harvard Air Force Base in Nebraska and I went there then, so that's where we were.

Int: So you weren't working when peace was declared?

AJ: No, I wasn't. But everybody at this air force base was just glad it was all over.

Int: I'm sure we all were.

AJ: And everybody said, "When are we going home?"

Int: So when did you get home from Nebraska?

AJ: Let's see. Do you remember the day you were mustered out?

UV: It was in October. I had to come to Fort Sherman, Illinois to get discharged.

AJ: It was in early October.

Int: Would that have been in 1946?

AJ: It was in 1945. When my son was three months old.

Int: Oh, so your son was born in Nebraska.

AJ: No, he was born here. I came home and he was born here. I went back out there when he was six weeks old. I went on the bus, on the Greyhound.

Int: Oh, with a six-week-old baby.

AJ: That's right. We lived there very primitive because there was no ice in the whole town. Ice came in on the trains and people had ice boxes like they had always had here, of course.

Int: There was no electricity.

AJ: They had electricity but not many people had electric refrigerators. Even in the restaurants you couldn't get a cold coke. The day we got there I said let's go get something cold, because it was so hot, but we went in there and all they had was warm beverages. There was no cold, no ice because the train hadn't come with the ice.

Int: That must have been a pretty small town.

AJ: It was. It was about like Northville was at that time.

Int: It was a farmer's town.

AJ: Surrounded by corn fields and wheat fields and nothing.

Int: Flat, with swells, but it was prairie.

AJ: I worked at the government munitions arsenal when I first went there for a few months. And that covered 27 square miles. And they made shells, all kinds of shells for the navy.

Int: So you were really involved.

AJ: Well, yes, I did a lot of war work.

Int: So, then when you came back here, you probably stayed home and raised your family.

AJ: Yes, I didn't go to work after that. I had too much to do at home.

Int: Well, Northville is a wonderful little town to live in.

AJ: It used to be a wonderful little town to live in.

Int: Is it too changed for you?

AJ: Oh, it's changed quite a lot, because, of course, there's so many people gone. And there's newer people moved in. Some people come and they don't stay long. They're here maybe a year and they're gone.

Int: Job transfers?

AJ: Yes, mostly.

Int: In the last twelve years you have worked at Freydl's? The dry cleaners?

AJ: Yes, the dry cleaners. I've known them all my life, because they've been here since, I think, Mr. Freydl, senior, that passed away about three years ago, told me that he came here about 1897. So they've been here and been in business all that time. His father was a tailor. He started the dry cleaning business.

Int: And the men's clothing store. And then the women's clothing store which is right next door.

AJ: Yes.

Int: So, I suppose you must have a lot of faithful old dry cleaning customers.

AJ: I imagine, yes. But like I said, a lot of them have not been here too long. Of course, some of them have been here a long, long time. Everybody who was adult when I was growing up is old now, of course. Very old, and they've passed away.

Int: Do you have any memories involving the Ford Plant on Main Street?

AJ: I remember that it was an old gray building to start with, where the present building is. Then about 1936 they put an addition on it which is where the water wheel is. Then they tore down the old gray building.

Int: Oh, is that right? This isn't the original plant?

AJ: No.

Int: The original one was built in the 20s wasn't it?

AJ: Oh, before that, because it belonged to another manufacturer.

UV: There was a sawmill there once.

AJ: Where Ford's now sits, that whole area, where this road is that goes past the spring, and where that office is, that doctor's office, that was all low in there, all down. There was no road going around. The road went in back of that. And it was all flooded. The creek ran from the back down into it. There was a pond there. It was a sawmill and there were logs there. But that was long before I remember. When I remember it was Ford's.

Int: And so the original building was torn down.

AJ: Anyway, we were all delighted when they built the new Ford's and the water wheel was constantly running then. Then sometimes it would freeze up in the winter. But I think now they don't even use that. It was a hobby of Henry Ford's that water power. And about a mile down the road...What is it they call it now?

UV: Well, that cardboard corporation is in there.

