Evelyn Rogers Interview
June 21, 2002
Local 653 Union Hall
Pontiac, Michigan
Also present and participating was Sandra Fee (Evelyn's adult daughter)
Transcribed by Marie O'Brien
Copyedited by Daniel Clark

ER: ...old union hall. Then they moved over here, so the card players [Local 653 retiree euchre group], they come over there. And then, well, I set the tables and all that stuff over there.

DC: You're still doing that.

ER: Yeah. Oh yeah.

DC: All right, that's great.

ER: Yeah. I keep on going, five days a week.

DC: You sound very, very busy. I start out with really basic questions . . .

ER: OK.

DC: . . . like, where were you born?

ER: I was born in St. Paul, Minnesota.

DC: Were you? OK.

ER: And I was quite young when we moved here to Pontiac to work in this shop. He wanted to work in a shop, and it was on Oakland Avenue, and they made the Oakland cars for awhile—I think it's about one or two years. Then they moved and my Step-dad and my—well, he was my friend—helped build the Pontiac Motor over there.

DC: OK. So which plant—was it your Father or Step-father who moved to Pontiac to get a job?

ER: My step-dad.

DC: Your Step-dad, OK.

ER: Yeah, my father died when I was a kid.

DC: Oh, OK. And so how old were you when . . .

ER: Oh, I was about ten when we come here to Pontiac.

DC: OK.

ER: 1927. It was about 1927.

DC: When you came to Pontiac?

ER: Yeah.

DC: OK. Well, when were you born?

ER: May 12, 19 . . . [laughs]

DC: 19 . . . ?

ER: 1912!

DC: 1912, wow. So you just turned ninety.

ER: Yeah, ninety in May. And we had, they had a big party and I had the mayor there, and quite a few of the CDC members. They were all—they all come in.

DC: What's the CDC?

ER: The Council—they got to come to us first before it goes to the mayor.

DC: Oh, OK.

ER: Yeah. You know, whatever comes up. And I belong to that. Yeah.

DC: So do you remember anything—oh, the door's locked. [interruption at the office door-some banter about the door]

ER: . . . Oh, she got me my hot water.

DC: There you go. In one of the other offices, there's a door and I've been interviewing people and the door opens and closes, you know, twenty times—and so I've gotten used to closing the door so I don't have to hear that on the tape. But until we're bothered, I'll just leave that open. What's your name?

SF: I'm Sandra. I'm her daughter. The only daughter.

DC: Sandra. Only daughter, OK. Well that's one of my questions.

ER: Yeah. And I got three boys.

DC: And three boys as well.

SF: She had three boys.

ER: Yeah, I had there boys. The oldest one died here in May. His name was taken after my husband, Bill Rogers. And he was a senior, and then junior is the one that just died, the oldest one. And we buried him in May.

DC: Oh, I see. So you had your ninetieth birthday and had to bury a son. Hmm.

ER: Yeah. Before. Yeah.

DC: Well, can you remember at all growing up in St. Paul? You said you were ten years old.

ER: Oh yeah. I used to go to school—roller skate to school. And [coughs] I had quite a way—quite a ways to roller skate. And I used to roller skate all the way.

DC: Did you roller skate with friends, or did you go alone?

ER: No, I just went myself.

DC: OK.

SF: Her sister was killed by a spoke on the spoke wheels. She fell out of a car. My aunt was driving it. She fell out of a car and the spoke broke—I mean, the wheel broke, and the spoke went through her. That was her only sister. And she was ten, or eight when this happened.

DC: Oh my.

ER: I was ten.

SF: And then her Dad got killed by the train.

DC: Well, let's see—back up a little bit and we'll catch up on—to those stories. I need to try to keep my mind straight here. Where were your parents from?

ER: My parents was from St. Paul. Right in there. But my Grandpa was from France and my Grandma was from Canada. So they got married, and then I'm French.

DC: OK. And did they move to St. Paul at some point?

ER: Yeah, St. Paul, and that's where the family would grow up. Yeah. And my grandma had ten girls and one boy. One boy—well, he was spoiled I guess. [laughs]

DC: What did your grandparents do in St. Paul?

ER: They were farmers, like. You know, they had a farm. And then they had a store. They moved in St. Paul and then they had a store. Then they sold the store. When they got older they sold the store and lived on the other part of it. It was a big, big store. And that was real close to the Mississippi River. And I went to school down there—a long ways across this tracks, railroad tracks, way up above. Yeah, we'd walk, walk, walk, that's all you did is walk. Yeah.

DC: Do you know why—well let's see now, let me back up a little bit. You said your Father died when you were quite young.

ER: Yeah, he got killed.

DC: He got killed. How old . . .

ER: Seven—I think I was seven, my sister was five. Yeah.

DC: OK. And then, let's see, how long was it before your Mom remarried?

ER: Oh, I was ten years old.

DC: Ten years old.

ER: Yeah, yeah. Just before we moved here to Pontiac.

DC: OK. And then, what exactly prompted your Mom and your Step-dad to move to Pontiac?

ER: To go work in a shop! To go make the cars.

DC: OK. Did they ever tell you how they found out about that?

ER: Well, one relation was here first. And then they told us about it, or told him about it. And then he moved from St. Paul up here to work in the shop.

DC: Who was it who moved first? Do you remember?

ER: Well, the other aunt. My other aunt and uncle. Yeah. And we moved in with them until they got enough money, but shoot, they were only making thirty-nine dollars a week, them days.

DC: What had your Mother and Step-dad been doing in St. Paul?

ER: Oh, he was working at a—let's see, what was he doing? Like a truck, you know, grocery—bringing groceries to the stores and stuff like that. He was working on there.

SF: Grandpa was?

ER: Yeah.

SF: I thought he built houses.

ER: And he built, yeah. He was an all-around mechanic.

SF: Yeah, well he was contracted up in Northport, building the rich peoples' homes.

DC: In Northport, Michigan?

ER: Yeah.

SF: That's where I was raised when I was a little kid.

DC: Oh, all right. Well, we're gonna sneak up on that! We'll figure that out. So anyways, they moved to Pontiac, and you went along . . .

ER: Oh yeah, yeah.

DC: OK. And you were living with your aunt and uncle?

ER: Yeah, they had a great big house and we moved in with them until he had enough money to put, you know, rent. And then we moved on Oakland Avenue. Right, oh not too far, not even a block from the shop. Pontiac Motors on Oakland Avenue. And they—then my mother took in boarders. She had—they had a big house, she took in boarders and they made a go of it. And I went to school to Saint Mike's, and I kept on going to school to St. Mike's—walk, walk, walk, walk.

DC: Did you roller blade when you were in Pontiac? Or roller skate, I should say. That's giving myself away there.

ER: No. No.

DC: What was it like moving to a new place?

ER: Oh, it was strange. I hated to go to school because, you know, I didn't know nobody. And we didn't know anybody when we met that aunt. But we got acquainted and came out all right. Yeah.

DC: And then, when was it when your sister was killed?

ER: Oh, she was only eight.

DC: OK. I know you've already told me. It just hasn't registered yet. But was she younger than you or older?

ER: Yeah, two years younger.

DC: Two years younger, OK. So that would've been back in St. Paul.

ER: Yeah, in St. Paul. Yeah. My aunt, my aunt was driving, and going up the road and hit the culvert. Because her little son was hanging on the back of the car—Oakland car—and was hanging on the back. And somebody hollered back there that he was hanging on there, and she turned her head, and when she turned her head she hit this culvert. And that's where the accident came in.

SF: Yeah, her sister fell out and the wheel broke and the spoke went through.

DC: Spoke went through. Oh boy.

ER: Yeah. Yeah. And you know, there, miles and miles for a doctor. So they put a—somebody come by and put a tourniquet on her leg, because her leg was off, or something or other—you know, was sticking out there. And we was all a bunch of kids, we'd just come back from swimming. And, oh, she didn't last very long. Two days, I think. Because she lost a lot of blood.

DC: That must have had quite an impact on you.

ER: Yeah. And an impact when my Dad got killed on the railroad. That was bad, too.

DC: So explain that one more time. I know that we went fast through it, but he killed on the railroad. Exactly how did that happen?

ER: Yeah. Well he was working on the railroad. He was a well driller, and he was drilling wells in North Dakota. [interrupted by a thud as a bird hit a window] And he was drilling wells, and then in the winter, they didn't do it. So he'd come home on the train, and he worked himself on the train. And the kids were throwing snowballs at him from in there, and he slipped on one of the snowballs, and down he went and another train come by and run over him. So then my Mother was left just alone with me.

SF: And they never got anything from that, either.

ER: No. Never got a cent.

DC: How was it, I mean, how did you survive when . . .

ER: Well, my Mother—well, there's Grandma, she took us in and we stayed with Grandma for awhile. And—well, quite awhile. And then my Mother met my Step-dad and when they got married, well then we come to Pontiac.

DC: OK. That's when you made the big move.

ER: Yeah, it was a big move.

DC: Yeah. So your Step-dad, then, worked at the . . .

ER: Oakland. Yeah.

DC: . . . the Oakland plant, and your Mom was taking in boarders.

ER: Yeah. Yeah.

DC: OK. Do you remember where those boarders were from?

ER: Um, no. They were around Pontiac, but they worked at the shop, so that that way the whole bunch worked at Oakland. And it was about a couple years that Oakland kept on their Oakland cars, and then they turned around and made Pontiacs, and then the—Oakland split. But the Oakland shop is still there. The—what do you . . .

SF: It's called—it used to be the welfare department.

