

## Oral History of Margaret Tegge – May 5, 2005

Q = Interviewer: Jennifer McFall

M = Margaret Tegge

Q – Today is Thursday ... sorry about that, and I'm interviewing Margaret – do you say your last name Tegge (“Teeg”)?

M – Tegge (phonetically, “Teg’-ee”).

Q – Tegge.

M – Um-hmm.

Q – T-E-G-G-E. Tegge. Ok. Let me write that down. And I understand you have lived in the township for quite a while.

M – Seventy years

Q – Seventy years. And .... You were in your 20's, then, when you moved here?

M – I guess so. I think I was about .... Let's see, I moved here in '32. I think I was about 23 when I moved here.

Q – And where did you move from?

M – Detroit.

Q – OK...and what made you move out there?

M – We liked to dance. We used to love to dance. We used to go to Walled Lake and Opening Night at Walled Lake was a big thing you know. You wore long dresses and everything. And Big Bands. And my husband and I loved to dance. And, after the dances we used to drive over to Northville. And they had a big hotel on the corner of Main and Center Street, right on the corner there. Was a big old hotel. We used to drive over and have chili, after we went to the dances. And...just fell in love with Northville! And wanted to come out here and live. So, I'm trying to recall, a friend of ours, she had a family that lived out in Salem. And then we told her that we'd like to live in Northville. And she said, well I know a man that lives out in Salem and sells real estate. I think he's got some property for sale in Northville. So, we got acquainted with him and he brought us out here to this property.

Q – This very property...is where you lived for seventy years?

M – Um-hmm. And the Sessions family owned that property which is now the Starr Home, nursing home. But, aside from that. We met with the Sessions, and we wanted to buy two acres. So the Sessions said, “Well, where would you like to start?” Well, there was a driveway in here

that used to go back to the orchard- they had a wonderful pear orchard; the original house was up here in front – the old farmhouse, the Sessions’ farmhouse. So we said we wanted to start from that driveway, being in, kind of, the big trees, and go across to the maple trees. So that, that was OK with them. So they marked off two acres for us. And then had somebody subdivide six acres along here; so anyway, we bought the two acres. The foundation for the old house was still there, up in front.

Q – Um-hmm.

M – The Sessions had their house up in front. And their family. And one day Mrs. Sessions was across the road in the old farm house quilting. It was in the winter. And she had a little girl, ten years old. And they were out sleigh riding. And she heard the squeak of the train. And the little girl, sliding down the hill, went right into the train. Killed her. So, Mrs. Sessions – she was a nurse, so she didn’t wasn’t to live here longer. So they moved into town on Main Street, and started the Sessions...what was it called at that time? I have to think of what it was...

Q – Was it a hospital? Because I’ve heard of Sessions Hospital.

M – That’s right. Sessions Hospital. So they lived there, and she had the Sessions Hospital, and Mr. Sessions used to love – he was a farmer, and he used to take his stuff into Redford. It’d take him all day to take his farm stuff. But after they moved, he used to like to come and sit on the bank out here. He said this was the coolest place to sit, around here. He used to love to come back.

Q – The bank of the river?

M – No, by the maple trees....

Q – OK.

M – They’re beautiful in the fall. He used to come here and sit on the bank. Well, anyway, we bought the two acres and started to build our house. But at that time, you couldn’t get any loans or mortgages. We even wrote to the President, he said, you know, because there was no water or sewer out here. We had a nice builder in Plymouth, wonderful man. And he said, well, he’d start our house with what money we had. So we did. And, he’s just a wonderful man. And so that’s the way we started our house. We never borrowed any money – just started it.

Q – That’s wonderful. Now, was this original? This house is the original house?

M – The only house I’ve ever lived in.

Q – And it’s never been added on to?

M – We added on two rooms, on the end.

Q – OK.

M – Four bedrooms. So – because I worked in Detroit. I was bookkeeper, and I worked at Chryslers and I worked at the Buell Building for (Murrays?) Bond and Investment Company. And I ended up in an advertising firm in the New Center Building.

Q – So this was all when you were living out here? So how would you get all that way?

M – My husband – of course, the roads out here were bad. Six Mile Road, it wasn't paved or anything. But we would drive into Redford, and I would catch the bus. That was the end of the bus line.

Q – Was it...was it Five Points? Because I've heard of – they had the Biddle Bus out here that went out to Five Points?

M – No, no. This was at the golf course in Redford, and that was the end of the bus line. So I'd meet the bus in the morning and ride the bus all the way into Detroit.

Q – How long did that take?

M – It took a good hour. And my husband would take the – he had to go to Ford Motor. Of course, he drove. Then at nighttime, he'd pick me up at the end of the bus line and we'd come home. We'd get up about 6:00 in the morning. We'd leave here by, 6:30, 7:00 in the morning. And in all kinds of bad weather and everything, you know, and drive the automobile into the bus line. But I did it; I did it for quite a few years.

Q – Wow. Now, was Six Mile... I have been reading that Six Mile was actually in a different place than it is now.

M – Six Mile used to come down over the railroad tracks.

Q – OK, was it following the street... was it following the street that's right in front of the school now (Franklin)? Or no?

M – Six Mile used to come straight. When they re-made Six Mile Road, then they made that little curve that comes in here.

Q – When was that?

M – Oh, I can't remember when that was. It was quite a few years ago – maybe twenty years ago or so. Quite a long time ago.

Q – OK.

M – They changed it and then they made Six Mile Road come down under the railroad tracks.

Q – Oh, did they have to knock down houses to do that?

M – No, there wasn't any houses here.

Q – OK. Now when you move in, in the 30's, how many neighbors did you have? Not too many, because it sounds like the Sessions had a big empty lot.

M – Well, they owned all this property, and the school property. They wanted us to buy it at that time. Of course, we didn't have any money, so... too bad we didn't.

Q – Well, yeah.

M – But, as the property, it was divided – as it became for sale, oh gosh... then we bought two acres. Then the property next to the school was for sale, and we bought that. And, of course, at that time it was expensive to use. But now... so we finally ended up with all the six acres along here, down to the next house. All the woods, and all the woods right up to the school.

Q – That's beautiful.

M – It is beautiful.