AJ: But, before that, there was a Ford Plant.

Int: Oh, down south of Six Mile?

AJ: Yes, a separate building. And he got his water power from that little lake in the back. He did this all through southeastern Michigan, he built these little plants with the water power.

UV: Nankin Mills was one of his projects. He used to have a little plant there. And Phoenix up here. And Wilcox Farm was another plant.

AJ: Well, that's about all I can tell you about the Ford plant. It employed a lot of men here. An then, of course, they had several factories here. They had the foundry. That was on Cady Street, at the very end of Cady Street. They had a mill. That was on Eight Mile Road. There was a bell foundry here once. They cast bells.

Int: Is that right?

AJ: And the bell in the old Methodist Church was cast there. That was right next to where the foundry was there at the foot of Cady Street. It runs right into the end there, where Ballenger's is. And

there was a furniture factory which sat right where that office supply is on Northville Road as you go around the curve there.

Int: Oh Ruby's.

AJ: Yes. They made church furniture. And I think that most of the churches here were supplied from that little factory and they made church furniture for all around the country.

Int: That's interesting.

AJ: It was called the Globe Furniture Factory. They had a big fire and that was the end of that.

Int: Do you remember anything about the early days of the library?

AJ: I remember it was called the Ladies Lending Library. Mother used to go there a lot. Mrs. Walsh was the librarian mostly and she had taken her private books, a lot of them, to start that library. Anyone gave books that they had.

Int: It wasn't tax-supported at that time?

AJ: No, it wasn't Wayne County at all. It was a private library.

Int: Where was it?

AJ: It was right across from the City Hall.

Int: The present City Hall?

AJ: Yes. It was east of the City Hall.

Int: Where the M.A.G.S. Building is now?

AJ: Yes, where that is. That took up several houses, but the library was behind a house, going down hill there.

Int: Did it face Main Street?

AJ: Yes. Now it's over at the old Mill Race Village, you know. It was really used; it was used a lot. And my uncle, who was Celom McCulloch, lived on Cady Street, he was Justice of the Peace here after I grew up. His father was very old when I was young and he read all the time. And so they were constantly going to the library in back. And after it became the Wayne County Library they had a lot more books. So that kept everybody busy.

Int: Can you tell me anything about the building where the Marquis Theater is now?

AJ: Since that building has been there it's always been a movie. It was built for that. But before that time, there was a roller skating rink there.

Int: In the theater?

AJ: No, there was no building there. The old building that was there is gone. But it was just a frame building.

Int: And that was a roller rink?

AJ: Yes.

Int: Did you go there?

AJ: No, it was before I was born.

Int: I see. You're telling me what you've heard?

AJ: Yes. My aunt used to go roller skating there. There was a fish hatchery out on Seven Mile.

Int: What did they do there?

AJ: The governor raised fish there to plant in different streams and lakes.

Int: Did you used to go out there?

AJ: Yes, it was quite a show place and a lot of people went on Sunday.

Int: Was it like an aquarium?

AJ: They had tanks in a building where they had started them. Very tiny fish. They graduated from tank to tank and then they were put in ponds out in back and you could see them 'cause they were quite shallow.