ER: Yeah, it is.

DC: Oh, OK. The old building is there.

ER: Yeah, the old building, in the back in there, that was the Oakland cars. They made their own cars there. Yeah, and then when they moved to Pontiac, over where the Pontiac cars are, well my Step-dad worked there, and then my—well, he wasn't my husband then, but he was a friend, and he worked there. And then a couple years afterwards, then we got married, and—well he died here in 1980. He worked at the shop. And then my son worked at the shop, too.

DC: So you have a lot of history . . .

SF: All of us worked at the shop—one of them.

ER: Yeah. Yeah.

DC: [to Sandra] I think I'll probably be needing to interview you at some point, too. But I want to back up, you know, we're going to go in all kinds of circular routines here. But what was it like growing up in Pontiac?

ER: Oh, it was kind of lonesome. Because, you know, you didn't have any friends. And the only friends you made, then, was at school. And I'd walk from St. Mike's way down Oakland Avenue, and that was quite a walk. I walked home and yeah, it was something else.

DC: Were you able to make some friends eventually?

ER: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Well then we moved from there. We moved to Drayton Plains. But now Drayton Plains, there's no Drayton Plains, it's, well, Waterford. There's no more Drayton Plains; it's all Waterford.

DC: So why did you move out to Drayton Plains?

ER: Well, he bought a home there. And we lived out there.

DC: OK. Do you remember when that was or how old you were?

ER: Well, I was—let' see, fifteen, I think. Around there.

DC: Around there. And so was he continuing to work at the plant?

ER: Oh yeah. Yeah, he worked at the plant. Kept on working at the plant. But when I first got here In Pontiac, all they had was streetcars. And brick roads. All Orchard Lake was all bricks, and then in there. And you could see the Clinton River and all that stuff. Now it's underneath and that you can't see it. And it was something else. And then, no buses. No buses or nothing like that. But they had Baldwin Rubber Company. It was over there on South Boulevard.

DC: OK. Baldwin Rubber?

ER: Baldwin Rubber. And then they had, they started making at Truck and [Bus]—we used to say Yellow Cab. I used to call a Yellow Cab. And that's what they called it. And then they started making the trucks, so then they called it Truck and Bus.

DC: Truck and Bus.

ER: Yeah. Yeah, that was quite awhile.

DC: When you moved out to Drayton Plains, did your Mother still have boarders?

ER: No. Just . . .

DC: Too far out, then. Yeah.

ER: Yeah. No, he was getting more money then, you know, he was. But when you first start they only give you so much and take so much off of you and all that stuff.

DC: Do you remember what his job was in the plant?

ER: Um, I thought he had tool, tool—in the tool shop. Something like that. Mechanic, some kind of a mechanic. Yeah. But my husband—was my boyfriend—well he was, gosh darn

what do you call it? A buffer. Buffing. Yeah. Nickel plate. It was nickel plate in Plant 9. And lots of these guys that plays cards, they know Bill from plant, or from the plant. And boy they would talk about it all the time.

DC: I need to meet these guys you play cards with. I think I need to talk to them, too.

ER: Well they—Marlene is supposed to be here. She's a black lady that, you know, she's the head one. Then I was the president of our local over there. And I would take, you know, and do different things for our bunch. Well then when I had Mike Willis come in, we vote every two years I think it is, every two years. And he was working for the CBC, council, you know. And then he had his name put up on that place. Now its name is Ruth Peterson's building. And it's quite, quite a bunch. Oh we'd get around seventeen men down there to play cards. Yeah. Or the wives or something like that, so it makes us about eight tables of euchre players.

DC: That sounds like a lot of fun.

ER: Oh yeah, it is. But I'm staying home.

DC: Yeah, for sure.

ER: I got [names of grandkids?] at home, her and him and, oh gosh, it's—and I was there from—my husband died in 1980. And I was alone for five or six years all by myself over there. But well, my neighbors were real nice.

DC: That's good.

ER: Yeah. And I live in an all-black neighborhood.

DC: Mm-hmm. They looked out for you.

ER: "Don't you touch Mrs. Rogers. Don't you do nothing to Mrs. Rogers!" [laughs]

DC: Well that's good. Did you have that kind of neighborly feeling when you were growing up in Pontiac?

ER: Oh yeah. After we moved there, well we got acquainted with the neighbors, you know, and that there. And we had all kinds of stuff. I even, even got from the—not the block plant, but block watch—you know there. I'm on that. And they give me a great big certificate, a little bigger than this here, that says Evelyn Rogers is a member of that club. And so I'm in everything. Every time I turn around, I'm in all these things. Yeah.

DC: I guess so! That's fantastic. Let's see now. Did you finish high school then?

ER: I went up as far as the eleventh grade and I didn't finish because—what happened? Something happened, and—oh . . .

DC: That would have been about the time of the start of the Depression.

ER: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. And I don't know what happened, but I was in eleventh grade, and . . .

DC: What did you do then?

ER: Well then I went working, working in the—well I worked in the Dime Store for awhile. Then I worked in, what the heck you call it? To help out in, with the seniors. And then I kept on working with the seniors.

DC: What did you do at the Dime Store?

ER: Oh I was one of the, waiting—women who wait on customers and all that stuff. Then we'd turn around and make Easter baskets and Christmas things and stuff like that. Right downtown in Pontiac, well there was Waite's [Department Store] and then it was a Dime Store, and Hudson's, and we had a whole big bunch of stores.

DC: Which store was yours?

ER: Oh, the Dime Store. The first, the corner Dime Store. Now it's the Osteopathic Hospital is on it.

DC: What was it called then though?

ER: Dime Store.

DC: Just called Dime Store? [Who's on first?!?]

ER: Yeah.

DC: That was the name of it. OK, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be so dense.

ER: Yeah, Dime Store.

DC: Dime Store, OK. Did you like that job?

ER: Well, it was money coming in. That was that, you know.

DC: Were you still living at home?

ER: Yeah. Yeah. Well I lived at home until I got married.

DC: All right. And when did you get married?

ER: 1922—no, 1934. '35. '34, '35, something like that. I don't remember.

DC: OK. And were you working with the seniors at that point in time?

ER: No, no.

DC: OK. Well I'm a little bit confused. You said you were working at the Dime Store, and then you went to work somewhere else?

ER: Yeah. Well I, that was—I worked in a soup kitchen.

DC: OK, the soup kitchen.

ER: Yeah. And I . . .

SF: It was called a nutrition center.

ER: Nutrition center. Yeah.

DC: Was that way back then in the 1930's?

ER: 19. . . what was it? No '52. '52. They didn't have soup kitchens then.

DC: Yeah, we're jumping around, and I'm trying to stay with you here. But anyways, what were you doing at the time when you got married? In 1934.

ER: [pause] I still was working at the Dime Store.

DC: At the Dime Store at that point.

ER: Yeah, yeah.

DC: OK. And what was your fiancé . . .

ER: Oh he was working at Oakland, Oakland Motor.

DC: OK. And was he—how regular was his employment at that point?

ER: Oh, every week, every day. Yeah.

DC: OK.

ER: Yeah, every day. He was tall, so he could buff. Well, he was a buffer. And the nickel plate, you know. And he buffed the bumpers and the—all that was nickel plated. And you'd put nickel plate on it and buff it.

DC: Where did you meet him?

ER: Where did I meet him. Oh, playing ball. He was a ball player.

DC: OK. Baseball?

ER: Yeah. And then he played for General Motors, and oh that was all ball—you know. He was a good ball player.

DC: Did you follow baseball?

ER: Oh yeah. Yeah, I even played for General Motors. And I . . .

DC: Did you?

ER: Yeah. The women and the—the men played and then the women who wanted to play, they had a game—team—and we played.

DC: When did you play? When was that?

ER: It's on a weekday, you know, right there by—where them big water tanks are down there on—what's the name of that street? Joslyn? No, no, not Joslyn. Oh, [Howard Dell?] is on there on that street. And then right up above there, there's a big tank. And they played ball underneath there.

DC: And when did *you* play ball? What year was it?

ER: Oh that was—oh, gosh. Oh—I can't even remember now. But I know I played ball with the—with General Motors. That's all I can remember.

DC: That's OK. Yeah. So you met your husband, then, when he was playing ball.

ER: He was playing ball in Drayton Plains.

DC: OK.

ER: Yeah. And they even had somebody come out there and see how good he was, because he was getting home runs left and right. And somebody told him then, they says they would get him a suit if he'd strike so-and-so out. And by golly, he did, and so he got his suit. [laughs] Yeah, it was . . .

DC: What—go ahead.

ER: It was—it was fun then and we got acquainted with the ball players and that, so. He's got pictures of General Motors and that, with the ball team.

DC: So was he a pitcher?

ER: Yeah. He could strike them out and all them. And he could hit! So, usually they would—pitchers and that don't you know, hit. But he'd it out in the field every time.

DC: What position did *you* like to play?

ER: Oh, I didn't like to see him playing catch, either. But he could play anywhere.

DC: But what about you, when you played. What position did you play?

ER: Oh, I played first base.

DC: First base, OK.

ER: Yeah. Yeah, and I'd run and get that ball and run and touch the bag, and it was fun. Yeah.

DC: Well, so where did you live when you were first married?

ER: We lived at, right there in Pontiac, right on Orlando. It's right there by a lake [Osmun Lake]—there's a small lake in the back. And all of our relation, we'd get together at night and we'd go ice skating. And we called it shinny. We'd get a tin can and we had a stick and we hit—they didn't have hockey then!

DC: You called it shinny?

