

(What is your name?)

ROBERT LITSENBERGER - we live at 314 Randolph in Northville. (413 – 314?) 413, see I got mixed up.

(That's alright, that's alright. OK, let's just see how this is doing? How long have you lived in Northville?) I was born in Northville. (Were you, how long ago?) 75 years. (Oh, you're 75 years old?) Last Monday. I was born in the house where Elizabeth's Restaurant was, now it's the Italian restaurant. (Is that right, the same house?) Right, my folks moved in there on Thursday, and I was born the next day. (Is that right?) That's what they always told me. (And that, I believe, that's called Ware's Square now?) That's right. (Did your folks build the house or were they...?) No, no, it was an old house at the time, and a man by the name of Ambler owned it.

(Tell me a little bit about your family, how many children were there, were your folks from Northville, what...) No, originally they came from over in Allegan County on the west side of the state. (What sort of business was your dad in?) My daddy was a blacksmith and horseshoer. (Blacksmith and horseshoer, and where was his business?) Well, when he came to Northville, he had it located in four different places, no, five different places. When he first came here in 1911, he talked with Ed Perrin, and he owned the place where the Gitfiddler is now, and he had some blacksmith equipment and the iron and had my dad go down there and open that up. He ran that shop. Then he was over on Main Street where the old Chevrolet-Dodge was later. (I don't recall where that was.) That was just right where you enter the parking lot there on Main Street, on West Main Street. (West Main, can you give me, near the garage there, Phil's Garage?) Yes, right in between that and the next building. (OK, that was a blacksmith shop there?) It was at that time, yes. For a short time and then moved from there to where the Bicycle Shop is on the east side of Center Street. Later on after World War I, why he built a place down where the – it would be just about the entrance to the parking lot off of Hutton coming to ... alongside the bank. (Alongside which bank?) 'Em, well, the Savings and Loan there. (What was your Dad's name?) Sidney, my mother's name was Cary – they had nine little kids before they came to Northville, and I was the only one born here. (Is that right. Now your dad – what sort of business would he have, just the farmers in around, or what?) Oh, yes, mostly farmers and then of course a lot of blacksmith work then Well at that time there was a lot of people right in town that owned horses; and did all kinds of blacksmith work, wheel work, and such. He did all kinds of work on farm machinery, setting wagon tires, making different parts of wagons, taking care of pickaxes and crowbars – sharpen 'em up; putting new shoes on springtoothed drags; and the entire operation of blacksmith work that could be done on farm machinery. (He had a very lucrative business then, didn't he?) He did for a number of years, but of course, it died out on him because the automobile was coming on. So, in the latter part of the '20's, it was getting pretty thin. Then when the Depression hit, why that was kind of a knockout blow. And he had a shop in back of the house that we lived at that time at 111 Dunlap Street. That's where Jack's

Barber Shop is now. We kids used to play in that field or vacant lot there where the Detroit Federal Savings just moved out of. That was a big lot there along side of our house.

(Now tell me about yourself, and what schools you went to, and growing up, and what sort of things you've done, and then we'll talk later about what Northville was like?) Well first, did I tell you my mother's name was Carrie (Her first name was Carrie or her last name?) First name. (You told me that, and should we go into her family because they came – they were not from Northville, your mother or father, either one?) That's right. They came from the west side of the state in – well, my mother originally came from Hicksville, Ohio – her folks moved up into Michigan just about a mile and a half from where my dad lived. At the time they were married, my dad was still working for his dad on the farm, but when he got married, he opened up a blacksmith shop. He had never worked in a blacksmith shop, but he'd been around horses all his life and started to shoe horses. (He had a couple of blacksmith shops there before coming to Northville?) Oh yes. And then they moved from where they were to a town called Fennville, and after being there for a number of years where most of the other kids were born, he got measles when he was in his early forties, and the doctor told him he could never shoes horses again. So the doctor talked him into coming to Proud Lake. He had a farm out there on Proud Lake in Oakland County, and he was there from spring till fall; and he decided if he could do that kind of work, he could shoe horses again. So they came to Northville. (What kind of work did he do there?) Just ran the farm. (I see, so he came to Northville.) And when unsatisfied with the type of deal he had there, it didn't work out the way it was supposed to, and so, brought the family to Northville.

(Were all your brothers and sisters raised here or were they older at the time you were born?) Well, they were all older, I'm the baby. (Yeah, but they were...were some of them left, I mean were they old enough to be out on their own, some of them, or were all nine raised here?) Well ah, at one time all nine were living in the same house, but just for a very short time. My next oldest, next to the oldest sister and the oldest brother, they got married shortly after they got here.