Int: There's one there yet.
AJ: Is there?
Int: Just one, I think.
AJ: Well, anyway, then they were put into large beds that you couldn't see. You could walk around there, but the water wasn't clear. It wasn't running all the time and they were larger fish that were in there.
Int: So was that a kind of park?
AJ: They kept it mowed and it was just a kind of sight seeing place. People went to see it.
Int: And did people picnic there?
AJ: Oh, sometimes I suppose they did, but it wasn't intended for a park.
Int: If you wanted to go to a park, say for a picnic, where would you go?
AJ: Went to Cass Benton Park.
Int: Right across the street.
AJ: Well, down a bit.
UV: At Kings Mills, that woods there.
AJ: They had swings after it became a park. Even before it was a park people used to go there and they called it The Woods. They used to go there on picnics. That's why Cass Benton thought it would be such a good thing to give this park.
Int: Well, that was a real gift, wasn't it?
AJ: Yes, I thought so, thought he was a very good man. When he was successful – he had attended the little country school that was down on Franklin Road.
Int: On Franklin Road?
AJ: Yes.
Int: Where?
AJ: You know where Meads Mill goes up there?
Int: Oh, all right.
AJ: Well, he had attended this little school. And he said that he felt bad because when he was a kid they had no candy on Christmas. So he always saw to it that the school got a pail full of candy to give out to the kids on Christmas. He was quite a community-minded man. He really believed that he should do things for the community that he grew up in.
Int: Did he practice law in Northville?
AJ: I don't know whether he did or not. I know that he did have a law degree. He farmed most of the time that I can remember.
Int: And was that right across the street?
AJ: Yes. That was down here. And he owned the land as far as Sheldon Road. From Six Mile to Sheldon Road was all his property.
Int: What did he grow?
AJ: Oh regular crops, corn, wheat. He wasn't a dairy farmer.
Int: Was there a place here to market those crops?
AJ: A farmer just sold what they had. If you knew someone who raised potatoes or whatever they had, you could go to them and say do you want to sell me a bushel of potatoes? My dad used to do that quite a bit. If he didn't have that, he'd go down on Six Mile Road to Mr. Crumb's farm. He raised a lot of potatoes. And he'd buy potatoes from him. And, if it was apples, he went out to Forman's Orchard. But they didn't have roadside markets.
Int: For your general grocery shopping, during the years you were growing up here, where did you go?

AJ: Northville.

Int: Where was the grocery store?

AJ: There was a grocery store where Black's Hardware is. There was a meat market in there one time. Let's see. And the bakery was where it is now. There's always been a bakery there as long as I can remember. There were other small grocery stores. There was a Smith store.

Int: A C.F. Smith?

AJ: Yes. And that was where Spagnuolo's is.

Int: C.F. Smith was a small chain at the time.

AJ: Yes, it was. And there was EMB; that was Elmer M. Bogart and he was where Genitti's is now.

Int: What kind of business was that?

AJ: That was a grocery.

Int: There was a lot of competition all in one spot.

AJ: Well, I don't know. They all seemed to do pretty good, because everybody had to go and get it. And Frank Hill had a butcher shop which is gone now, where the parking lot is behind the stores on Main Street. Going west on Main Street. He did a good business. When you went to the meat market you said, "I'd like a steak." So he would throw the haunch down on the table and say, "How big and what type would you like?" And so he cut it. A roast, pork chops. And they had ice in the show case that they would put a few things in, you know, so they would have them ready. But they didn't cut a lot of meat for display.

Int: Or package it?

AJ: No, it wasn't packaged until he took the paper off the roller and wrapped it with a string. That's how it was packaged. As I remember, they didn't have a whole lot of fresh fish. Most people went fishing if they wanted that.

Int: When you were growing up was the clock on Main Street?

AJ: Well, the clock wasn't on Main Street. That's only a recent thing, in the last five years.

Int: Where did it used to be?

AJ: Well, in the tower of the Methodist Church.

Int: That clock on Main Street is from the tower of the Methodist Church?

AJ: No, the clock is still there.

Int: Oh, I misunderstood.

AJ: It's been fixed a number of times, but it never runs for very long. It used to keep good time, and everybody in town knew when the clock struck it was noon, or a certain time, 'cause you could hear it all over.

Int: So, you don't know where the clock came from that's on Main Street.

AJ: Yes, it was donated by the people whose names are on that plaque.

Int: I see. Ok, so it's not an old clock?

AJ: No it's not old. It was just put there when they redeveloped Main Street, and had all those flower beds sticking out in the street, then they put the clock there. But that was not what we used to call the town clock, The Methodist Clock.

Int: I've been in that Methodist Church recently and that woodwork up above is ...

AJ: Beautiful, isn't it?

Int: Yes, it is. Some day it won't be there.

AJ: I think they should find a way to keep it there.