ER: Shinny. Yeah.

DC: OK.

ER: And, oh boy, we'd get it on the shins all the time. Boy, our legs would get sore, you know you hit the doggone can and we'd get it right on the knees. Oh, it would—and we'd do that almost every night or every other night—we'd go skating. We had, we had a ball.

DC: How many of your relations were around here?

ER: Oh, all of them come up! They all come up to work at the shop. All those from Minnesota, they came up here and got a job and worked in the shop. Most of them was still . . .

DC: Did you have any relatives back in Minnesota at that point?

ER: Oh yeah, we had a lot of them.

DC: You had some left there, too.

ER: Yeah. Oh yeah. Because my grandma had ten girls and one boy and all the cousins, you know, and that. So, but I'm the only one left.

DC: Oh, is that right?

ER: Yeah. Everybody, the older ones—but I got cousins. Nieces and nephews and grandkids and . . .

DC: Sure, but in your generation . . .

ER: Yeah, my generation everybody's gone. Yeah.

DC: So when you were married, did you continue to work at the Dime Store?

ER: No.

DC: What did you do then?

ER: What did I do? [pause] I don't remember. [flat affect] I stayed home, I think. Yeah.

DC: What was it like living in the Depression in Pontiac?

ER: Oh, well, we'd stand in line for cigarettes. We'd stand in line for this and that and everything. And then General Motors used to give us, you know, potatoes and surplus, a lot of surplus, so we made it. Yeah, that was terrible, them days. But he, he would, he was in the—laid off for awhile. Oh, then we had—one time he was laid off and we went up north picking cherries. And the kids, one of the kids made enough money to buy himself a bike. So, you know.

DC: So you went up to pick cherries because there was no work at the time.

ER: Yeah. No work here in Pontiac, you know.

DC: Were there many others who did that?

ER: Oh yeah. Quite a few. Yeah. It was—it was something else.

DC: How did you like that?

ER: Oh, especially those bing cherries. You'd have to use the scissors and cut them with the stems on, you know. And you'd have blisters in here and you—oh, it was terrible. But we made it. We'd have enough to make our meals and bought some tires for our car and—oh, it was, it was [unconvincingly] fun. I was just tired when we got home.

DC: How long did you spend up there picking cherries?

ER: Oh just, you know, during the layoff. About a month. I think they were laid off for about a month.

DC: So who all else was up there picking cherries with you?

ER: Oh, everybody I think. Everybody from the shop would go up there and pick cherries.

SF: A lot of our family—hers and my Dad's side of the family worked at the shops—they were up there. You know, CEOs and a lot of the big bosses up there, was all our family.

DC: Was that true back in the '30s, or was that later on?

SF: Well, didn't a lot of the [Arcans?] and the [Belills?]—the [Belills?], yeah, they're up in General Motors, quite a lot. They're the bosses.

DC: Well, let's see. You went up to help pick cherries. We're going to sneak up on all this stuff again. I'm just trying to work my way into it here. Then it sounds like the layoff ended and your husband went back to work.

ER: Went back to work, yeah.

DC: And then, did you stay home at that point? Or did you . . .

ER: Oh yeah.

DC: OK. But did you ever find any other jobs during the Depression years?

ER: No. He didn't want me to work in the shop. He didn't want me to work in the shop. He says, "You stay home and take care of the kids," or something like that.

DC: Well when were your kids born?

ER: Oh, one was born in, the oldest one . . .

SF: [?]

ER: Yeah. Yeah. It was quite awhile before we had Bill.

SF: 1928.

ER: Yeah.

SF: You were married in, what was it? '34? It was '38.

DC: '38, OK. All right. But in between there, it sounds like you weren't really working a lot.

ER: No.

DC: What were you doing?

ER: Oh, taking the house—taking care of the house and doing stuff around the house. Yeah. Then later on when we moved back to Pontiac—that was in Drayton Plains—and when we moved back to Pontiac, then I worked in the—working in the soup kitchen. Then I worked in the—like now, I go to three different churches. I go to—St. Mike's is on Monday, St. Benedict's is on Sunday, and Wednesday I go to St. Joe's and open the doors for the priest and bring—take the candles and fix the candles and all that. I still do that.

DC: Was church a big part of your life when you were growing up?

ER: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I was raised in the church, yeah.

DC: And how about your husband?

ER: Well he was, yeah, he was—he followed. He wasn't Catholic at first but he turned for me. And then kids were all.

DC: Well so then you had your first child in 1938.

ER: Yeah.

DC: That's getting near the end of the Depression and near the start of World War II and all. What was happening with your family at that point?

ER: Well, we lived—my Step-dad made a house—built a house. And then he had his house and he had the cobblestones—he put cobblestones on there and broke them up and made the siding and all that stuff on cobblestones. And he made another home, and then Bill and I was in there.

DC: Oh, OK. And was that in Pontiac?

ER: No, that was in—in Holly.

DC: In Holly? All right.

ER: Yeah, in Holly. And that's when my first little guy, well he died. He was born in there and then every two years I had another one. Yeah.

DC: So Holly, that would be quite a commute, wouldn't it?

ER: Yeah. Yeah, it was. Yeah, but he still worked at the shop. But he had his own home then. He had built his home and put these cobblestones around and it's still there.

DC: How did you like living in Holly?

ER: Oh, it was lonesome, but then we had a big garden and we canned and canned, my mother and I. And then our other aunts and uncles would come over and they'd help can, and they'd get some of it. So it was pretty fun.

DC: So, let's see. I'm trying to figure this out as carefully as I can. But when was it that you moved to Holly, then, when that house got built?

ER: Hmm.

DC: If you can't remember, it's OK. I'm just trying for my own . . .

ER: No, it was before my son was born. Before '38.

DC: Before '38, All right.

ER: Yeah. Yeah.

DC: OK. Because that's where he was born.

ER: Yeah he was born in there. Yeah.

DC: And how long did you live in Holly?

ER: Oh, about three or four years. Something like that.

DC: OK. Three or four years. And then what happened, why did that change?

ER: Well, then we moved, we moved to Pontiac.

DC: OK.

ER: And when did we move . . .

SF: You bought that house in two years, when Willie was two years old.

ER: Yeah. The house that we're living right now.

DC: Right now? All right. So why did you move back to Pontiac?

ER: Well, it was closer to work, and stuff like that, you know. So, yeah.

DC: And so that was, what, around 1940, I guess.

ER: Yeah. Then my Step-dad, he sold his place and he was going to Alaska, but they wouldn't take my Mother. They just wanted men.

DC: Oh, was he going to work up there?

ER: Yeah, he was going to work up in Alaska. And they wouldn't take—take their—they sold all their stuff so then they bought another place and moved in there.

DC: So he didn't go to Alaska.

ER: He didn't go to Alaska without my Mom.

DC: So they sold their house before he knew they wouldn't let your Mom go?

ER: Yeah.

DC: Oh, ouch.

ER: Yeah, ouch is right! Yeah.

DC: So then they moved back to . . .

ER: To Pontiac, yeah.

DC: To Pontiac as well. OK. So what did everybody do during the war?

SF: Daddy was too old to go.

ER: My oldest son went to war.

SF: No, no—but he's talking about the first war.

DC: Yeah, I'm talking about World War II here, in the 1940s. Yeah. You moved back to Pontiac around 1940, right, around in there.

ER: My Dad went to war, too, and then he found out he had two girls and then they told him no, he can come back. My Dad . . .

DC: Now was this World War I?

ER: World War I, yeah.

DC: World War I, OK. All right, so he went off to World War I.

ER: Yeah. And then they said, "Well, you can't go in there. Because you got two kids, you gotta go back."

DC: Where was he when he got sent back?

ER: North Dakota.

DC: Oh, was he training?

ER: He was a welder, you know, and then they took him from there.

DC: OK. Did he go off to boot camp or training camp or something?

ER: Yeah. And then they—that's as far as he got.

DC: Oh OK. And they sent him back.

ER: Yeah. They sent him back.

DC: Well what about World War II? You've moved back to Pontiac and . . .

ER: Then my son went in there, the oldest one.

DC: Well he would've only been . . .

SF: No, he went to the other war. He didn't go to World War II.

DC: Not World War II, no, no.

SF: He was just, what, eight years old? Ten years old?

DC: He would've been three years old or so.

ER: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. No, but he went to the other . . .

SF: Seven years later, I was born. In the '40s.

DC: Ok, so what year was that?

SF: '47.

DC: '47, OK. All right.

SF: I have a brother that's older than me. He was born in '45.

DC: '45, All right. But the first son was born in '38.

ER: '38. So that's when he . . .

DC: He wouldn't have been off to war after Pearl Harbor because he would've been a little young.

ER: Yeah. Well they, he—I think what he was, eighteen. Wasn't he, just eighteen. And he went in. Yeah, he wanted to be a—what was it?

DC: Well I'm trying to stick in the 1940s right now if we can. You know, did your husband stay on at . . .

ER: Pontiac Motor. Mm-hmm.

DC: Pontiac Motor, OK. During the war—all through the war?

ER: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. All through the war, yeah.

DC: And what did you do during those years?

ER: Take care of my kids. [laughs]

DC: You were home with the kids then. OK. All right. Yeah, that would've been a busy job.

ER: Oh yeah. I had four of them. Three boys and a girl.

DC: OK. So what was it like living in Pontiac during World War II?

ER: Well, it was like . . .

SF: Streets, trolley cars, cobblestone, dirt roads . . .