(Did any of your brother or sisters settle in Northville?) Yes, Virginia, Kathryn, John and Joel, and Carrie. That's the one we always call (?) or Mrs. Taft. (And they lived here?) Two brothers and two sisters are living, all the rest of the family is dead. (Your sisters are married to whom, who are your sisters now?) The older one is Virginia, her name is Virginia Smith. She was married to Leland Smith who ran the grocery store here and then also later became the Postmaster. She lives down on Yerkes Street. The other sister that is living, Kathryn Sibley, she married Alfred Sibley and is living up on ... I can never thing of that name when I want to; "Eaton". (In Northville?) Yes. (Are either one of them being interviewed for this project, do you know?) Eh, no, but I mentioned it to Marion Zayti, and she said she would contact Virginia. (So Marion is aware of the fact they are older than you?) But there's not much difference, of course, because they are the next two older than I. There's only five years' difference between Virginia and I and two years between Kathryn and I.

(Where did you attend school?) In Northville. (The elementary and the high school there, that would be on Main Street where the Board of Education is?) That's correct. The old building beyond that is where I went to grade school. A few years after I graduated, well that one burned down. Where the high school is, that had burned down shortly before I started school. The first memory of that was going up there with my mother when I was a little kid before going to school; and my dad was up there with his team grading off the grounds back of the school, the new school. (That high school building would be what, something over seventy years old, wouldn't it? They built the school when?) Yeah, over seventy years old.

(Did you go any further than high school?) Oh, I was kind of exposed to it in several places; Rutgers University for one year of night school; down to Drexel Institute in Philadelphia for a couple months; and then up to Houghton, in the Upper Peninsula, to the College of Mines for one year. (Oh, is that right?)

(Then what sort of work did you do in your lifetime?) Oh, I did quite a few different things. Mainly, it was just tool and die work. I worked in grocery stores when I was in school, when I was in high school, and a year after I got out. That was during the Depression, of course. I got out of school in '31. And then I went to work for my dad shoeing horses and doing blacksmith work, and I was with him until January of '36. I went down to Ford Motor here in Northville and worked there for eighteen months and went to New Jersey and worked for L.A. Young Spring and Wire. I was out there for three years and came back here for a year and then went back out there for another couple of years before I went into the Service.

(What branch of the Service?) The Navy. (What was your grade in the Navy, a Seaman or?) Oh, I was, let's see, I ended up being a machinist mate third class. Oh, when I went in '43, I qualified for the rating three different times, but there was never any ratings to be given out. So I finally got out in a ...

(Now, were you married by that time?) Yes, I was married once – I was married once before. (Before you went in the Service?) Yes. But that was all over with when I got out. I was pretty sure when I went in. (So you were divorced while you were in the Navy?) Well, no, that was hard to do, so about the time I came out, I wrote her a letter so she could present it in court and get the divorce.

(So, did you come back to Northville then when you got out of the service?) Yes. (And what did you do then?) Well, first I worked for G.F. Taft in construction work, road building and that; and worked that for a couple of years. Then I went to work for Bathey Manufacturing in Plymouth. It is still there, but it's altogether different ownership. There's (?) going on there most of the time.

(Now, where have you lived most of your time in Northville since your second marriage?) We lived for, let's see, it would be ten years down in the Frid Apartments. That's across, the

apartment building is across Main Street from the Ford Factory. And then we came here in '61. (To this house?) '62. (How many children do you have?) None.

(Now when you retired, you were working where, at the factory in Plymouth?) Correct. I had worked there for twenty-eight years. (Twenty-eight years. What did you do there?) Uh, mostly tool and die work.

(How tell me a little about Northville itself. Of course we are very interested in trying to reconstruct the history of Northville from what you remember the town to be like; the churches the businesses, that kind of thing. Just what you remember about.) Well, first I think I better backtrack and tell you that my wife since 1961 has been Litha. Was Litha Kemp and she was originally from up in northern Maine in Rouchstock County (?) where they have all the potatoes growing. Crisguiles (?) was the name of the town. She lived with her sister over on Plymouth Road – Vera Shoes (?). She came out here in 1940, and I met her about 1947 or '48.

Now the town, got a lot of early memories of it. There on Hutton Street where, at the end of Dunlap, why for years that was a dump. Everybody took their trash down (Where Ford Field is now?) That's right. They took their rubbish down to the end of Dunlap Street and dumped it over the bank? (Is that right? You're the first person that's told me that.) And where that new building is there at the corner of Main and Hutton, was a stone blacksmith shop. And just north of that was a line of two-story wooden buildings, real high two-story. One of 'em, I remember had a ramp up one side of it where they ran farm equipment up that ramp and into the upper story because those two building were owned by an implement dealer. And he had the space in between 'em where he'd park a lot of the equipment, but for some of it, he'd put up in the upper floor.