Int: Well, when the library has talked about moving, they talked about it they were to move that site, maybe use some of the woodwork and incorporate it into the library, putting the old in with the new, so to speak.

AJ: Yes, well, it's beautiful.

Int: It really is.

AJ: And then, in the Baptist Church – have you ever been in the Baptist Church?

Int: No, I haven't.

AJ: Up above that are wide pieces of wood; they cross the ceiling and they curve like this. And they must be twenty inches wide. They look like mahogany, but I don't believe they are. They're a dark wood, probably walnut. And they've been there a hundred years and better, I know, since the church was built.

Int: Is that right?

AJ: Yes. And it's nice; they're nice.

Int: So, there've been a lot of changes in Northville, on Main Street.

UV: For the worst.

Int: I was going to ask you how you felt about it. Do you think it's for the better?

AJ: It looks beautiful, the way they've got it. Very nice in the summer time, but it's a traffic hazard. And there are so many people, now, that go through.

Int: It slows the traffic down.

AJ: And, I mean, it's really kind of dangerous the way it's plotted out. Maybe when they get Cady Street changed, where they're going to put more parking in, maybe they will fix that so it will work a little bit differently and take up some of the traffic. But it's really hard.

AJ: It used to be that piece of land when there was a small grandstand there, was the Wayne County Fair. Well, I think about 1945 or 46, they decided to change the Wayne County Fair and they moved that to Belleville. Then they started having racing there along about – in the forties.

Int: After the War?

AJ: Yes. Then this pari-mutuel came in later and it didn't run as long as it does now. They've expanded it a lot since and it's run much longer. They have it all winter now.

Int: When they first started operating Northville Downs here, how did the people respond to that? Were they in favor of it or opposed to it?

AJ: Well, a lot of people didn't want it. They said when they started it that it would bring in a lot of revenue, a lot of tax for the new town, and so that really swung it and the people voted for that. I think a lot of them were sorry after they did.

Int: Oh, is that right?

AJ: Yes. Yes, because - - How long have you lived here?

Int: Almost eleven years.

AJ: Then you know how the traffic comes in here at night to go to that.

Int: Yes.

AJ: And if you wanted to go to town, you'd be hard up to get there. That runs all winter. Of course, in the summer it's a lot better, they aren't there. But it gets crowded, really crowded.

Int: Have you noticed they've moved the horse barns west of Sheldon and south of Seven Mile and they're building what they call the St. Lawrence Estates?

AJ: Yes.

Int: How do you feel when you see all those trees and that woodsy land having houses built on it?

AJ: Well, I don't go for that. Maybe it's because it's just too much, too soon, but it seems like they tear up everything. They tear up everything. The environmentalists say, well, we're going to save this, that and the other. And then when a contractor gets hold of this ground he just goes in there and tears it

apart. If it was a mountain, it would be flat. Gets rid of all the trees. Sells the soil back to the people that buy the house and then they've got these condominiums stuck on every hill in every place. I guess I'm just small town and I can't get used to that.

Int: They're building homes for moneyed people.

AJ: You have to be. Who can pay \$250,000 for a house?

Int: That's right. There is a great shortage of homes for lower income people. There's not much profit in it, I guess.

AJ: No. Well, you know, you used to be able to buy an acre for little or nothing and when you got ready to build on it you built on it as you felt. I mean, if you built the basement, you didn't have to hurry to build the rest. But now that's all changed, too. There isn't any way you can save money.

Int: Have you any idea how four and a half acres cost in 1911?

AJ: Yes. I know exactly what it was. \$600. That was with a house and barn.

Int: Was it that old barn, back over there? Is that still in use?

AJ: It's still got stuff in it.

Int: So, the house next door here; are the people related to you?

AJ: That's our house; I mean, it was my mother's home.

Int: Do you have a tenant there?

AJ: No. My children have lived in there at different times, to get started to where they could go and get their own homes. Now one of my sons stays there when he's here. I just keep it furnished and ready to use.

Int: Now, the original four and a half acres are just two homes on it now, is that right?

AJ: Yes. Well, see, my father sold that part there.