ER: Yeah. It took us—one time it took us a half a day to go from Pontiac to Big Beaver. A half a day on a dirt road, you know. And, oh gosh, that was terrible.

DC: Did your husband appreciate living closer to work?

ER: Oh yeah. Yeah, and so did my Step-dad. He did, too.

DC: What shifts did they work?

ER: Day. Day shift. Yeah.

DC: So would they be home in the evenings?

ER: Yeah. Yeah.

DC: Did your husband work much overtime at that point?

ER: Oh, quite a bit, yeah.

SF: My father built—in nickel plate, the bumper used to go around like this, and it used to leave a crease right here in the middle. Well my Dad's the one that made, designed and made that machine that goes all the way around, and cleared that stripe, that streak that was done on the front of the bumper. He designed that, and gave it to Pontiac Motors.

ER: And they gave him . . .

SF: They gave him a reward.

ER: Two thousand, three thousand bucks, huh?

SF: Twenty-six hundred dollars.

ER: Yeah, something like that.

DC: When was that, do you know?

ER: Hmm. . .

SF: Well see, I was a kid. Because I remember we bought the boat.

ER: Yeah, we bought a boat so he could go fishing—a great big boat.

SF: See, I must've been eight. So it had to be in the '50s.

DC: In the middle '50s somewhere.

ER: Yeah.

DC: OK. Yeah. So did you ever consider taking a job in the plant at all during the war?

ER: Yeah! I went down there and when he found out, he said, "Uh-uh, no way." [laughs] He didn't want me to.

DC: Why did you go down to apply?

ER: Because I wanted to go to work. I wanted to go to work in the shop. I got up there as far as the—and then Bill says, "No." He says, "You stay home and take care of the kids." You know?

DC: Who would have taken care of your kids if you had gotten the job?

ER: Well, we could've got somebody. But then, a lot of the neighbors had kids that, they were grown up, you know, and—yeah.

DC: So how did you feel about that?

ER: Well, I said, "OK, I'll take care of the kids." So, I did.

SF: My Dad—like I said, my Dad tried—helped build Pontiac Motor.

DC: Yeah.

ER: Yeah, they went from Oakland, Oakland to the Pontiac Motor—well now there's no more Pontiac plant. Yeah. It's Lake Orion now, ain't it? It's Orion—what is it, Orion?

SF: That's General Motors.

ER: Yeah.

DC: Well what did you do with your kids. You were home with them and all, but what did they do?

ER: Oh, they done all kinds of stuff. Yeah. And one of them, well when they got old enough, they went to work. They went to work at Big Boy and Sandy went to work—where did you go to work? Big Boy.

SF: Oh, I was eighteen when I started at General Motors.

ER: Yeah.

DC: OK, eighteen then. Yeah. Well, let's see, at some point you took a job in the plant then, didn't you?

ER: Uh um.

DC: No, you never did. OK, All right.

ER: Never did. No, he wouldn't let me.

DC: He never did. All right. Well, interesting. OK. Well let's see then. I gotta figure out which direction to take here. Well, how long did your husband, then, work at Pontiac Motor?

ER: He worked until—forty-seven years.

SF: Forty-eight.

ER: Yeah, around forty-eight.

DC: OK, and so when did he retire?

ER: It was seventy—

SF: ‘68.

ER: No, ‘72.

SF: 1968. He retired when I had Micky.

DC: 1968. And he had been there for forty-eight years. OK.

SF: He retired when I had Micky.

DC: OK.

SF: He was retired when the house caught on fire.

ER: Yeah.

SF: Our house was bombed.

ER: Yeah, they set our house on fire. The man across the street did it. The kid across the street did it. Didn’t find out until my husband was dead. Yeah.

SF: Yeah, we just found out a couple years ago.

DC: Who did it?

SF: The guy that did it died, too. Using drugs, and he died.

ER: Yeah. And I work with the blind—another thing, I work with the blind. We started a blind league here in Pontiac. They had one in Detroit and my cousin come up to me and he says, “Aunt Evelyn,” he said, “will you be captain if we start a blind league?” And I said, “Oh yeah.” So we, at—oh, where’s that at? Huron Bowl. And that’s burned down. Huron Bowl was burned down after we went bowling there. So then we went to Airway Lanes and bowled on Monday. With the blind.

DC: OK. When was that, when did you do that?

ER: Gosh, when did I do that?

SF: I don’t know when they started. But the blind ladies got that started.

ER: Years. Years and years.

DC: Years and years ago. OK.

ER: Well, and we'd go, pick up the blind, take them bowling, and teach them how to bowl. Fisher Body is the one that made our rails and charged us just what it had cost for the rails—enough to make them. And then they put two balls on there and they'd go with their left hand with the rail, and then let the ball go. And boy they enjoyed themselves.

DC: Well that's great.

ER: Yeah. Yeah. And I did that. And then I worked at the blind center. It's right here on Baldwin. It's still there. And it's a second-hand store, you know—people can give them their stuff.

DC: What got you interested in working with the blind?

ER: Well, well this cousin of mine, he says—or not cousin—and he says, "Aunt Evelyn," he says, "will you be a captain?" And then that's when I started. He says, "I see in Detroit they got blind league. Let's start a blind league." So I did. He had a leader dog and all that stuff. And he bowled on this then.

DC: Was he blind?

ER: Yeah, he was blind.

DC: Oh, OK.

ER: Yeah, he was blind. He got blind when—right in the service, I think he got blind. And then he got a leader dog from Rochester and so he came bowling and we'd pick him up, take him to the bowling alley and then take him back home and all that stuff. And we did that. We had, oh gosh, wonder how many? How many leagues? Nine—nine leagues of blind bowlers.

DC: [To Sandra] Was this when you were young, or was this later?

ER: No. . .

SF: This is when I was young.

DC: When you were young, OK. Yeah, All right.

SF: I was a captain. I joined a league, too.

DC: How old were you then, do you think?

SF: Um, let's see—1970—I quit bowling in 1975. So it was a little before that.

ER: And my husband was even with the blind. Yeah, he was a captain when . . .

SF: He retired in ‘68 and he was a captain of a league.

DC: At that point in time?

SF: Yeah. Because I had just had my daughter.

ER: I got pictures. Have I got pictures. You ought to see the pictures I got down there at the center.

SF: They took a whole bunch of blind people—they used to stand in front of banks like this and it said, ‘a little dime will do you.’ They used to take the whole bowling league . . .

ER: I stood up there, in there with that can and I got—they gave me a plaque with a cross on it and it says, “Collected *two thousand dollars* for our building.” And I—that’s what I did. I used to get a can . . .

SF: She’d go to Portland, Oregon to bowl in the tournaments with the blind people. Took a whole plane full of blind people.

ER: Yup, we had a tournament—everybody went to Portland, Oregon. And, oh, I asked my husband, I said, “Are you gonna go?” And he said, “No,” he said, “I gotta have one foot on the ground.” And I said, “OK, then you stay home. I’m going.” But he went, and he had a blind—we each one of us had a blind. And it was, it was fun. And we won trophies. Yeah, we got trophies upstairs in the attic from that.

DC: It sounds like a very successful program.

ER: Yeah. Yeah. And I don’t know how they’re doing, because I hurt my shoulder and I had bursitis in it or arthritis or whatever. And I had that calcium deposit taken out of it, but still, now I can’t—but every once in awhile I try to bowl. Yeah.

DC: I’m trying to see if I can learn more about what it was like living in Pontiac in the ‘40s and then on in the ‘50s. Do you remember what the neighborhood was like, you know, during the war when you had the young kids and you were home with them and all? What was your neighborhood like?

ER: Well, it was *fun*. Could leave the door open and go downtown, come back, nobody’s been in it or nothing. But you can’t do that no more.

SF: Oh, Lord no.

ER: Yeah. You gotta have everything under lock and key now.

DC: Were there lots of new people in Pontiac during the war?

ER: Oh yeah. We had quite a—all the houses were filled. Yeah. But I lived in Pontiac since

1940.

SF: Sixty years in this house. Sixty-two years.

ER: Since 1940.

DC: There have been a lot of changes.

ER: Oh yeah.

DC: So, did you—[looking at the tape] oh, my gosh, this is about to run out. You know, who were your neighbors when you first moved in? Where were they from?

ER: Oh, quite a few of them were, you know—they were just right from Pontiac, I think. But they were all nice. They all had kids, so my kids got acquainted with their kids. But in—when was it when Bells moved in there?

SF: I was thirteen years old.

ER: When the first black people moved in our neighborhood was Mr. Bell. And they moved in at night. And . . .

SF: Moved right next door to me.

ER: Right next door, and they're still there.

DC: Mm-hmm. So this would've been about 1960 or so.

ER: Yeah, something like that. Yeah, yeah.

SF: Yeah, it was during segregation.

ER: Yeah.

DC: So the neighborhood was all white when you first moved in . . .

ER: Yeah, now it's all black. [laughs]

DC: OK. Yeah.

ER: And I never moved!

SF: I was at Eastern Junior High School when segregation came down. I mean there was nothing but a lot of problems.

DC: OK.

ER: Oh, and they had them big fires, you know.

SF: Oh the buses that came—oh man, we were right in the midst of that.

ER: Then they—one year that they had, they were bombing all the stores, you know, and our Pete, he still—he still goes to our local here. He eats dinner over here on Thursday, you know, every fourth Thursday. And he's still there. But they burnt his store down. So when they start burning the stores down, we took our boat and we went fishing. We stayed up there until it was over with.

DC: Yeah, now that was in the later '60's it sounds like.