(So there was a stone blacksmith shop there, but that wasn't your father's? Your father never ran that one?) No, he, that was an odd thing, my dad had a man come here from the west side of the state and work for him for a while, a young man that he had known, in fact worked for him on the west side of the state. His name was Hugh Clawson. Well, he was working for my dad for a while, and some way or other, my dad bought the equipment that was in that stone blacksmith shop, so he told Hugh to go over there and set up his own blacksmith shop. So he had that for a couple of years.

(Now was that the blacksmith shop that they reconstructed at Mill Race in stone, is that patterned after that stone building or after one that your dad had?) It was patterned after it, I think, but the actual stone shop was torn apart, taken down to Greenfield Village and reconstructed there. That's the blacksmith shop, the stone blacksmith shop they have in Greenfield Village. (Is that right?) That's what I've been told.

(So you were telling me about what was here?) Well, that street, Hutton Street, was always known as Wheelbarrow Avenue. (Was it?) Yes, for years. (Why?) Well, of course people didn't have automobiles there in those years, and an awful lot of town (north side of town) had

wheelbarrows, and when they'd come to town to buy groceries, why they'd come up with their wheelbarrows and wheel back the groceries. (Is that right?)

There was a Mr. Blood that lived along side of us who was one of the early people traveling around the areas selling Watkins Products. In fact, he was one of the first people that had a Model T Ford. He had it fixed up just like, similar to these vans, in other words boxed in 'cause it was a Model T Ford pick-up and he had it boxed in so it looked just like similar to all these vans nowadays. That's what he carried his Watkins Products in.

People up on the next corner at that time were, where the drive in bank is, was named Martz. They had a daughter that was the same age as my sister, Virginia. They palled around together a lot.

On Dunlap Street there was, across from us, there was a number of houses. There was a real old house that was from the time I first seen it, was an awful looking wreck. But just east of that was a very nice house. People by the name of Trufants lived there. Had a big yard and a big house. Next to (What was the last name?) Trufants, Mrs. Trufant was related to the Yerkes. The next place was people by the name of Gesseltells (?), and they had two sons and a daughter. The daughter died when she was in high school. Their son was in the First World War, and he was a pilot in the First World War. For years after that, why every once in a while he would go to Selfridge Fields and fly a plan and made a trip over Northville, swoop down ... (It must have been a rarity, there weren't very many planes.) Oh yes, his folks would be out, they'd know he was coming and they'd be out to watch him. (What was their last name again, I want to make sure the record gets that, Desetell?) I think it was DesAuteles, I believe that was the name. (That's a French name?) Yes.

The next one was, we'll go on to the next one. Ben Cook and his wife. Ben Cook was a ... and when I first knew him and for quite a few years up until the middle '20's, he was peddling mile or peddling mail by horse and buggy. He was quite a trainer of horses, also dogs. Not a lot of 'em, but his own. Had two horses that he used on the mail route, and he had a gate across the driveway, and he would leave that gate open after he got through dressing down the horse, why he'd give it a slap and the horse would start on a run up towards the road. He'd whistle, and it would spread its legs and just slide, and then turn around and come back. Both of 'em.

In the next house was Mrs. Ware. (When you said the next house is Mrs. Ware, was that the present Mr. Ware, was that his mother or...?) No I changed my mind, I said it wasn't Mrs. Ware. (Oh.) No Don Ware lived across the road, on the north side of Dunlap, the same side I lived on.

Henry, Mrs. Henry. She was the wife of Doc Henry. They had two sons and a daughter.

And along side of us was, there on our side of Dunlap Street, was Hinkley's, Mr. And Mrs. Ed Hinkley. (Hinkley?) Right. One of the things I always remember around him was that he was

always rolling up a few cigars and selling 'em. Roll up a few boxes of cigars and take 'em over to the stores and sell the boxes and then they'd be sold out to customers (He rolled his own?) Oh yes. He had the equipment to roll 'em, and he bought the leaf and dried it, and rolled cigars.

Next house Don Ware's grandmother lived there. And that was a big stone house.

Beyond that was Ed Smith. He owned the house, but he had a family living there with him by the name of Dye, Mr. and Mrs. Dye, and they had two sons, Cleon and I can't think of that younger one's name. We always called him Snip, Snip or Skeeter, one or the other. He was a little smaller than most were, boys of his age.

And beyond that is where Don Ware lived.

(All those were in your immediate neighborhood, down there?) Right.