Q – So when you first moved in here, it was just the farm house across the street. And you. So what did Six Mile look like?

M – It was a paved – or not paved, a dirt road, you know.

Q – Houses along?

M – Yes, oh, farmhouses along the way. And they didn't have electricity. We could see the lamps lit at night as we came along. But we did have electricity along here. We had electricity, the old farmhouse, and that house wasn't there (directly across the street). The other farmhouse, Clark's was there. And, well, originally, this was laid out for Waterford – a little town of Waterford.

Q – Yes.

M – Yes. And so those houses up the road were there, there up the road. And of course the Old Mill was down the street there, you know. Where the Ford plant – or, it was a Ford plant.

Q – I heard that... burned down twice.

M – Oh, I got a thing I want to give you, too, so you can take it. About Waterford – the origination of it. Have you got a copy of that?

Q – No, I don't. I read the Northville book, or, I have the Northville book, and I was going through it – the original Jack Hoffman book. So that's where I read about Waterford and then it made sense to me that you have Mill Street, you have Mead Street, you have Waterford... but it

took me a while to figure out – I think the city of; or the Village of Waterford actually kind of started here and went toward the railroad right?

M – Yes. And it was laid out – Washington Square, was laid out with a square, and so forth. I got that whole thing.

Q – But it wasn't Waterford when you moved here; had the mill had already burned down by then?

M – Yes.

Q – It had burned down...

M – Ford had, Ford owned that property down there. Yes, I got the little story of it all typed up, I'll give you.

Q – Wonderful. And where did you get that? Or did you do it yourself?

M – No, no. (laughs) I went to I have to go back – when St. Mary's Hospital was going to be built, Mrs. Patterson and I went around to collect some money to build the hospital. And ... what's her name, her husband worked for the Detroit News. And for Christmas he gave here this little book that he wrote about this area. So, she gave it to me and I copied it. I got copies of it. I gave it to the board a while back. Called Meads Mill. The whole story of this. Really interesting.

Q – I wonder if they have that up at the Historical Society?

M – I don't know.

Q – That would be wonderful.

M – I'll get you a copy of it anyway.

Q – So when you first moved here it was just you and your husband. Then eventually you had your daughter?

M – I had my son.

Q – I'm sorry. Your son.

M – And Waterford school was up there, where the parking lot (of Meads Mill Middle School) is.

Q – And that was the one-room. A-frame schoolhouse....

M – The only pictures I could find of that, going through some stuff I had, the other night, quickly, was my son and daughter – I think that was the first day of school. It doesn't show much of the building, just the front. That was the Waterford schoolhouse.

Q – Your children are just adorable.

M – And that was – it burnt, you know.

Q – Yeah. And, well, they burned it down didn't they? To get rid of it?

M – Yes. The school burned it down. Oh, all of us old neighbors stood up there and cried. And watched it go up in flames.

Q – That was in the 60's?

M – Well... I worked there in '56... yeah, it must have been in the 60's. I have to get the... I'd have to look back and see just when they burned that down. I should have made note of it on something.

Q – Well (looking at the photo), this says "First day of school, 195 – 9? Or 1957? I can't tell.

M – See, we (Northville Township) moved up in there about '55, in the old school house. Because we disbanded with the city in 1956.

Q – Wait, wait, wait – go back again. When you say 'disbanded with the city'...?

M – Well see, the township was originally – Plymouth Township and Northville Township was a township – 36 square miles, you know, for a township. And then I think it was in 1898, then, they separated them. You probably got that record someplace.

Q – Yep.

M – Then the city, in '56 they voted to become a city – in two square miles, or whatever it is.

Q – In Northville.

M – In Northville, yes. Then the township had their offices – it was the township and the city, so they had to get out of the city. For their offices. And the school house was vacant. And, because, not long before that, the school was getting too small, and so the people voted to become part of the Northville....

Q – Northville High, right? Because, previously that was, what, kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade? Or 1<sup>st</sup> to eighth grade?

M – Eighth grade, uh-huh.

Q – Did it start in kindergarten back then?

M – No...my daughter had to go to school in kindergarten in town. Then she went to the Catholic school. But my son, he went up there to the eighth grade, then went in to Northville, to the high school.

Q – Ok, so your daughter went to the Catholic school – was that Our Lady of Victory?

M – Yes.

Q – Catholic School. OK.

M – She went all through there. Then she went to Ladywood.

Q – OK, so the township and the city – the City incorporated as Northville City. So the township offices had to move. They moved out here into the A-frame schoolhouse. And is that when you got involved as Clerk?

M – I was Deputy Clerk. Yeah, I saw an ad in the paper, and of course I knew Molly Lawrence, she was our Supervisor; everybody loved her. And I said, are you gonna need some help? Because I had all this bookkeeping and office experience you know. And she said, yes. So it was right next door to my house, you know, so it was ideal. So that's when we started with the township up in the one-room schoolhouse.

Q – And what year was that?

M – Well, that was 1955. Because it became final with the city, as I recall, in 1956.

Q – They're saying this year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, so they're having a lot of activities... (What?) 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Northville City; incorporation as a city. That's what they're saying up in Northville... So how old were your children, at that time.....

M – It's the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the city?

Q – That's what they're saying, yeah.

M – So that would be in '55. Yes, that's right.

Q – And then, how old were your children? Because at that point had you quit working, because of your children?

M – Oh yes.

Q – So how old were your children? They were already both in school?

M – I think Connie was starting in the first grade as I recall. And I think Doug was, yeah – he was leaving the eighth grade.

Q – So it was perfect timing (Perfect timing, yes). And Molly Lawrence, she was the Clerk?

M – She was the Supervisor.

Q – Oh, she was the Supervisor. What was the structure of the government?

M – Molly Lawrence was – we had the Supervisor...

Q – Oh the Township Supervisor? The first Township Supervisor was a female?

M – Well, she was the Supervisor, yes.

Q – Elected supervisor?

M – Elected supervisor, yes. Sure.

Q – That's wonderful.

M – And the people of Wayne County, we just loved her. She was a lady, a darling lady. And DJ Stark, when we moved he was, I don't know who was elected before him, but he was our Clerk when we moved up to the one-room schoolhouse. Mt. (Cherril?) was our Treasurer. Then we had our Board of Trustees; I'd have to think, who all they were...