ER: A lot of kids—yeah, yeah. Oh man, that was terrible.

SF: I got kicked out of my senior high school because of that. I hit a black girl in the face with a science test tube. Because she backed me up in—I was a cheerleader in school, Pontiac Central—and she backed me up in a corner, scratched my face and I took a big beaker and hit her right across the face.

ER: Yeah. It was terrible after they started moving in.

SF: We're not prejudiced. We still live there. We're going fishing with our neighbors—Mr. Bell, the one that moved in—we're going fishing with him tonight. So—but they thought we were all sorts of prejudiced and they caused a lot of problems, but I got kicked out of my senior year. Couldn't go to no Pontiac public schools because I hit that black girl in the face with a science test tube.

DC: But it sounds like your neighborhood was a lot different when you first moved in.

ER: Oh yeah. Yeah, it was all friendly, because you could [??]—and I had the last baby, Butch, when I had him, my neighbor watched while I went downtown and I left him in the crib. I had him in one of those screened-in cribs. And she says, "Just leave him there, he's all right." And I went down, and got whatever I needed from my groceries, and I walked, and turned around and come back home, and nothing's there. But you don't dare do that now.

End of Side A

Begin Side B

DC: . . . when the tape appears, then we can—all right, so he went to St. . . .

ER: St. Frederick's. They went to school until, oh three or four years. And they made their confirmation and all that stuff. Then they went to Eastern. Now it's—what's the name?

SF: Perdue.

ER: Purdue Center now. But it used to be Eastern. And my youngest son, he was taking up newspaper, you know, making things in there, and he liked that. And he was pretty good at that.

DC: Now did your husband have the same job throughout these years?

ER: Yeah, he worked at the same job all that time.

DC: So the buffing and all that . . .

ER: Yeah, forty-seven years. I mean, he was—forty-seven years was it.

SF: Forty-eight.

ER: Forty-eight.

DC: So did he ever talk much about his job?

ER: Oh yeah. Yeah. He liked it.

DC: What did he have to say about it?

ER: He liked it because he was tall, see, and he'd—they'd always call my husband Mutt and Jeff—me. I was short and he was tall.

DC: Now, do you ever remember any times when he got laid off or anything?

ER: Oh yeah. Yeah.

DC: What was that like?

ER: We just had to get big bologna and cut it up and make big boiled dinners and all that stuff with big bologna and—yeah, we had—but then they gave us all kinds of stuff, you know, the surplus.

SF: He had to stand in a lot of the . . .

ER: Lines.

SF: The lines, you know, from General Motors when they shut down the strikes. He stood out there a couple times in the lines. I remember him doing that when I was a kid.

ER: Yeah, and we had to stand in line for cigarettes, you know, tobacco—Bull Durham. Get a

couple packages of Bull Durham. I don't think they even got that any more, have they?

DC: Well, I don't know. Were these during layoffs or during strikes, or both?

ER: During strikes and layoffs and all that stuff.

SF: Changeover, we used to go up north for three months—fishing, camping, and all that stuff.

ER: Yeah, and take the kids and . . .

DC: The changeover, OK. So he didn't work during the changeover, then. OK.

ER: Deer hunting, he'd take off so many days and we'd take the kids and I'd take their material and work with them in the car and in the tent.

DC: So you'd leave school and go up and go deer hunting.

ER: Yeah. Yeah.

DC: Where would you go?

ER: West Branch. And North Branch. Yeah, and Clare. We went to the—what's his name?

SF: We had quite a few venisons. We're all hunters.

DC: Sure, yeah.

ER: Yeah, I was even a hunter.

SF: Yeah, me too.

ER: I had a twenty-eight gauge. Now you ever hear of that one?

DC: I've heard of it, but I've never shot one.

SF: Yes, that was my Mom's gun.

ER: Yeah, that was my gun. That was my Step-dad's gun when his Dad come—when I come over there, he says, "You want a gun?" And I said, "yeah." He says, "Here, take that." And my Step-dad says, "That was mine." And he says, "No sir," he says, "I'm giving it to Evelyn." [laughs]

DC: Did you enjoy hunting?

ER: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

DC: Did many of the other wives go hunting?

ER: Oh yeah. They'd all be there, then we'd have a big potluck dinners and stuff like that—you make this, you make that. And we'd have our deer and that—oh, we had a ball then. Yeah.

DC: Did many of the other wives go off shooting as well, though?

ER: Uh . . .

SF: No, they more or less stayed at the camp.

DC: OK. But you actually went off hunting. But they went along on the adventure but remained in the camp.

ER: Yeah, right in the woods in tents. Yeah. We never had a cabin or nothing like that. We had tents.

SF: We always roughed it.

ER: Yeah. We even rough it when we go fishing.

SF: We're going tonight. Like I said, we're roughing it.

ER: She's going. I'm not going this time.

DC: What about on the summer trips, you said that during the changeover, the model changeover, you'd go up north.

ER: Yeah, up north.

DC: Where would you go?

ER: Uh Northport.

SF: The U.P.

ER: Across the straits. And Walleye Lake. The kids with big saugers, and big, like this—you had to have them twenty-two inches long. And we'd get a bunch of them and then we'd filet them and we'd have that for supper.

DC: This is in the U.P., now?

ER: Up north, yeah, across the straits. Yeah, we used to go fishing.

SF: Walleye Lake. Between Paradise and Newberry.

DC: Oh, OK.

ER: Right up that way.

SF: It's fourteen miles in the woods, but it's also—no, it's eleven miles in the woods and fourteen miles from town.

ER: We'd make pancakes—we'd make pancakes and go out and pick blueberries and put the blueberries in it and we had blueberry pancakes every breakfast. And we'd work it out.

DC: Did you have your tents there, as well?

ER: Yeah. Yeah. Oh yeah. Well, last, what is it? Two years ago, I went up north with you guys. And we had tents and out there, right by the lake. Oh yeah . . .

DC: Did you go up—oh, I'm sorry, go ahead.

ER: . . . it's more fun going there when you get off your boat and go right up to your tent—p it's right there, you know, and that there. You don't have to go way downtown or something for a cabin. No, we never had a cabin.

DC: Did you go up with other families?

ER: No. This was just us.

DC: The model changeover was just you. OK.

ER: Yeah.

DC: OK.

SF: We had a couple cousins near our camps and . . .

ER: Yeah, Pat and them, and they'd come up there.

SF: Who's the one that lost the fish?

ER: Joe. Joe Blue. My husband got a great big fish and he said, "Get the net and catch it with the net." And he got on there and that—and it was a great big thing. It was a big thing like this, yeah. And it fell back in. He missed it. Oh, he says, "Oh my God." Yeah. Oh, yeah, every summer we'd go up north. Take the kids. We brought our kids all over with us. We never left them home.

DC: Did you go off on any trips outside of Michigan?

SF: Oh yeah, Florida, Portland, Oregon with the blind . . .

DC: I'm thinking again when you were really young, though. You know, in the '40s and the early '50s, in there.

SF: Oh no.

DC: No, OK. Not so much then.

ER: We went—my two boys is still living down there in Florida, near St. Cloud. St. Cloud and that there, and when, before my husband got sick, we used to fish in the canals down at Disney World—in those canals—and catch great big fish. Oh we used to have fun there.

SF: Yeah, they're the ones that opened up Disney. One was in the water patrol and the other brother was in the—they shaped the trees and the bushes and stuff.

ER: Yeah, make them deer or elephants and stuff like that. My old—the, Al, it is—he's the oldest one now. He's the one that used to do that. They all worked at Disney World. She even did.

SF: I cooked.

ER: She cooked.

SF: I got tired of that.

ER: Yeah.

DC: Um, was your husband involved with the union?

ER: Oh yeah.

SF: Yes.

ER: Yeah. He was the first one in the union. Yeah. He was. He joined the union and then they had insurance and all that stuff, and he put me on the highest. I'm "B" and he's "A". You know, in the insurance. He got all of that. So now, when I get sick or something like that, my union has paid for it.

DC: It's taking care of you.

ER: Yeah. Yeah.

DC: Did he ever have any need to use a committeeman or anything when he was working? Did he ever have any problems that he needed the union to help him solve?

SF: I think once.

ER: Yeah.

SF: Once or twice. When he fell out of the machine.

ER: Oh, he fell. He was up there fixing. He wasn't supposed to fix it but h— it had come apart or something. And he got up there and fell back on the machine, and broke a rib, wasn't it?

SF: Quite a few ribs.

ER: And they wouldn't have let him have no downtime, so he . . .

SF: Called a committeeman.

ER: Yeah. Made him go to work.

SF: Well this committeeman we know, because he goes fishing with us. [laughs]

DC: When was this, do you remember?

SF: I was a kid.

DC: You were a little kid?

SF: I can remember it, though.

ER: It's about in 19—1969, or 1970.

SF: We got the boat before I was out of school. I was a kid when we got the boat. So that's when . . .

ER: Yeah. They gave him a big . . .

SF: When he fell, he was repairing the machine that he made.

DC: Right.

SF: And the guy out here, he says, that janitor said, "Don't we get—aren't we supposed to get some kind of feedback from putting . . ."—my dad making that machine. General Motors got it, but he didn't patent it. You know what I'm saying?

DC: Yeah. Right, it was just a one-time deal.

SF: Right, you know, not just $2600 many years ago, you know. They're still using it!

DC: Yeah. Should have asked for a dollar a car.

ER: Yeah, or give us a car a year, or something every other year.

DC: Something, yeah. OK. So he stayed on there, you know, throughout.

ER: Throughout, yeah.