(What about, OK, let's take institutions like churches. What about the churches at that time when you were growing up. What were they, and where were they located?) Well, the Presbyterian Church was located in the same place it is now. The Methodist Church was down here where the Open Door Church is now. The Baptist Church was the same place it is now. Of course altogether different than it is now. (Well, part of it is the same?) Yes, part of it is. A great deal added on to it. (In fact, I think I remember reading in the paper last summer, that when they replaced the rook, part of the roof was even from the original.) Oh, I should imagine so. Then, I don't remember when the Catholic Church came into town. I don't think it was here in my earliest days. Then just outside, on the edge of town, there was a place called It belonged to the Catholic Church. (Episcopal, was it Episcopoc?) No, it was the Catholic place. (Where was it?) Just, you know where that pool is there on Seven Mile, where you're going out west of town, that pool, just as you go around the corner on the right hand side. (Yeah, the pond one?) Yes, there was, just a ways beyond that. (And that's where the original Catholic Church was?) No, no. This was a Catholic organization, had some property in there. (I see, I see. What church did your family attend?) Well, most of 'em attended the Methodist Church. Later years, one of my sisters went to Presbyterian for a while.

(Ok, what about the businesses in town when you were growing up? Tell me where the main stores were, as you remember.) Well, on the corner of Center and Dunlap was a large building that was, you probably read about it, that was a Theater Building, wouldn't call it theater. (Was that the Opera House?) The Opera House, yes. It was a three-story building, a high building. It had a balcony in it. Main doors to the theater were in the center on Center Street, and each side there was a store building, each side of it, in the same building. Each one of 'em had a number of different operations in 'em. There was Brader's Clothing Store came in there on the south side of the building. And later on there was a Meat Market. Later on it was a Meat Market on the other side, north side of the building. But before that Meat Market on the north side of the building, there was a C.F. Smith Store.

Just beyond the Bicycle Shop, where my dad had the blacksmith shop, was an A & P store. You went up a couple of steps into that little, narrow A & P store. Beyond that was a grocery store. A little grocery store, independent, a man named Whiteman. I don't know what was in the other side of that at that time. Later on Ely had his coal office there.

(What were in that block? Carl Stevens told me his father had a grocery store...?) That's correct. Next place where that Dairy is, the Ice Cream Parlor and Restaurant, that was Detroit Edison Building. Beyond that was the Neal Building. The first, the north side of the Neal Building was Steven's Grocery Store. The next one was, what I think, was either the first or second beauty parlor in town. That was started by Mrs. Trufant, and later on when her daughter took the examination, she worked with her. Laura, that was her daughter's name, she became Mrs. Buckley, and she carried on the business for a number of years there, and then down in her own home, down on Yerkes Street. The next portion of it was Blake's Jewelry Store, and as I say that was the Neal Building that was put up by F.S. Neal (?). They owned the home where the American Legion Hall is. That building was turned ninety degrees, part of it torn off. That was a great big house, big white house that had a big porch on it. No way you can hardly recognize any part of that place now.

Beyond that was the bank, the bank building, Lapham State Savings Bank was on the corner with, on this side of it, was a barber shop. I can't remember whether it was in the Neal Building or part of that other building was where The Record Office was. The Record Office, I've suppose you read, was started by a man named Little. He was the one that promoted the Opera House to be built in Northville. Of course, that was long before my time. My brother worked in the Lapham Bank there on the corner, he did that for several years.

In fact, my oldest sister, shortly after she came to Northville, she worked for Ponsford's Clothing Store, that's where the grandparents of Lapham are in there now. Later she went over to the Northville State Savings Bank and worked there for a couple or three years. She was the first one to hold a public, the first woman to hold a public office in Northville, She became Village Treasurer. (Oh did she? Her last name was what now? Was she a Litsenberger then or was she married?) No, she was a Litsenberger then – she married Elmer Whipple. His family had the land grant farm out on Haggerty Road between Six and Five Mile Roads. (What is a land grant farm?) A land grant farm is one that have a grant from the Federal government back in the 1800's for so many acres granted to that ...(was that same as homesteading?) Yes, in fact they are the same thing. Only here in Michigan, they call it land grant. They had to do so much clearing and settle on the property.

(Now when your sister became – let's go back to her because this is something that's When she became treasurer, you said, she was Litsenberger. Was she married while she was in office?)

No. She only had it that one term because she got married and moved out of town. That was a village treasury. But my sister, Carrie, she later went into the same bank and worked there for a

number of years and became assistant cashier (of which bank, now?) The Northville State Bank it was called...where the big bank – Manufacturers is now. And she also became village treasurer.

And later years, my brother, John, who worked in Lapham's Bank, he became village treasurer.

(Now, I'm told that the Lapham – where it got its name is because he was the president, but was not related to the Laphams of the clothing) No, that's right. That Lapham – the last one – lived right over here in that gray house on High Street and Randolph – the big house there. And Elizabeth, their daughter, she taught school here in Northville. In fact, I had school classes from her. And she and her husband, E. A. Chapman, as we always called him, they lived there in that house for years until it was sold to the present owners Thom and Marianne Barry. They lived there in part of it with her mother and dad; and then they finally all lived in it together. But I don't think Ed Lapham was the one that started the bank. I think it was probably his dad - I may be wrong – but I'm quite sure of it. (It was known as the Lapham's Bank?) Oh yes, it was called Lapham's State Savings Bank.