Q – So was it similar to what they have now? (Oh yeah). They have, how many – 1,2,3,4,5 trustees?

M – Sure. It was the same. And I was the first Deputy Clerk.

Q – And what were you responsible for?

M – Everything.

Q – Elections?

M – Elections. I ran, well, I ran, there... when we moved up there, we had no furniture or anything. Molly Lawrence moved in her kitchen table, and a couple of chairs. And a cardboard box with all the papers. So that was my desk.

Q – So did they – they must have given her, then, at Northville – in the City of Northville, they must have said, these are all the documents for the township people.

M – Of course, of course, Molly, I think, kept it in her house. Mr. Lyke – he was the Clerk, that was it but he lived in the city. So he had to relinquish his office as clerk so DJ Stark was appointed – because he lived in the township. But Mr. Lyke was the first guy that I knew. And – what was I trying to say about that? Molly, as I say, she came in with her kitchen table; that

was my desk. But they did order a desk with some chairs, in it – a big table for the board. And, we had – they moved in – DJ Stark was funny. Moved in a great safe to put our – keeping our big money in, you know. I think I had a petty cash of five dollars. (Laughing). Oh, buy anyway, that’s the way they started. So I was – Molly Lawrence used to come in in the afternoon. I think our office was open, from one to four, we started. And it was ten to – finally, we ended up nine to five, I think. Gradually added hours. But we had this great big safe, and I’ll never forget it. On e night – as I say, I lived next door here. I came to work and the safe was – the door had been pried open. So somebody got in and they tried to work on this great big safe, you know. They worked on my desk, but there wasn’t anything...and DJ Start, he came in to work the next day. Well they called the Sheriff, the police, you know, and told them. And the safe was big, and this guy from the Sheriff’s office, he walked in, he said – in one room, “Well, where’s the safe?” DJ said, well we got a couple of good ones on. The great big safe and they can’t find it. (Laughing).

Q – So at that time Northville Township didn’t have its own Police Department?

M – No.

Q – You had the Wayne County Sheriff?

M – We had the Wayne County Sheriff.

Q – And how close were they – where were they located?

M – The sheriff? (Um-hmmm). Well, they weren’t located around here, you know – you had to call the Wayne County Sheriff – where were they located? In Wayne or someplace, I don’t remember.

Q – So you didn’t see a lot of police around here?

M – Oh no, oh no. No, anything happened, you had to call the Sheriff.

Q – What about fire? Did you have the Fire Department out here by that time?

M – Ah, we – well, we had the Fire Department as I recall, with the city. But... but we gradually had a fire station, but you had the fire department, was, the fire – thing, was water you know. Because we didn’t have any water out here, you know. I remember when the Grennan house burned down over there...

Q – Where was that?

M – On Six Mile. The Grennan Farms.

Q – Is that – was that east of Sheldon – east of Sheldon Road?

M – Yes, it’s right over here at Bradner and Six Mile

Q – Oh, across from – at Bradner and Six?

M – Yes. It was the old Grennan Farm, and all through there was the Grennan farm.

Q – OK, so it was a huge plot of land?

M – Huge.

Q – And how did that burn?

M – It was in June. It was a very still night. And we had – oh, I remember how still it was. And we had this terrible storm and lightning hit that Grennan house. A beautiful home. Because my children – my son especially, used to ride his horse with the Grennan kids. And the top of that thing just caught fire, you know. Everybody around here flew over there to see what they could do. My husband...and they were carrying out furniture from the main floor while the top was burning. I remember the big baby grand piano, they put out on the lawn. (Wow) And ...

Q – So they probably figured there was no way they could save it because they couldn't get water up there. Were they trying to put buckets on it?

M – Well, they had this tank on this truck, sort of, with a kind of, a fire truck with water on it. But, you know, it only held so much water, you know. So they used what they had and the thing just burned.

Q – Did it come from the city of Northville? The truck with the water?

M – I'm trying to think where that fire truck came from... it must have come from the city, but there wasn't any water around here.

Q – So that was in the late 50's, early 60's?

M – Well, that was before... that was the early 50's because I wasn't working then (editors note: so before '55) ... I wasn't working over there yet.

Q – OK. How many people lived in Northville Township – do you know how many people lived here when you moved out, in the '30's?

M – We probably had – it probably was about five or six thousand.

Q – And then by the time you started working, in '55?

M – We probably were, we got up to, maybe 15,000. I remember when Grennan's Farm, Thomson Brown developed that, Grennan's Farm – Northville Commons, and we thought then, gee will those people fill that? And I said, "There goes the – there goes the country!" you know.

Q – Oh sure.

M – And I heard the bulldozers come in there and start.

Q – So was that the first big development here in Northville?

M – The development and King’s Mill. King’s Mill was the first – the development for ...

Q – Apartments?

M – Apartments – well, they were townhouses. (OK) I remember we had a big party over there when they started developing that – or when they developed it, when it was finished.

Q – They had a big party so everyone from the township could go and see it?

M – Us officials.

Q – Ahhh? OK. How long were you Deputy Clerk?

M – 24 years.

Q – 24 years?!? Wow! So what kind of changes did you see? In '55 you were using typewriters, no computers.

M – Oh heavens no, oh heavens no. When I started, of course, I was the only one – you know, Deputy Clerk. And we started the Building Department. You know, when buildings started coming out, they formed a Building Department.

Q – And when was that?

M – Well, that was right after we started (OK), because we had to form our own Building Department. And so I was the one that formulated the forms for the electrical work. I understand that even when they moved out of the building (laughs) that they’re still using the same kind of forms. You know, electrical permits, plumbing permits, building permits; and then we had hired the inspectors – building inspectors. And an electrical inspector. And even when people couldn’t come with the hours we had up there, you know, they’d come to my house here. I’d issue a permit here (OK). Even on Saturday and Sunday. Dog permits – they’d come. I was the only Notary Public and if they needed something notarized, they’d come here.

Q – Did that bother you?

M – It didn’t bother me.

Q – Did it bother your husband?

M – No.