Int: So now how many acres is it?

AJ: It's an acre and a tenth.

Int: So you own both houses on it?

AJ: That's right.

UV: A quarter of an acre up town here sells for \$62,000.

AJ: Oh, I'm sure.

UV: It's gone too far. It's ridiculous. How can a man working in a plant somewhere, making \$10 an hour afford to build?

Int: What it tells me is that there are a lot of people making a lot of money.

AJ: You're right.

UV: I want to tell you what they're doing. They're all in debt.

AJ: They make good money, but they're in debt anyway. They're in debt up to their ears. That's what the trouble is.

UV: We've got a false economy, and something's going to happen. You watch.

Int: You think it's going to happen after November?

UV: I don't know. But it'll happen.

Int: Here's the old library when it faced Main Street.

UV: I've got children who can't afford the place they got. Two working and they can't make a decent living. Now there's something wrong.

Int: Well, that's what we're hearing in the political campaign.

UV: They just seem like they don't seem to realize; oh, when did that happen? Where've they been? That's what I'd like to know.

Int: I remember this old Civil War veteran. Oh, is that right? George Goodell.

AJ: Yes. He was the grandfather of a friend of mine.

Int: He died in 1931.

AJ: He lived on Cady Street.

Int: Is that right?

AJ: He used to be in the parades. He was very old then and he rode in the back of a car, but he was always in the parade.

UV: Way I look at it I fought the Second World War for nothing. Yes I did. I don't have no rights. I gotta listen to somebody tell me what to do all the time. I don't like that. That really burns me.

Int: Here's the City Hall that was the first City Hall. That faced the library on Main Street. We're looking at a book which is a collection of pictures assembled by Laura Smyth called "Early Northville." Excellent book. We're looking at a picture of the old Village Hall located on the corner of Main and Wing Streets. It was razed in 1963 for the present City Hall. That's about 25 years ago. That's a beautiful building.

AJ: It's a nice building.

Int: And is that exactly where the City Hall is now, the Municipal Building?

AJ: Yes.

Int: That's a shame to tear down that beautiful building.

AJ: Yes. And it was a private home before that. It was the Lapham home.

Int: Well, you probably know the Laphams, too.

AJ: Well, I know who they are. Yes, I've always known them as far as that goes. Like I said, they've always been here, too. Well, is there anything else you'd like to know?

Int: Well, I can't think of anything else. What I would like to do...if you think of anything else you'd like to talk about, I'd be glad to come back sometime. Now what they will do will be by Al Smitley at the library will probably do a little editing of this tape. We will bring it back to you and play it. And then, if it's all right with you, everything is ok, then you would sign this paper saying that you have reviewed the interview and give your final approval for its use by the Historical Society and the library.

UV: Did you tell them about your grandfather being buried behind the school up there?

AJ: Oh, yes, my grandfather is buried up there in the old cemetery.

Int: Is that at Rural Hill?

AJ: No, the one behind the old high school.

Int: Oh, on Cady.

AJ: Uh, huh.

Int: If you would just sign here now. This was your signature, but if you would print your name, address and phone number.

AJ: Oh print it? I'm not too good at that.

Int: Well, it doesn't really matter because I can read your writing very well.

AJ: You don't need Northville on here, right?

Int: No.

AJ: Oh, yeah, we study the herb books. Do you do that?

Int: No.

AJ: Well, my daughter works at Greenfield Village.

Int: Oh, is that right?

AJ: Yes, and they have an herbalist there. She's very, very interested in that so she tells her about all the things that used to grow a couple hundred years ago, you know. The things that they grow there. Tells them what to plant.

UV: The willow that grows along the creek here is aspirin.

AJ: My father taught me that.

UV: The Indians used it.

Int: Is that right?

UV: Absolutely.

Int: OK. So they will probably take out some of my questions and try to compress it into an hour and bring it back and play it for you and, if it's to your satisfaction, we will ask you to sign this paper and it will be put into the library and the Historical Society. In fact, I think we give you a tape.

AJ: That would be nice.