People by the name of Babbitt, a man by the name of Babbitt, was the president of the Northville State Savings Bank at the time when my sisters were working there. And until it closed, it was that way.

(What other – what other things can you remember about the – oh, let's say Post Office, funeral homes, things like that, you know, that makes the town run? Where were they in town?)

Oh, the Post Office was where that barbershop I told you was in the back end of the Lapham Bank building – the Post Office was in there before there was any barber shop in there. That was there for a number of years. (What was the location, now for the purposes – Main or Center Street?) It was on Center Street. (North of Main?) Yes, the building, the main entrance was always on Main Street, but down the center street side, there were entrances. In fact, there was a stairway – there's still a stairway going up there, and at one time the telephone office was up there on the second floor and also some doctors offices and dental offices. But that area in back of the building was the Post Office – the Northville Post Office for a number of years. As I say, that was F.S. Neal, the one that built that other building – he was the Postmaster. And then they moved it over to where Schrader's building is – you know where the Schrader's building is – used to be the furniture building that they closed up. Well, on the north end of that, there was, built as a separate building, that was, but it was tacked right on to it, that became the Northville Post Office. There was a woman named Palmer – had an old wooden building – old wooden building there, and she sold candy and supplies for school kids and all kinds of stuff for – all kinds of writing paper and so forth. Of course, there was the Schrader building there was – they had furniture there and then they also used it as a funeral parlor for years. Then they moved it up here on Main Street and West Street – the corner. (The one that is now Casterline you mean –

was it the same?) No, no. (O.K.) Casterline used to work for Schrader before he started his own – the original Casterline.

Then up where the record office and the Community Bank – what do they call that – savings and loan deal there – why that was the hardware store – Huff's Hardware. (We were talking about what was located there.) Well, the hardware store there owned by Huff – in fact, there is a Huff lives over on Cady Street that is a son of that man that owned it. (And where was that?) On the corner of Main and Center, the northwest corner.

Across the road from that, just to the south, was the old Ambler building that was a hotel and a – in my time, it was kind of a decent eating place and served ice cream in there, and they had a little dance floor at the back end of it. You went up a couple steps on the dance floor. But before that, they'd also had a bar in there before Prohibition. The building burnt down during prohibition so I never saw the operations there too much.

(Speaking of dancing, what can you remember about the recreational life.....in Northville?) Well, of course they always had the school operation where the different classes – the junior and senior classes – had, the held dances, and then, in my time, getting up that high, they were having dances after all the basketball games to raise money for the classes to use. And there were like the Masonic always had a dance. The Eastern Star had a dance – they were – took place up in the gym in the schoolhouse. That was the old school on Main Street. There was, I can remember my sisters and a couple brothers going to what they called pastime dances they would have during the winter. I guess they had 'em about once a month, and they were all married couples that went to those, I believe. (Where were they?) They held them in the schoolhouse – in the gym there.

There was a skating rink down in back of where wares had their beanery they called it. (Where was it at?) Just beyond where the theater is – across a little alleyway, and then there was the Beanery there. (The Beanery – was that a restaurant?) Yes, Don Ware's mother ran it. And there was also (and then next to that was the skating rink?) No, let's see I kinda get those buildings mixed up. They were way, way back. They burnt down the same time the theater burned down way back in the twenties. There was a skating rink in back of one of the buildings. I believe the ware restaurant was in a small building by itself. (You mean a roller skating rink or ice skating?) Roller skating, and they held dances in that too some. (And that was somewhere in the area that the theater is right now?) Just east of the theater – you see back in the twenties, the theater burnt down and this other building burned down too. It was an all-night fire.

I remember, going back farther, I remember when they put the paved roads in Northville. They had paved – Seven Mile Road was one of the first roads coming west out of Detroit that was, came any distance, and that came out to Northville, and they paved that before any of those south of Michigan Avenue. And then Northville paved their streets. First they paved up from Seven Mile Road up into town, and out to Rogers Street, down Rogers Street and out to Seven Mile

Road now they call it, to the edge of town, the edge of the village. And in that same paving operation, they paved from Main Street, down Center Street to the Baseline Road. And I remember that operation (hen would that have been – how old were you then?) Oh, let's see – I was probably about nine or ten, probably about ten, I don't remember if it was before I was sick or after I was sick. I date everything from the time I had (?) when I was nine years old. (It would have been over sixty years ago, sixty – sixty-five years ago?) Yes, that's right. (The streets were paved?) Of course, first they had sewer crews in, and when they put the sewers in, why, at that time, there was during the period when there was an influx of Italian people into the United States; and most of the sewer crew, I remember, were Italian. The foreman on 'em was Italian because, well, he was a good foreman, but also he was the only one that could make himself understood to the other workers. That is the men that had been doing the heavy work down in the hole.