Q – OK. So it sounds like you must have had quite a big of traffic.

M – Oh, we didn’t bother – it didn’t bother us.

Q – So the schoolhouse – but as the government got bigger, you couldn’t have all worked out of that schoolhouse, right? Were people working out of their homes then? Like the Building Inspectors?

M – No, they worked out of the schoolhouse.

Q – Oh! All the Building Inspectors – everyone was there?

M – They had a desk in the corner. (OK) Yeah.

Q – Because it doesn't sound like it was big (big enough) ...was it a real big school?

M – Oh, I (don't) know...schoolhouses – you could say... You know, we didn't have any plumbing in there – toilets or anything. So...well they did for the school kids, but they were not the sanitary kind. You know.

Q – Were they like outside – outhouses?

M – They were on the inside of the building. For the school kids, when they were in there. They had a boys' and a girls'. But they weren't anything sanitary, you know.

Q – Did they have water in them?

M – They didn't have water in ... but when our new board got in there they put in running water. In fact (laughing), Dr. Curtis lived in the farmhouse (across the street from Margaret) – Dr. Curtis, when he came on our school board – after they moved, he and his wife went up there – Arden ... oh they were good friends – with one of those (divining rods). She said, this is where to dig for the water. You know how, they used to, in the old days, have one of those ...

Q – Yeah, the stick (editors note: divining rod).

M – The stick – uh huh. Like an apple (tree branch) – (it would) twitch or something.

Q – Uh huh.

M – And that's where they got a good well. Up to then, you know, they – somebody would come in with a bucket of water in the morning for the school kids, you know – they didn't have running water. (Wow). Yeah.

Q – That's amazing. So they had electricity in '55, but they didn't have running water. But when you say running water I think of city water, but you're saying it was a well. And then – did they at least have a pump for the well? You didn't have to (pump by hand) ...

M – No, no. They put in a pump for the well, and so we have running water in the schoolhouse. That was the first – we didn't have it up to then. And they had a big furnace down in the basement someplace. But it was one big thing that heated the place. I remember once, one night the kids were having their school party – festivities – and boy, the heat that came out of that thing. So the township board then put – DJ Stark – put in a furnace. So then we had a furnace and running water.

Q – All the comforts.

M – All the comforts (laugh) – that was, it was fun.

Q – Now, where did everybody else live? (Tape ends). So, obviously, all the people who worked in the Township Hall had to live in the township. Did some of them come from quite a distance, or did they pretty much live around here?

M – Oh, they lived around here. In fact, our inspectors didn't live in the township. Glen Salo (sp?), he lived over in Novi. And Mr. Williams – I forget where he lived. But, see they were inspectors, and you had to get somebody that was, uh, licensed.

Q – Certified.

M – Yeah. And I remember that Mr. Pati (sp?) was a building inspector for a while, and he had – he sold Studebakers, I think, in the city of Northville. It was, I remember, at dog license time, I used to sell a lot of dog licenses out of my home (laughs). If people couldn't come during the mornings – or, on weekends, you know.

Q – Sure. So did people have to go to the Township Hall to pay their taxes?

M – No. Oh no. They paid their taxes here at Township Hall – township people.

Q – No, I mean, I'm trying to get an idea of the kind of work you did when you were there. Did you collect taxes from people?

M – No, no. (OK). Our Treasurer collected the taxes. (OK). But I remember one year the Supervisor, Clerk and Treasurer all went to Florida. And I was the only one there (laughs). (Oh!) It was like the – like this, that, and the other thing.

Q – Oh my – so you ran the whole show?

M – Uh-huh.

Q – OK.

M – Then I sat in our Planning Commission meetings – Planning Commission personnel. And so then I was Secretary to the Planning Commission. Then we had to – our minutes, board minutes. And you can go back and see where I wrote all the board minutes. (Wow). And then we set up an Appeal Board, and I was Secretary of the Appeal Board.

Q – Oh, wow! Now, did you volunteer for this, or they said, “Margaret, will you please...”?

M – Yeah... because I worked there, you know.

Q – OK. So, and were those all held, like, in the evening, like they are now? (Yeah). So it sounds like you were really busy.

M – Yeah, I was Secretary of the Township Board, Planning Commission Board, Building...in the Building Department; elections. At that time we had two precincts – one at the township; and then Frances Mattison ran the other one. And that was out at Eight Mile Road, where the school is out there.

Q – Oh, at Hillside?

M – Is it Hillside out there?

Q – Well, Hillside – what used to be the old high school is now Hillside Middle School and Recreation Center.

M – It was out Eight Mile – what's that school?

Q – And then there's Amerman...

M – In the city. (Yes). And, Amerman's in the city ... anyway, we just had two precincts (Oh, OK). I ran the one that was up in the Township Hall. We had there old voting machines and ... but I worked as a – for voting; and they had paper ballots. I used to count ballots in the City. Which is now – it used to be – what was the building there, now it's a bank. We used to count ballots until nine in the morning – all night long, you know, the paper ballots.

Q – Ooh. So what did the ballot machines look like? It was just a big box and people could stick it in there?

M – Well, we had paper ballots; that's what they used. And fold them, and stuck them in the box.

Q – OK.

M – Yeah. Fold them.

Q – And you had to record everything by hand?

M – Oh yes, yeah, oh sure.

Q – OK. So what did your husband think during this time? You're so busy during the day, how you're starting to go to all these night meetings. Because I always think – in the '50's women stayed home, they took care of the house.

M – It wasn't that bad. I mean, I was home all the time, you k now, and ... it didn't bother him.

Q – So, you weren't ahead of your – did you feel like you were ahead of your time, maybe?

M – Ahead of my time?

Q – Yeah – being so busy and working and having all these activities?

M – Well, of course I was busy in my job in the city – really busy. And...but...we started advertising for Chrysler-Plymouth, and they wanted somebody to set up the advertising for Chrysler-Plymouth in the New Center Building. That was a new office – a new advertising company from New York. I was working at Chrysler, so my boss suggested I go and take the job. So I did. I set up all the bookkeeping for the Chrysler-Plymouth in the New Center Building. I had a good job.

Q – Wow. So what was your background? Did you go to college, or...?