DC: OK. And do you remember why he got involved in the union?

ER: Uh—I think all the—all of them got in it. Of course, when he come in, he said, "All right, put me in." and he got in.

SF: That's one of the strike things—that when he was first started—wasn't that when they laid everybody off because they started the union?

ER: Yeah, something like that.

DC: Can you tell me about that?

SF: He worked there a long time. I heard a story about it. I wasn't born yet.

ER: Yeah. He was working, and they wanted a—there was something.

SF: They were off for six months or eight months and you—Daddy used to go to barn and sing songs.

ER: He had a banjo and he used to sing songs and make money to—for the week.

DC: OK. Well he would have worked there before the union, right?

ER: Oh yeah. Oh yeah, he was working without a union, yeah.

SF: They laid everybody off when the union first came in.

DC: Well so I wondered if you could fill me in. Did he ever talk about the difference between what it was like working there with the union as opposed to working without the union.

ER: Yeah. Yeah, he said it was a *lot better* because he could say what he wanted, and they did it, you know. The union will come in there and get it, and they didn't like that. So [laughs] . . .

DC: So the big difference to him was that he could say what he wanted?

ER: Say what he wanted.

DC: What did he want to say?

ER: I don't know. He—what did he do? He was in there buffing and the people that sold the buffing stuff, they come in and talk to him. And they said, "How do you like this?" And he says, "I don't like that because it does this and it does that." And they gave him a bunch of fish poles and they give him all kinds of stuff for what he had told them about that buffing wheel or whatever it is, a great big wheel that buffs the nickel plate. But he was—he was doing pretty good.

SF: I know they laid him off—this is what he said. They laid him off when he first started because the union was coming in. So they laid everybody off for six to eight months, or whatever it was, a long time. And Daddy says that Mom and Daddy used to go to the bar and he'd sing songs.

ER: Oh we lived—it was right there in Drayton Plains. Well, it ain't Drayton Plains. Now it's Waterford. The one that goes across the tracks, there's a bar—hill, Halls. And he used to play his banjo and some guys would take and pass a hat around he'd get some money, and that would last us a week—was because it was just him and I.

SF: But it was just when he started.

DC: When he started, yeah. Did he continue to play the banjo?

ER: Oh yeah, he does, yeah. They started with, "Sing this song, sing that song!" And he would, you know, and play the banjo and sing. Yeah.

DC: Did he play when you went camping?

ER: [animated] No, he'd try and go fishing and do stuff like that. He didn't want none of that stuff, no way! We'd come back with a big platter of fish like this. Then we'd catch bullheads. They were little blue ones, you know, about that big, for the kids. There's no bones in them, so we'd have a big platter of them and the kids would think it was the same fish as we were eating, see. Yeah.

DC: [laughs] Secrets come out.

ER: Yeah.

DC: So did you like to fish as well?

ER: Oh yeah. Yeah, I fish and hunt and—oh, I did everything. Ice fishing, even!

DC: Who cleaned the fish?

ER: Well, both of us. We had a thing we got from across the straits, from Paradise, and I haven't found one again. It's because she had left it in Florida when she sold her stuff.

And it was a little skinner, and it'd skin the fish. Boy, and it come out real good. But I gotta find another one like that. They must still have them up north. The skinner, and you can skin the fish—takes all the skin off and the scales and the whole thing. And it's just plain meat, that's it. It was good.

DC: Now when you were socializing in Pontiac, did you socialize with people that were connections through work or through church, or how did that work?

ER: Yeah. Well I was connected with the church. But then, now, I belong to CDC. That's with the mayor and the whole business.

DC: Right. But I'm trying to think about—I know you're very active now and it's kind of hard to think back into the past. But I'm really trying to think about the '50s, you know, when you [to Sandra Fee] would have been just a little kid in elementary school and stuff. I mean, I wondered if your connections were more oriented towards the union and the work or towards church, or maybe they were all related, I don't know.

ER: No. Well, he was in the union and then they'd talk about union and all that stuff. But then we didn't pay much attention to it, you know.

SF: Other than the shop, no, they didn't socialize. I mean, because, it was all family members, it seemed like, worked at the shop. And anybody that played cards that came over to the house or anything or came camping and stuff were almost all family, but they belonged in the shop.

DC: OK. So your family was so embedded in the shop that there wasn't any difference.

SF: Right.

ER: Yeah.

DC: OK.

SF: And they don't talk shop on vacation.

DC: OK, they didn't talk shop.

ER: Well then, like where I live now, the kids would come down from Auburn Heights and play cards, euchre or pinochle and stuff like that. First thing and I'd get a phone call on the telephone and say, "Hey is my kids down there?" I'd say, "Yup." She says, "OK." They wanted to know where the kids were, see? And they come down to play pinochle with my kids and my husband and I. And that, that's been some of our nights, you know. Otherwise—and then we got a television and couldn't get them away from that. [laughs]

SF: I remember our first television.

DC: So when was that? When did you get your first television?

ER: Um, let's see, when would that be?

SF: '50s.

ER: Yeah, right in the '50s somewhere. And then I got a bigger one. So they'd all sit there and watch. But there wasn't very many programs then, you know—just three or four programs. So. . .

DC: What did you like to watch?

SF: I don't know, but I was on Twin Pines, you know the clown—Milky Way, Milk—Twin Pines. I was on that program.

DC: You were *on* the program.

SF: Yep. One night. Yeah.

DC: So, you know, I'm trying to think—how comfortably could you live in the '50s on your husband's wages?

SF: Seventy-five dollars a week.

ER: We made it. We made it because I'd go out and I'd look up for stuff, get vegetables, we had a lot of vegetables and stuff like that. And boiled dinners. And they'd eat it. And pork and beans, and baked beans.

DC: Tell me more about how you ran the household. I mean, what all did you have to do?

ER: Oh, all, everything. Washing, ironing, the whole thing. Kids went to school and they always clean. Yeah. I did all of that.

DC: What kind of—did you have a washing machine?

SF: A wringer.

ER: Yeah. Well I didn't at first and I had to just wash a little bit. Yeah, we had an old one.

DC: When did you get your washing machine?

ER: Well, I went down to Sears, I think it was. I got a washing machine and a dryer and I charged it to my husband's name. [laughs hard] For my birthday! [laughs hard] I fixed him. So then I had it good. I had a dryer and everything. Usually when it rained, well you couldn't, and the kids would have to go this way and that way. But this way I had it all. So I did it.

DC: Do you remember when that was? Was it. . .

ER: It was, let's see. . .

SF: My little brother split his finger sticking his finger in a wringer.

ER: Yeah, I had one of those wringers, you know, in the big wash tub. And then this here. So I said, "I'm sick and tired of that." So I went down and I got me a brand new one.

DC: Was . . .

ER: When she was little.

DC: When you were little? So that would've been like the early "50s?

ER: Yeah.

SF: I can remember my little brother getting his finger stuck . . .

ER: He stuck his finger in the wringer.

DC: So when you were little, you still had the wringer.

SF: Yeah.

ER: Yeah.

DC: OK. So it was some time after that. OK.

SF: Right. I remember that.

DC: How about a refrigerator? Did you have that?

ER: Yeah, we had a refrigerator. And . . .

DC: Did you ever have an icebox?

ER: An ice box? Yeah, we had that.

SF: I remember the old trucks that come around with them big old picks and you got big blocks of ice. I remember that.

DC: You remember that. Did they drop off ice at your house when you were young?

ER: Yeah.

SF: Ice and milk. Yeah.

DC: OK, so you had an icebox then, at least when you were little.

ER: With the top, the ice was right there, and . . .

SF: We didn't have the television, but I remember the first TV, though.

DC: OK. But it sounds like throughout the '50s, then, you started out with an icebox and a wringer, no washing machine. But it sounds like you upgraded at certain point throughout the '50s.

ER: Yeah. Yeah.

DC: OK. How about your house? Did you house stay the same? Did you do any additions to that or anything?

ER: No . . .

SF: She took a sledgehammer and beat the kitchen wall, and told her Dad that (her Stepdad, which was my Grandpa), said that, "if you can build other peoples' houses, you can fix mine!" So we made the kitchen bigger.

ER: He made my kitchen bigger. I had a kitchen that, you could meet yourself in it, you know? And here, it would—raising four kids, you know, is something else. And so I knocked that hole in there and I says, "Now fix mine." I said I wanted my kitchen bigger.

SF: I remember that, too.

DC: So when was this? When did you do this?

ER: That was, oh gosh, before my husband died.

SF: '58.

ER: Yeah. Yeah.

DC: '58, All right.

SF: Because the hand print that's on the concrete in the backyard, it says '58. All our fingerprints, or handprints, are in there.

DC: And that was when they built the addition out.

ER: Yeah. And then Dad made me a porch like, with the cement; the cement that was left, the

concrete that was leftover. And I got a cement porch in the back, and a base. So, I was a stinker. [laughs]

DC: So how about shopping? You started to mention that you shopped for vegetables and all.
ER: Yeah.

DC: Where did you shop?

ER: I shopped wherever I could get it cheaper. Way up there on Perry Street. I went on Perry and got stuff there. They had a big store. But they had a store right down below where we live—now, that's gone. There's no store there no more. The closest store now is that one way down there on Baldwin—Auburn I mean. Almost down towards town, but I don't go there no more. I go to, where is it? Sav-a-Lot, and all them. Yeah.

DC: Sure.

SF: We do the shopping—my son. There's four generations living in our home right now. Her, me, my son, and my grandson.