And the reason that I was quite familiar with that was because they always brought their tools to be sharpened to my dad's blacksmith shop.

Another one of my early memories was when there'd be a fire, they had a hose cart that they pulled by hand. They'd come out of the Fire Hall, and pulling that thing, and running down the street with it. (Where was the Fire Hall – do you remember?) Yes, it's where the building next to the corner is – the big brick building that's been reworked - there on Main Street just west of the corner, west of Center Street, west of Center Street, just west of Center Street. (On Main, west of Center?) East of, the building that's east of the square building there. (Isn't that where the city offices is now, the Police is in the back, the Library is?) No, that's over here at Wing and Main, on the east side of Wing and Main. (Ok, the Fire Hall was east of where this hotel was that you said had burned down?) Yes, that was a two-story building, and when they had council meetings, it would be upstairs in that – over the Fire Hall. That's where my dadDave Perrin when he first came to Northville. Ed Perrin was quite often sitting there in from of the Fire Hall, leaning back in his chair. He had a - he carried a big gold honorary County Sherriff's Badge.

Where the Northville Square is – there was a big, brick apartment house there on that corner. Of course, you know that the Library building, which started off as a church, and then became the Women's Library, they called it, was just south of that. They have that down in Ford Field there – the Historical Village.

Some of the people I remember well – most of 'em I remember were quite some characters. One of 'em was a fellow named Hod Jackson, lived down on Cady Street. He always had a lotta berries, raspberries. He used to bring – we used to buy raspberries from him, then he'd always bring a quart or two over that he had canned. And they sure were rich because he put a lotta of honey in them when he canned 'em. And he'd always bring over a couple of quarts.

Another one was, you may have heard of, was Jude Cranston. An awful lot of people said he was a mean son-of-a-gun, but he really wasn't as far as our family was concerned. He was always a friend of all our family. In fact, the matter is, I always used to when he introduced me to anybody, I always introduced him as the meanest man in town. He'd throw his head back and laugh and say that was right. His sister, he or his sister, or maybe both of 'em at that time, owned the building where Northville Drug Store is. And she lived up overhead. (Cranston?) Cranston.

(You were talking about the firemen, the volunteer firemen. What about the Police Department....Do you remember the Police?)

Yes, we had a one-man Police Department --it was A. The first one I remember was--I can't remember what his first name was. Well, always called him Crackie, Crackie Lyke. And the next one was Bill Sabbard. They both had families.

I understood that Don wanted something said about -- Don Ware wanted something said about the Taft family. My sister, Carrie, was married to Gerald Taft. They lived out here on the corner of Taft Road and Eight Mile Road, and that was a land grant farm to the Taft family. (Of course, that's where it got its name, Taft Road I'm sure.) Right, and Gerald, in later years, he worked for a bus company. In fact, he was part- he was one of the owners of the Blue Goose Bus Company. And in the late twenties when they sold the bus company out, why all but one man sold out to the what's the name of the big bus company now? (Greyhound) Greyhound -- sold out to Greyhound, but the one. Gerald took his money and sunk it into that gravel pit with all fancy equipment for dredging out the pit and washing the gravel -- all operated by electric motors. Well, right after that the Depression hit and went down the drain on that practically. So he and one man that was working for him named Jigger called him Jigger, they would sit around this one winter hoping it would snow so they could plow roads with trucks. (Where was the gravel pit that he started?) Just up from the corner of Taft Road and Eight Mile Road. -- just up on the top of the hill. That had been a small gravel pit, but he opened it up...that was a big operation. After they got that, after the snow came, they started their own...owned two trucks to clear snow, why then when Spring came, they started getting a lot of orders for gravel, and the thing built up so they had quite a big -- Gerald had quite a big gravel business, and also he went into road building work. He was a contractor here for years, doing road building work. In fact, the couple of years I worked for him he put in the road, all the roads on the west side of the river up at Kent Lake Park. We run all those roads in through there -- through the woods and all. (You worked for him?) Yes, for a couple of years.

(What about the other businesses that were -- that was here? Ford's, of course....)

I think they started here in 1919 if I remember right. They -- one of my brothers was in high school at that time, and he went down and Mr. Marburger gave him a job for the summer time. And he talked with him when school came on if he could work on the midnight shift, and Mr. Marburger told him as long as he -- didn't interfere with his grades, and he heard different, why he'd fire him. But he wanted to let him know first. So my brother, John, worked for him, for Ford's there for a couple of months, and then went and told him he was all through. Then got a job in the bank, and on his last year, he was still working in the bank -- most of his last year at school. I mean he started working in the bank most of his last year at school.