M – I went to – I grew up in the city of Detroit. And ... where Wayne University is now – Detroit City College. And I went there, for just about, oh a year and a half I guess, because my father died. And it was Depression time. My mother had four kids so I couldn't go on further, and my brother couldn't go on to college either. He graduated, was offered a scholarship – my mother needed the money. It was – there was no social security or anything like that in those days.

Q – Sure.

M – So I was lucky, I got that far. So then I took a bookkeeping course. And I had to leave Detroit News – City College, I took a bookkeeping course. And that's what set me up.

Q – And where was your first job? Was your first job at Chrysler?

M – No. It was in the Detroit Creamery, in the City of Detroit.

Q – OK. And where was that?

M – It was down on Grand River.

Q – Grand River and ... do you remember where?

M – It was – down, right down near Talon (sp?), like on Griswold. It was right on ... and from there, I went to ... I got this offer for the Briggs Commercial Development Company, which was in the Buell Building. I worked there for ... then there were 4 companies there; Great Bond Investment in New Center, and an Insurance Company. And then they went out on Jefferson Avenue ... that was an insurance company. That was Mr. Walter Briggs who owned the Brigg's – Tigers, at that time. I worked for him.

Q – Oh! Wow! You must have been some kind of worker.

M – I was.

Q – Wow! Well, I mean obviously you were very smart.

M – Well, I had to do a lot you know. My mother was left king of high and dry.

Q – Mm, hmm. How old were the – how old were all of you children when your father died?

M – I was seventeen. My brother was nineteen, and then my sister ... I just lost my sister two months ago.

Q – I'm sorry.

M – Yes, I miss her. And then my younger brother, they were set two years apart.

Q – And your sister was a few years younger than you?

M – She was – she was four years younger than me. Uh huh. And my brother was two years younger than me.

Q – OK.

M – So there was kind of two years between them. But times were tough, you know... Times were tough. But everybody seemed to be in the same boat. My friends were all in the same boat. (OK). But I was lucky that I got a job right away.

Q – So at seventeen you had already been to college?

M – I had just started City College.

Q – OK.

M – I started school, in first grade when I was four.

Q – Wow. That's amazing.

M – I was a little ahead of myself.

Q – OK.

M – But anyway – we had to make out. Pay the bills.

Q – Mm-hmm. So all of you children were living at home; you and your brother went to work – to pay the bills.

M – My brother and sister were in school.

Q – OK. And... how did you meet your husband; when did you meet your husband?

M – We used to come out to Walled Lake to dance.

Q – And you met him at Walled Lake?

M – At Walled Lake, yes.

Q – Were you a good dancer?

M – Yes.

Q – Was he a good dancer?

M – Terrific.

Q – OK.

M – All the girls loved to dance with him.

Q – Oh.

M – He was a terrific dancer. But in those days, you know, we had a car; I don't know whether it was from my – our family's car, but I think we had an Oakland. And in those days four of us girls would get in the car and drive out to Walled Lake. And never thought anything about it. To the dances on the weekends, you know.

Q – Yeah ... I guess gas wasn't two dollars and fifty cents a gallon back then, maybe.

M – Oh, like fifteen cents. (Yeah). But we didn't think of – to drive out there, either. I don't know why, we just didn't...and we'd drive out there and go to the dance. Well a friend of mine, too – her family had a cottage on Walled Lake.

Q – Oh, OK.

M – Yes, and we used to go there too, and stay overnight. (OK). Yes, that's where I met him, anyway.

Q – OK, so you met him dancing and you guys dated, and, when did you get married?

M – 1932.

Q – OK. Right when you moved out here, then; or just about that time.

M – About that time. Mm-hmm.

Q – OK. What is your first memory of Northville Township; do you remember? Must have been driving through going to the dances.

M – It was.

Q – And then going... to eat the chili.

M – To eat the chili. There was a big old hotel, there on the corner. I think it burned. I think that burned, too... Part of the house that was up here burned. And they moved – part of that house is down on Mead Street. You know, part of the old farm.

Q – Oh, really?

M – Mm-hmmm.

Q – Someone moved part of it? (mm-hmm). And is it – made it into a house ... OK.

M – After Mrs. Sessions died, I think, it burned. It was an old farm house up there. (OK) Because when we bought the property it was a big old hole there, you know, where the basement had been. (OK). Foundation or whatever they had.

Q – OK. It – is it in the exact spot that house is now, or ...?

M – It was right there in front of ours. This side of the maple trees. (OK). There was a big hole there (OK).

Q – Now, there's – well, some people think there's a big difference between the city of Northville and the Township. I mean, obviously, it's run differently. But from what I understand, they talked a few times about joining the City and the Township. But it's never happened. Do you remember...?

M – We had a big election on that. The City wanted us - the City started it. The City wanted us; the Township people ...make it one city. Oh, we had a big fight about it.

Q – Was it in the '60's?

M – Oh (long pause) ...must have been in the 60's, because we really fought that.

Q – Now why did they want the Township to become part of the City?

M – Well, they wanted to grow. And, the Township – I think Mr. Walters, I think, was the major at the time. I'm not sure about that. But they wanted the township, they wanted the property, they wanted the ...

Q – Taxes?

M – They wanted to develop and make it a big city.

Q – And why did the people in the Township not want that?

M – Well, city government, you know; they have a government of the council, and they have different laws. Have you read any of my letters to the paper (Northville Record)?

Q – No.

M – Oh well, periodically I write a letter, you know.

Q – Oh, to the Northville Record?

M – Yes.

Q – I love the Northville Record.

M – Well – oh, the last year.

Q – OK. You know, I've lived here about six months. (Oh, I see). I'm a – definitely a new person, but I read it every week.

M – You should have read a couple of my letters.

Q – Well, do you have them? I'd love to read them. You know what; I can probably look at – online; go back ... or call them. When did you write a letter, though?

M – Ah, well to...we fought the city...and, see, the council; they have different rules about taxes and one thing or another. Now, in the Township, if they want more millage, they have to go to the people and vote on it. And the council, they can just raise the millage if they want to. People don't have any...I have, I think they have a limit on it; fifteen mils or twenty mils or something like that. But they can do it; the City can do it, without a vote of the people.