DC: Wow. Your grandson that was here, right. Yeah, wow. But it sounds like you—well let me ask you this way: are you thrifty by nature or did feel like you had to be thrifty?

ER: No, I was thrifty by nature. My Mother was that way, too. She canned all kinds of stuff. Well then when they were way up there in Traverse City, and they canned—well, they lived right there with all the fruit and stuff. So I'd get pears and I'd get peaches and I'd get a hundred quarts of tomatoes and . . .

DC: So they stayed up there?

ER: Yeah, they lived up there. Yeah.

DC: Oh, OK.

ER: Until my mother got sick and then I took care of her.

DC: And would they ship you down the fruit for you to can, or would they can it?

ER: Yeah, yeah. I'd get the whole bushel basket of pears and bushel basket of peaches, and they had all kinds of stuff up there. And blue—blackberries and blueberries and raspberries and strawberries. I canned—I made jellies out of strawberries for my Ma and that. She had a root cellar, one that—it's not a full cellar but then it's dirt. And carrots and oh, we canned all that stuff.

DC: So you did all that.

ER: Yeah.

DC: In the summer and fall.

ER: Yeah.

DC: OK. That's a lot of work.

ER: Oh yeah. And four kids.

SF: Well that's why I stayed. They'd come up and get whatever Grandma and them canned, and then come back down here. Well I stayed up until I was in school.

DC: So you would stay up . . .

SF: Up there with my Grandma and Grandpa.

DC: How old were you when you started to do that?

SF: Um—I can't remember . . .

ER: Before she went to school.

SF: Right.

DC: Oh, when you were very young, four or five. And you'd go up and you'd spend several weeks, it sounds like, up there.

SF: I stayed up there all year.

ER: No, you just stayed up there during the—until you come back to go to school.

SF: Yeah, till I went to school. Then I come back here.

DC: All right. So for a couple months perhaps in the summer?

ER: Yeah.

DC: Yeah. OK. Did you like it up there?

SF: Oh, I love it up there.

DC: Yeah. OK.

SF: That's God's country.

DC: [to Evelyn] So that gave you a little bit of breathing space, you know, now, because you

had younger kids, as well, right?

ER: I had one younger.

SF: There was one more younger than me.

DC: One more, yeah. Right. So did you . . .

SF: They're all boys. I'm the only girl.

DC: Did your—let's see, did your older brother go up with you and stay there?

SF: Uh-uh. Just me. I stayed with Grandma.

DC: Just you. OK. Yeah.

SF: I remember my grandma passing away in '53.

ER: And I took care of her until she died. She died in my house.

DC: Oh, OK.

ER: She didn't want to be put in no home, no nothing like that. And I said, "OK, you don't have to go." So then I'd have a nurse come in and take care of her.

DC: OK. So you were looking after your Mother.

ER: My Mother.

DC: Your mother, OK. And what was your Step-dad doing at that point?

ER: He was working at the cemetery. Yeah. He was working at the cemetery with another cousin.

DC: So they had moved back from . . .

ER: From up north when she took sick, and he come down here.

DC: What was her illness?

ER: Cancer.

SF: Colon cancer.

ER: Colon cancer.

DC: Oh. Oh, my. So they moved back down. Did they live in your house?

ER: My house. I took care of them and the kids and I slept upstairs in the attic. [laughs]

DC: Oh my.

ER: We had a walk-up attic, though, and we had mattresses and all, put that down and we lived up there.

DC: Yeah. That sounds like a stressful time.

ER: Yeah. And I took care of her until she died. She came back—well I wasn't—and she died in September.

SF: Of '53.

ER: Yeah. And she—four months. She lived four months after she had that big operation. Yeah. We used to go every month, once every month. We'd go up there and see them. And one time we went up there and seen them and they were there—they were sick, both of them. And we sent a tire, you know, one of those tires so he could sit down in that there, and he had that. So, I don't know . . .

DC: When you say you went once a week, was that up north?

ER: Once a month, yeah. We went way up there to Traverse City. It takes five, six hours, you know, to go up there. Yeah.

SF: Well back then it was longer.

ER: Yeah. But we'd go once a month to go up and see them.

DC: OK. Then they had to move in with you. But you would've had young children and you had your mother who was very sick.

ER: Yeah, yeah.

DC: Yeah, that's . . .

ER: Yeah, the youngest one, he was just little. Because he had suckers, and they put the sucker over the fire. We was cooking . . .

SF: No, he was playing with matches. I remember that because he was like this and one of them sparks flew down his pants and burned him right here.

ER: So it burned him, so I had to take him into the—there. And it scared my Ma. Yeah, she says, I can't go anywhere and have him do that. So, by golly, they—he stopped. But he

wanted to heat up his sucker, you know. [laughs] Oh shoot, kids.

DC: Oh my. It's amazing anyone survives.

ER: Yeah. Yeah.

DC: So you were really busy running this household. And I know I asked before but, again, I'm trying to place it in this period. Was your husband working just his day shift, or was he working a lot of overtime at that point?

ER: No, they didn't have very much overtime. They just kept regular hours. Forty hours, I think it was. Forty hours. He'd start at 7:00 and quit at 4:00 or 5:00. Then I'd have his supper ready on the table and ready to eat.

DC: And what would you do in the evenings then?

ER: And watch TV.

SF: Play cards.

DC: Watch TV, play cards.

ER: Play cards, yeah. The kids would say, "Can we come down and play cards?" And I said, "Yeah, come on!" So we'd play cards until a certain hour, then they had to go home so they could go to school the next day. But, I had the biggest part of the Auburn, Auburn Heights kids down at my house.

DC: So yours was the meeting point.

ER: Yeah. Yeah.

DC: Well that's, that's all pretty interesting. And throughout those years, you stayed at home—you weren't working in the plant or anywhere else. You were plenty busy, it sounds like. Yeah.

ER: I had my hands full with them.

DC: Yeah, yeah.

ER: Make cookies and bake and all that stuff. I used to do all of that.

DC: Let's see. It gets confusing because so many of the people you hung out with were your family members as well, but were any of the other adult women in your family working in the plants, or were they staying home as well?

ER: Uh-uh.

SF: They stayed home.

DC: OK. Stayed home. All right, yeah. Was that common in your neighborhood. Were many of the other women . . .

ER: Yeah, they stayed home. Most of the women stayed home in them days.

DC: Were any of the mothers in your neighborhood working?

ER: Yeah, next door, they went to work when you went to work. That was a long time ago.

SF: You know what, I think the Prestons—I don't know what the Prestons did, but they were in the newspaper business. Weren't the Prestons in the newspaper?

ER: Yeah.

DC: I should say that when I say working, I mean working for wages, you know, because I know you're working hard.

ER: Yeah. Yeah!

DC: OK. But it sounds like your sense of it is that most of the women in your neighborhood were staying home.

ER: Yeah, most of them.

SF: Back then.

DC: Back then, at that point. We're talking about the '50s now, when you would've been in elementary school.

ER: Yeah. Yeah, they were all home. Yeah.

DC: Did you hang out with them during the day?

ER: No, they—well they were always busy, too. They had a bunch of kids. So, probably in the evening, well we'd, over the fence or something like that, we'd talk. Yeah. Yeah.

DC: OK.

SF: Yeah, Mom didn't do too much socializing with the neighbors. Never did.

ER: Uh-uh.

DC: OK. Was there any reason for that?

ER: No, just because I was, I was—like, when I worked for the blind, and then I worked for; I even worked in the shop there for the blind, selling clothes and all that stuff. And I stopped that and then I was working for the soup kitchen. And I stopped that because it was too hard. I'd bring the bread over to my seniors and, gosh darn, you know each one weighs a pound and a full box of bread to the seniors, it was kind of heavy. So I'd holler at the guys and, by golly, they'd come out. But afterward, you know, it's kind of heavy. So I quit. I thought, well, let somebody else younger than me go over there.

DC: And when was it that you stopped delivering the bread?

ER: Well, see now, it was '83 when I started. And I stayed there until '90. '90, wasn't it? No, '89. '89.

DC: So that would've been more recent anyway.

ER: Yeah.

DC: It sounds like all that energy that went into running the household had to go somewhere, so it went into these other activities. Now, I know I asked this once before—it's probably on the tape—but was your work with the blind, was that earlier on? Was that when you were younger, or was that . . .

ER: Yeah, when they were young.

DC: Yeah, OK. Because that's a lot to be involved in.

ER: Well, I worked in the blind, with the blind, too, when she was older.

DC: Older as well.

ER: Yeah. A long time, yeah.

DC: It was a long-term involvement.

ER: Yeah. Because I was working at the blind shop, you know, down on Baldwin here.

DC: Yeah, you mentioned that. I'm sorry if repeat myself, but, you know—it's all clear when I go back and listen to the tape, but when I hear it for the first time, sometimes it kind of bounces around inside my brain.

ER: Yeah, that's all right.

DC: You mentioned that the first black family moved into your neighborhood in 1960, it was, when you were like thirteen or so. Were there—did your husband, at work—were there blacks and whites at work in his department?

ER: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Yeah.

DC: OK.

ER: Yeah, he knew quite a few of them there. Yeah.

DC: And where did his black coworkers live at that point in time? Not in your neighborhood.

ER: Yeah, they moved—they started moving after Bells moved in there, and they . . .

SF: Across the tracks.

DC: Across the tracks, OK.

ER: It used to be across the tracks, yeah. Yeah.

DC: OK. Well, did he ever talk about the way blacks and whites got along inside the plant?