(Other than Ford's what other businesses were here that you recall?) Well, right across from the Ford Plant, there was a lumber yard. Most people don't remember that there was a lumber yard there. (Across Main?) Yes. Those two apartment houses – the one farthest to the east was closer to the corner – they moved it. And in between those two buildings – one of those was built up – I think one of them was built right from the ground up. The other one was this old, this big house, that was moved and remodeled; but right in between those places was a lumber yard.

Then down around the corner was the Stimson Scale Works. They made platform scales. They later moved to just across the Ohio River into Kentucky. (Covington or Louisville?) No, Louisville, into Louisville, Kentucky. One time my wife and I were taking a trip and we came up, coming back home, we came up through Louisville, and must have been about five or six blocks down the road from it, and I saw this sign up there – Stimson Scale Works. It wasn't Stinson – it was Stimson.

Later on in that same building down there was where Stinson Aircraft Factory started. Eddie Stinson – Eddie Stinson was quite a character. He was quite a drinker, and he was over to Selfridge Field once. When he took off from there, he had quite a load on, and he started doing loop-the-loop; and he did it from Selfridge Field to the field out here on Lapham's farm. One right after the other – just go out of one loop and go into another – all the way. In fact, we happened to see him – I was standing in the yard with..., and we saw him going over as far as you could see him – just out of one loop and into another with those small planes. (Is that right? Did he live here in town?) I imagine he had some place where he lived. I don't know, I never really knew.

I used to substitute for the Post Master's son, Warner Neal, used to substitute for him carrying out the special delivery letters in the morning. At that time, they could have a kid do it. So you'd get a few cents each – for each one. And quite often you'd have packages and letters to go down to the Stinson Aircraft Factory.

Beyond that, just across the creek from there, was the big building, Globe Furniture Factory. That was a very well-known furniture company in the United States at that time.

This side where you turn and go around to Cady Street off of main there across from Ford's, around in there was a foundry – Ambler's Foundry, Bell Foundry. They made – at one time they made furnaces, and they were considered a real good furnace. (They also, didn't they make bells?) Yes, yes they made bells.

And another man made butter churns back in that area. They were crocks about this high that sat in a frame and you turned – they'd churn the butter. They were for, more or less for farmers for their own use. (And that was in that area back in there where the Foundry was?) Right.

We used to go back of the Foundry and play in their sand pits, and also snatch a handful of little pieces of metal about a quarter of an inch in diameter and a quarter inch long. They made good material for your slingshots.

(Of course, the forerunner of the race track was the fair grounds. What can you tell me about your memories of that?) Well, when that organization was started, you see, the fair was at one time over in Plymouth. And then they got up a Fair Association here in Northville. I remember my dad – he bought one share of stock, and he had that share of stock as long as he lived – one share in the outfit. And of course that later became the driving club. Then, I think that was started around 1912 or '13. They used to always have the fair in October – first part of October or last of September. Then they changed it to the last of August. And they had the race track there – always had quite a race meet during the fair. They had acts that were hired to come in and perform on the platform across the race track – in front of the grandstand. One of the best acts I ever seen was a trained little pig. My dad talked to the trainer after that, and he told my dad they were the easiest animals he'd ever trained. He said he'd trained a lot of different acts, but the pigs were the easiest. He said the only bad thing was that they didn't last very long, they grew so fast. But oh, that was really a riot watching those pigs. They were trained better than a bunch of dogs to run through barrels and play on teeter totters, and run up, go up steps and slide down slides, and chase each other around. Then, of course, they had the farm animals on exhibit. They had one big building that they had the women's products in – there was baking and sewing, and I don't know what-all they had in there. They had a lot of stuff, and then they had another big building they had as I remember, there were just one line of stock building – horses and cattle. All in all, besides the Grandstand, they had about four of these buildings for the horses, cattle, pigs and sheep. And then besides that, they had at least three if not four other buildings in that area. And of course, during the fair they'd always have the baseball game over inside the race – inside of the race track. And at night they would, in later years, they would have horse shows there. And sometimes during the day, they'd have kids' races on Shetland Ponies or their riding horses. So it really was quite entertaining. My first memory of the Northville Fair was my mother had taken me there and she'd put me in the baby contest. (You can remember that?) Yeah, I can remember it. (How old would you have been about?) Three or four. My sisters tell me I'm nuts sometimes when I tell 'em things I remember because they don't remember them.

The landscape around the town has changed quite a bit in different areas. There where Arbor Drug is – that was all vacant area in there. There was quite a hill there before they chewed it off to put the drug store there. We'd slide right down to the creek. And that's the first place I slid downhill on my sled. In fact, I took the easy way, and my mother came to the door and told me to get back up on the other part and go down the steep part.