Q – Yeah, fifteen mils or twenty mils is pretty significant.

M – Yes. But if we want some millage; they have to come to us. (OK). That's the big factor. And so we fought them and they lost (OK). But only by 1 percent, too, it was pretty narrow. It was Precinct 7 along Five Mile Road. See, that section over there is the Township, and most of those kids go to Plymouth Schools. But those are forgotten people over there.

Q – Like Five and Haggerty?

M – Yes. Five Mile.

Q – Why do you say they're forgotten? Because they're not really involved in Township business?

M – Yes. And what it came to – what gets me about it; of course my pet peeve is, is the Senior Center in the City of Northville. See, the Township Recreation, library and Senior Center – we support those by 80% - the Township. It's based on the percentage of millage and assessment. But it's in the City. All those things are in the City but we pay 80%, And the City – when they advertise it, it provokes me because it always says “Northville Senior Center”, or “Northville Recreation”. And that was, I think that was in my letter, too – we are two communities, not just one. But they identify with it – they don't identify the Township. People think it's just a city – “that belongs to the city”. And we're paying them – big price ... that really irritates me. That really irritates me. That was my last letter, I think, I wrote to them about that (Editor's note: Northville Record). And people don't know that. That we pay 80% of it. We support it – and yet, those people, especially over at Five Mile and Haggerty – they don't know anything about that.

Q – Well, because it's too far away.

M – It's too far away!

Q – So maybe if they were more centrally located, people in the Township would have access.

M – There's no parking up there, for the thing, anyway. And everything; they've got the library, now the Senior Center and the Recreation...and here we are. I said, “with big pocketbooks”, I said in my letter. We come along with the...every time they, the City, needs some money, we loaned them, what \$13,000, I guess – and we pay, put the big millage in. And we get no credit for it. The people over there don't know there is a Senior Center over there. Now I, I saw that, the other day, they have Northville Community Center – Northville Community Center.

Whenever the city needs money, I said, they come to the Township, who's got the Big Pocketbook, you know. And the Township goes along with it. And the Township Board – I wish you could see a couple of those letters I wrote. They were really good ones. It gets me so angry because we're paying out the big dollars, and they get all the credit.

Q – Well, the Township's a lot bigger now, there's not a question – it's a lot bigger than the City. I think the City's only two square miles.

M – Yes. Over here on Seven Mile Road where those stores are, along there ... (Yes); that would have been a good place for a Senior Center. Plenty of parking and kind of central, and ... but our Township Board went along with it. I said, all they got to do is come over and ask for money, and they dish it out... They better not put any more millage for a Senior Center on our tax base.

Q – No, I think the next millage is schools. There's a lot of development coming along. But I guess it's good because – I live at Six and Sheldon, so mine is a relatively new community ...

M – You live at Six and Sheldon?

Q – I live – it used to be an old farm. Directly across from the new Township Hall.

M – Are you talking about the Gibson's?

Q – Yeah, Gibson farm! Do you...

M – He used to be on our Township Board ...

Q – Oh he did?

M – When we were at the one-room schoolhouse.

Q – And, I think you told me, he came in overalls.

M - ...Before I realized he was a graduate of the University of Michigan. You would have never known it. Lived in that old farm house, all his life, but owned all around it.

Q – How much property did they own?

M – (soft talking) ... and that side and that side.

Q – OK. Did they own on this side, on the east side of Sheldon?

M – On the east side of Sheldon? No, they owned ...

Q – Just west?

M – Uh-huh, yes. And on the north side.

Q – On the north side. So it must have been ...

M – (soft talking) ...acres or a little big before.

Q – Well, the Couse – the last name is Couse, of the lady who developed Edenderry. And that was in the 60's. Do you remember that?

M – Couse? (phonetically, Cowss)

Q – Couse, yeah. You remember that. So the Gibson farm must have bought it up to the Couse property.

M – No, that was the Grennan farm. They had owned that, back up to there. Because after the farm, the old farmhouse, burned, they had a ranch out there – Grennans. And my son used to go out there, played with the boys.

Q – So after their house burned down they sold all this property?

M – Yeah.

Q – And then they moved into Edenderry – or next to Edenderry?

M – No, they had a ranch out there. (OK). They sold the farm, the property, to the school.

Q – For the new high school?

M – For the new high school.

Q – Ohhh. Ok. Ok.

M – As I recall, I don't know ... but I know they had a ranch they called it out there. Because my son used to go out there with the ...

Q – I thought you meant a ranch (style) house.

M – No, no.

Q – Oh, a “ranch”. Like, a lot of land.

M – Yes, yes.

Q – OK.

M – They sold that property to the school.

Q – OK. Yeah, my house backs up to the east side of ... the school.

M – Does that bother you, near the school?

Q – No, they’ve actually been really good neighbors! They have. It doesn’t bother me. But I often wonder what the land was like before. Because it seems like whenever it gets developed they change the lay of the land. (Yes). They smooth it all out.

M – The Grennans had a ranch out there.

Q – And what did it look like? Was it hilly; was it flat?

M – They had a big gate that you drove back in, back in there. I never went back in there, but my son – they had the horse. And the Grennans, they used to ride. He used to go ... yes; I guess that’s where you live, where that ranch was. Because when my son came out, one day he said, “I’d like to driver over”, so we drove over there. He couldn’t get over – that was where the ranch used to be. And now it’s all houses. He couldn’t get over that.

Q – Oh, yeah.

M – Yeah. (You’re probably right). He couldn’t get over that ... it was beautiful back there, I guess.

Q – I can imagine. Because now if you go further down Six Mile, you go past where the Wayne County Work Farm was – where DeHoCo, I’m sorry, Detroit House of Corrections, the work farms were. (Yeah, uh-huh). And I don’t know if you’ve been there recently, but that’s getting developed.

M – Is it really?

Q – Yes. It is all ... and, uh, then further west, after you cross Ridge Road – then it gets rural again, more rural.

M – After you cross Ridge Road?

Q – Yes. Because the old Thayer’s schoolhouse is still there.

M – Oh yeah. Yeah.

Q – And they’re trying to develop a park at Thayer’s Corners. They’re going to put a school there, another elementary school.

M – Are they really?

Q – Yeah, and ... what do you remember – do you remember Maybury way back when? Because Maybury was here when you moved. (Oh yeah. Yeah). What do you remember about Maybury? Did you ever go out there?

M – No, not really. We didn’t really go out there. I mean, we drove out there to see it, but I didn’t participate in anything up at Maybury. They had the barn out there; horses. In the winter, Doug’s (Margaret’s son) friend they went out there, they had a riding – you could see them riding horses out there.

Q – They do now.

M – They do?

Q – Yes. How about – do you remember the Wayne County School for Feeble-Minded Children?

M – Yes, oh yes.

Q – County – Development Center?

M – Yes. Oh yeah. That was a nice place for children. See, the township, after they left...after they left the city, they had one of those building for the Township offices. As you – right off of Sheldon Road. I think it was the first building as you came in.

(Editor note: Margaret later clarified; the Wayne County Training Center grounds were on the east side of Sheldon north of Five Mile Road. As you went in, the Township Offices were in the first building on the right, south of, or ‘across from’ the library that was located on the grounds. The Township Offices were in a two-story structure).

Q – OK.

M – And they had vacated those other buildings...which I think was too bad, because those were beautiful buildings. (Yes, yes) Beautiful buildings. So, our office was there. And we started our police station up at the one-room schoolhouse – no, in town. And then we had the Police Station upstairs in one of those buildings.

Q – In town?

M – No, on Sheldon Road. (Ohh). One of those buildings, they came in. We moved our office there.

Q – OK, that must have been sometime in the 70’s (?)

M – In the 70’s.

Q – And, OK, you – when did you retire? Did you retire from the city – I mean, the Township?

M – Yes, in 1980?

Q – Oh, in 1980. Oh, so you then worked down at the Wayne County Child Development Center (grounds). OK. So how did that all come about? You’re in the one-room schoolhouse. (Yes). Things are getting more crowded.

M – Yes. So then we... in the one-room schoolhouse. We moved into the city, on – in the community building. No, that was – we moved...what was it had the gymnasium in there. We

remodeled it and moved into there, into that building; part of the Community building. And then we left there and went into the – into the first Wayne County building (Note: on the ground of the Wayne County Child Development Center).

Q – OK. So the City let you move the Township Office into the City?

M – Yes.

Q – How long were you there for?

M – Gosh, you got me – I'd have to go back and see the – we moved there to there to there...

Q – OK. You were looking for a home. Did you keep outgrowing your ... spots? (Yes). Growing and growing. (Sure). OK, so by the 80's you must have been using some kind of computers. Were you using computers?

M – Yes. We were also in the old library.

Q – On Wing Street?

M – On Wing Street. We had our Township Office in that, for quite a long time.

Q – So, that wasn't originally built as the library?

M – It was the library, originally.

Q – It was the library originally, and then you guys moved into it. With the library?

M – No. No, no.

Q – So where'd the library go at that time?

M – Oh, where did the library go? I remember ...

Q – That's OK ...

M – I had a little stroke about two years go.

Q – Well, I certainly can't tell. I didn't know.

M – I have to stop and think about this. Because we were moving so we ... on Main Street; we were in the old library, and then we were out on Sheldon Road.

Q – What was it like when the Township Offices were in the Wayne County Child Development Center?

M – It was nice...we had, used to have people come in that had gone to school there. And it was wonderful place for children. They had a beautiful library; they had a beautiful gymnasium. A place for girls to learn beauty work, and when they closed that, all those children, some of them,

I guess, put in foster homes and one thing and another. Which I thought was terrible thing because they had good schooling over there. And they would come back and say, “This is where I went to school: when they were grown-up people.

Q – And they (editor: the children) were happy about it?

M – And they were happy about it.

Q – Did they tell good stories?

M – Yes.

Q – Because I hear a lot, you know, about how there was some abuse there, and...

M – I’ve never heard of that.

Q – But that wasn’t how you remember it? OK.OK.

M – They came back and (They were happy) they were happy. Beautiful grounds, too. We used to walk around on our lunch hour – it was beautiful place. But, I’m trying to think. We went from the one-room schoolhouse; I think we moved into the library on Wing Street there. It was a nice place; we like it there. And, then we went to the Police Department, and then we moved up on Main Street to the Community Building. And then from there we went out to Sheldon Road, and then from there we went to the new place – on Six Mile Road (Oh yeah, on Six Mile). I remember we had to get the drawings in at a certain time, because they were getting endowments. Money, to build it.

Q – Grants (Grants). Sure.

M – So that’s when I retired from there (OK) but I want to get that story and give it to you.

Q – Yes, that would be wonderful. Yes, yes. Do you remember anything else about Northville Township? What it looked like? Sounds like it was all dirt roads when you first moved in?

M – It was all dirt roads. Uh-huh. I’d see lamps along the way (editor: in the farmhouses). No lights on Six Mile Road.

Q – Were they gas lights?

(Tape ends)

Q – And now, do you get around and see the Township now?

M – Not too much, anymore. Because I don’t drive anymore.

Q – OK.

M – I’ve got macular eyes, and my daughter lives in Illinois. And I like to go there and visit her, and my grandson, in fact, I’m going next week.

Q – Oh, wonderful.

M – I’ve spent more time over there, the last sixteen years, with my grandson; than I think I have at home.

Q – Well, that’s wonderful. I’m sure you like that.

M – But, when the school – of course, when the school was built; I know you want a little about that too. We had a couple of horses. But when they – see, my property goes right up to the school. And when they had the plans – they had laws, zoning laws, at that time. Now schools can do anything they want. So here they had – they said the front of the school was Franklin Road. I went to the meeting with my daughter, and said, no. The front of the school was on Waterford Road – that’s where they come in (Yes). Well, according to law, if the front of the road was Franklin Road – well, as you come in, they said that the back of the road – the back of the school, that was the side yard. If it was the side yard, they’d only have to keep twenty feet from me. (Ohhhh). But, being that Franklin Road was not the front of the road (school), you know, they would have to have been fifty feet from me. So, it ended up they are only twenty feet from me, instead of fifty feet.

Q – Now how has that impacted you, having the school back right up to you?