You spoke about recreation. One of the big recreations around here in the winter time was going ice skating. There were lots of people went to on down there off of Hutton Street and Rayson Street. And lot went up to the Ambler Pond, which was just below where the road goes across the creek to the Rural Hill Cemetery. There was a dam there that held up big – backed up a big pond there, and that was good skating too. That dam went out, and they never rebuild it. The one down there off of Hutton Street – that dam went out several times, but each time they rebuilt it. There used to be an ice house right on the embankment that was built up along side of the dam. They'd cut the ice with horse drawn ice cutting outfit, and bring the ice to the edge and run 'em up a belt elevator out of the pond and into the ice house and stack that full. (Where was the ice house exactly in relation to where the streets -) Well, where the pond is – right at the end of Rayson street, and the dam is just south of Rayson Street, and that embankment run south over to

the property where, the edge of the property where the Historical Village is. And on that bank, built right on the bank and down – up the edge of the bank was this high ice house; and beyond that at the end of the spillway to the – off of the next street over *Griswold* is where there was a mill, grain mill. It was owned by the Yerkes family. They later – I think that burnt down and they built down alongside the railroad track on Base Line Road. People used to come there to the mill with their teams and wagons loaded with grain and have, sell some of it there, and some of it would be ground for them, and they'd take it home for feed for their horses and cattle, mainly for their cattle.

Another thing, when I lived on Hutton Street, the wagons would go by there loaded with milk cans, early in the morning – not early, about ten o'clock in the morning going down. They were going to the Condensery, down on Base Line where the milk was condensed. And they'd come back with their tank, milk cans rattling to beat the dickens. (Who ran that, do you remember?) Well, I think it was Thornton, but I'm not sure. At first, I thought it was T.G. Richardson, but I was told different. Maybe, each of 'em owned it at different times, I don't know. But I do know that the Condensery, as I understood it, was supposed to have been the first Condensery, Milk Condensery in the United States. (That was on eight mile?) Yes, Eight Mile on the east side of the railroad tracks – not on Eight Mile as you know it now – on the Base Line. (Somewhere in that area near the cider mill?) Across the road from it. Where the cider mill is, the Condensery was directly across from the road from it. It's a Stamping Plant now. They make all kinds of automobile parts there now, and other kinds of stampings too.

(You certainly have an awful lot of memories.)

My sister-in-law her name was Bina Hayes, she married my brother, Bill. Most – she and her friends always call him Arthur, but the rest of the family always called him Bill. They lived up here at the second house beyond the creek on the north side of the street, Randolph. She was born in one of the two houses there- the second one or the third one. She lived in both of 'em at different times, I know. In fact, she and her husband both lived in 'em at different times. (Does she still live there?) No, she died in...quite a few years ago.

(Well -)

My sister Alice – she was the next oldest – she had five kids. Consequently, I had one nephew that was older than I was. She later bought the house over here on High Street that has the glazed brick front. She lived in that for, let's see, about twenty-two years, twenty-three years, something like that. Lived there by herself. She loved the big house, so she could have the whole family come in. We used to – she had us in for a lot of family gatherings. But two of her – her oldest son and the next to the youngest son are dead, and the other three, who live in all different parts of the country – one of 'em in Florida, one in New York state, and one in Northern Michigan.

(The house that you're living in – who lived in it before you moved here?) Well, we bought it from people by the name of King, but they only owned it for about a year and a half. And he bought it from people by the name of, I believe their name was White, but I'm not sure; but they lived upstairs after we bought it because they'd just switched locations. The Kings were living

upstairs, renting; and they bought it from the people. (Is this two-family?) Yes, but haven't had anybody up there for a long time. Originally, this house, when I first saw it – I realize I was only in it once. My niece and her husband lived in it. His folks and grandparents – this house goes way back in his family, Strauss. And this was all one room – kitchen and this was all living room. That area there was from there to the back was a big dining room. They had a big kitchen back there, an opening to go down the basement. But at the end of this room was an open stairway. But it was changed when my niece and nephew – they owned the place across the street, and his mother lived here alone after his dad died; and after awhile, why they traded places, and then had the apartment fixed up upstairs and sold that one over there, and she came and lived up here. And then they went and sold this and went up to Stanton, Michigan. So the house is nothing like what it used to be. In fact, besides the changes that they made inside, the house has been added on to three times.

(Ok – I'm sure you have given an awful lot of information that they –we haven't had before, and some of it dovetails in with what other people) Oh yes, I know there's been a lot of repetition. (Yes, well not necessarily repetition because your, your memory of something is different, you see. I want to thank you very, very much on behalf of the Historical Society.) Oh, it was a pleasure, a pleasure meeting you, too.