M – Well, it impacts my property (Mmm-mmm). Because twenty feet is different than fifty feet. (Oh sure). So they ended up – I ended up with twenty feet from the school instead of fifty feet, which irritated me. The school would like to come up a little more. But, I’m not – I’m not in the mood. And one day (laughs), I heard a bulldozer. And I was getting ready to go to work, and got in my car and drove, and here was a big bulldozer coming through my property. And I got out, and said, you know – STOP.

Q – And they were mowing down trees, or moving dirt?

M – Yes (Oh, no). And the guy on the bulldozer says, we got an easement through here. And I said, “You have...get out!” He said, “No, we...” So they got off and went and made a telephone call. And so they had to leave. But they thought they had an easement of thirty feet in there (wow!). Yeah. Knocking down the trees, and coming right through with a big bulldozer!

Q – Oh, no – well, it was good thing you heard him.

M – Yeah, I thought, “What is that noise?”

Q – Was that in the late ‘70’s?

M – Yes.

Q – Oh my goodness. What were they planning on doing?

M – Well, they wanted to – they thought they had an easement that they could put the school up closer (Oh, my goodness). So that didn’t make any favors with me. Then they knocked down the old schoolhouse and made that a parking lot, you know.

Q – Do you often get out to your yard, now...nowadays? Do you get out and walk your yard? Because you still have a fair amount of land – you have, what, you said 6 acres?

M – Yes. Well, I go – there's, let's see, between me and the school there's a hundred feet, you know. That's another two acres in there, so...woods, an acre, and then this. But anyway, they're one hundred feet. I don't want them any closer to me. (Oh, sure). They would like to come take another acre, but I says, ugh-uh. I don't want you – they could build a fence along there; the kids could play right... I don't mind the children, but I don't know ...

Q – Yeah; well, I mean, when you moved down here in the 30's, you moved down here because it was rural. Because you wanted to live in the woods and the country, and now it's definitely changed. But, you – it doesn't sound like you want to leave Northville Township.

M – No, not really. I know that my family – don't think I should be living here alone.

Q – Sure. Well, it's beautiful, though. You have your original House (Yes) that you built (Yes). And you know where everything is. So they haven't ...

M – I'd hate to have somebody living – coming, living in it...

Q - So they haven't...your family hasn't been successful in moving you yet.

M – Not yet. They keep at it, they keep at it, but I don't know. At my age, you know ...

Q – Uh huh, sure. Well, I don't want to keep you too much longer, because I've probably been here an hour?

M – Oh, that's OK. I'm going to see if I can find that thing (on Waterford/Meads Mill) real quick, OK?

Q – Sure ...

(Tape ends; then restarts with a new conversation)

Q – OK, you were born in Corktown.

M – Yes, we came and settled in Corktown. And she (Margaret's mother) had a call from out in Ohio; her father was ill. So she took Edward (Margaret's brother)...my brother was just a baby. He was two years and ten months, to Ohio, Hamilton, Ohio. And, my father died, and of course they didn't have running water and stuff. And Edward took sick, and died. So, my mother had to come home without that little boy, two years and ten months old. (Heartbreaking). Heartbreaking. And then I was born – no two years after Byron. So, I don't know how she ever...well, that's Edward, that's my brother I never knew.

Q – Mmm...well, they probably didn't have vaccinations back then.

M – They didn't have vaccinations. Uh-huh. He died of spinal meningitis, I guess they called it. (Oh, no). They beautiful little boy. Everybody just raved about him, you know; he had big black eyes.

Q – Now, when did they start to have vaccinations – was that, about when you were having your children? (Yes) Were there vaccinations (Yes)? And I'm sure you immediately got them vaccinated?

M – Yes. Not when we were small though. But I recall getting a vaccination for small...in my arm, one time.

Q – Polio? Was it polio?

M – Oh, no. Smallpox. I remember getting it in my arm, one time.

Q – Oooh. OK...and now they don't even do the smallpox vaccinations anymore.

M – No, not that I know of. I guess they had a kind of, a stage on that, a couple years ago, when they were... Well, anyway, that was so sad. I was born and went to – was baptized at Holy Trinity Church, right down in Corktown. And my father had a pool hall; I think I have a picture of it, right down in Detroit; right where all the activity was – Michigan Avenue (OK). Yeah, he ran a billiards parlor, for quite a long time. So he was interested in politics at that time, too; my brother was named after one of the politicians down there.

Q – Well, maybe that's where you got your interest in politics.

M – Probably, because my dad was very interested in politics (Well, that's wonderful). I got another letter from him, for – he raised a lot of money for World War I, you know, service and such. And I remember World War I. Marching in a parade!

Q – Whoa!

M – Down Grand River Avenue.

Q – To celebrate the end of it?

M – No.

Q – No?

M – We – us girls, I was six years old. I remember my mother putting a white pillowcase on and a red cross. We were supposed to be nurses. And we marched down Grand River Avenue holding a big flag. People threw money in it as we marched down. I remember my dad standing there with my little brother.

Q – Wow!

M – I remember that like it was yesterday.

Q – That’s wonderful.

M – My grandson had to do a theme, a few years back – it was sixth or seventh grade, in Arlington Heights; telling about his grandmother. And they told him; oh she must mean World War II. No ... (laughing).

Q – World War I!

M – That’s for sure.

Q – Oh yes – I was gonna ask you, how do live to 93. 92?

M – I’ll be 93 next month.

Q- You know, I don’t think I asked you your birthday!

M – June 19, 1912.

Q – What’s your secret?

M – Hard work. Hard work.

Q – Well, it sounds like hard work. You’re working a lot!

M – Yes. (laughs) I was painting some cupboards today (more laughing).

Q – Oh my goodness. So, the key is to keep moving?

M – My kids?

Q – No, I said, the key is to ‘keep moving’?

M – I went to the doctor one day. He said, “Keep moving”. That’s what he said.

Q – Yes, because you look great. You don’t look like you’re 92.

M – I just had a pace – thing put in my heart.

Q – Pacemaker?

M – Pacemaker put in my heart.

Q – Wow. Good for you. And it sounds like you’re still happy.

M – I am, I am.

(General conversation and the interview ends).