ER: Oh, they all did. They all got a—they all did, yeah. Yeah. We was never, never—they's gotta live someplace, and that's what we figured. So they go all over. They gotta live somewhere, so we might as well stay with what we got.

DC: Well how did your neighbors respond, then, when black families started to move into your neighborhood.

ER: They moved.

SF: [laughs] I had a thirteenth birthday party and I invited two black girls that just, in the neighborhood. And I lost about twelve friends.

ER: We've never been prejudiced, never. Yeah.

SF: We put the cards on the table. Well *we* do.

DC: Yeah.

ER: We don't bother you, you don't bother us. That's the way we figured.

DC: Yeah.

ER: Like one little girl, she was going down the street. She says, "Why are you in this neighborhood?" I said, "I was here first." See? And then one time we was, we went to . . .

SF: We went to the gas station last night, right there on Martin Luther King and Auburn. And I

don't know how many black people said, "Honky! What are you doing here, honky!"

ER: Yeah.

SF: I'll whip out my pistol and I'll show you honky.

DC: Well tell me more. This sounds like a pretty interesting period, right around the time you were thirteen. Were these black girls that had just recently moved in to the neighborhood, that you invited?

SF: Uh-huh.

DC: OK. Yeah. And the friends that you're talking about, were they from your neighborhood as well?

SF: Yep.

DC: Were any of them family member or cousins or anything?

SF: No.

DC: No. They were just friends from the neighborhood.

ER: No, we had no cousins down there on my street. No.

DC: OK. None. All right, yeah. So how did you feel about it at the time, can you remember? I'm trying to see if you can remember how you felt right then as opposed to how you feel right now.

ER: Well let's see, there was one girl went down the street, kind of a lady. And she said, "What you in our neighborhood for?" And I says, "I was here first." I said, "I've been here since 1940, so you have nothing to say to me."

SF: Well you know, just recently when my daughter and son went to school, I got spit on by a young girl right in front of my own house. I told her, I said, "Go get your mother," and she said, "My mother will kick your butt." I said, "Well go get her, then," you know, "because I ain't gonna touch you." But we had a couple confrontations with prejudice. You know, they're just as prejudiced as the white people. So, we did have some prejudices. But we [?]. We call a spade a spade no matter what, you know? But my kids got beat up on a segregated bus.

ER: Oh yeah.

SF: My daughter had a footprint right here, and we took the kid to school, to court.

ER: Three of them. Three, three of them.

SF: Well it just so happens that the black guys that took the complaint, we went to— they was raised right down the street from us. They know darned well we ain't prejudiced, so they got that little . . .

ER: So they, the lady took us to the court, you know, to jail, where the jail is, you know? And said that—in the garage. "Uh-uh, no way." And, by golly, find out that three girls are picking on her. She says, "Well they told me to do that. They told me to do this." She says, "OK, now," says, "I'll let you go this time, but you're under supervision. If you do it again, then you're. . ." No, that's . . .

SF: Until she's eighteen. I had a mother come out after me with a big old block of wood, trying to hit me over that incident.

ER: Yeah. But when, when they were told that they couldn't do that stuff and that, then they changed.

SF: She went in to court and said yeah, that they told us that if we walk down the neighborhood that they'd throw rocks at us—the white people will throw rocks at us. I said, "Have you ever seen me throw a rock at you? Why are you saying that?" Because I can throw a rock. Yeah, we had a little confrontation. . .

ER: But then, after they found out, then they leave us alone.

DC: You know, I'm trying to think about that period when the neighborhood was just starting to change. It sounds like there was prejudice in the neighborhood. A lot of your white neighbors were very upset, it sounds like.

ER: Yeah, and they moved out. Yeah, they moved out, every one of them.

DC: OK.

ER: But I got along with all of them, every one of them. That didn't stop. The only one of them is the kids from Detroit or Flint. They come and visit next door. Then they say something and my neighbor says, "Uh-uh, you—nothing, no don't you do anything to Mrs. Rogers. You just leave her alone."

DC: Well, did you interact with the new black families in your neighborhood right away?

ER: Oh yeah.

SF: Oh yeah.

ER: But see now, I'm on the pride and beautification, you know; the flowers that's all around the buildings and all that stuff? I'm on that committee, too. So we would—right across the street they got their yard all fixed up and that, and I got papers ready to have—I signed

mine down here and they sign theirs up here if they want their name in. Then they get two tickets to a big banquet. Yeah, at this Orthodox Church.

SF: We don't have no problems with them. When we were growing up, we didn't—I had more problems with the family than I did with the outside!

ER: You know, my neighbor across the street, they had a big apple tree and the kids would get in there. And she says somebody called my younger son a white, black, the other name, you know. And I says, "Who do you mean, Butch?" And she said, "Yeah, he was up in my tree." So I hollered to Butch and I said, "Get down!" And he says, "Well I wanted to get me an apple." And I said, "Uh-uh, you don't do that stuff." But they called him a white. . . [laughs] They come back and he told me, he said, "They called me that, and I—he says, "I was gonna fix them. I was gonna get me an apple anyway."

DC: So why do you think that your family was different from so many other white families on your block?

ER: Well, because lots of them are prejudiced and they just . . .

SF: Well they don't understand. They think just because somebody's of a different color or different look that they're a problem. But you know, they grew up with that.

ER: Well see now, like they now, we got—we have Mexicans moved out and they haven't got the green slips, you know, they come across. And they don't speak English. And I went over there, and I told them about the soup kitchen and all that stuff. And the kid, the kid goes to school, and he; I said, "Now listen," I said, "This tree is, you park on that one side. You don't park on the other side." We had fifteen to twenty cars parked all there. So I went up to see them and I told the mayor and the mayor said, "OK, we'll fix that." And sure enough, they got it fixed. Now we got one family, or two families, but there was fifteen families in there. Well, seven kids, all around the same age from two to six. Wasn't it two to six? And I went down there and I got them some hamburger sandwiches. For Halloween, you know, you'd get tickets. And I said, I was giving them six, and she says, "Oh, we got eight." So I had to give them two more. It was eight of them under the certain age. Under twelve years old. Living in that house. But they put a stop to that. They come down. The soup kitchen, they come up there and told them that. She was a Mexican lady, and told them that they couldn't do that stuff. And she talked to them and they got Them controlled over there. So now there's only two families living in there, I think. Yeah. It's better.

DC: Now back, you know, in the '50s here, after World War II and all, did you and your husband still stay interested in baseball?

ER: Yeah, he played baseball for a long time afterwards. Yeah.

DC: Who did he play for?

ER: Um. . .

SF: Pontiac Motors.

DC: Pontiac Motors had a team right through the ‘50s?

ER: Yeah.

DC: Uh-huh. And did they play their games here in Pontiac or did they go away?

ER: All over. They’d take this one—even bowling, they’d have one team from bowling and play against another team in General Motors and—for a chicken dinner or something like that. And they did that. Oh yeah, well jeez, we’re a bowling family, too. [laughs]

DC: And that was during the ‘50s as well?

ER: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

DC: Yeah, OK. And how many nights a week did you go bowling?

ER: Oh, I think he went twice. I went once. I bowled for the blind and then I went, I went with my sister-in-law, and we bowled at Auburn Heights.

DC: Did you have a women’s league?

ER: Yeah, women’s league at Auburn Heights. And we won four or five years in a row. We’re bowlers.

DC: I guess so!

ER: And turn around and then we quit and they said, “Oh good, they’re quitting!” [laughs]

DC: Give everyone else a chance.

ER: Let them—give them a chance!

DC: Well who was on your bowling team?

ER: My sister-in-law, Betty, and Lila Leskey [sp?] is her name. And May. There was another lady—I can’t think of her name.

SF: Barb.

ER: Barb. Yeah. And we had a team up there in Drayton Plains, I mean, Waterford. Not Waterford, Auburn Heights. And we took them every time.

DC: What did the kids do on the nights when you were out bowling?

SF: School work.

DC: School work.

ER: Or maybe some of them worked until, what . . .

SF: Not when you bowled on them leagues. He's talking about early in the '50s, Mom, not '60, '70, '80s.

DC: I'm trying to go way back just to—yeah.

SF: The '50s. We stayed home. We did school work and stuff all evening.

DC: You know, well it sounds like—did you and your husband bowl on the same nights or different nights?

ER: One night, one night we bowled together. And then, then other nights he bowled and then I bowled on a different night. Yeah.

DC: So if you were out bowling on the night when you weren't bowling together, would your husband stay home, [to Sandra] would your dad stay home with you then?

ER: Yeah.

SF: Oh, my oldest brother, he's nine years older than me. So he's seven years older than my older brother.

DC: Yeah. So he could be in charge.

SF: Yeah.

DC: Yeah. OK. That makes sense. Yeah, he would've been in high school by the mid-fifties, right? OK, yeah. It sounds busy!

ER: Yeah. It was a busy house.

SF: We all, whatever we did, we did as a family.

ER: All together.

DC: So did you go off and watch, you know, your father, your husband play baseball and stuff when they went?

SF: Yeah.

DC: Yeah, OK. And then were there kids' activities, too, that people got involved in?

SF: Yeah, General Motors used to have a—where you go to these amusement parks, like Walled Lake, Edgewater, where there were roller coasters and stuff like that. Every year they had that picnic.

DC: That would be organized by Pontiac Motor?

SF: Right, by General Motors.

DC: By General Motors, yeah. Yeah. OK.

SF: We'd always go to that.

DC: Did the union have any kinds of picnics like that or any sort of events?

SF: I thought that was union.

ER: This one, yeah.

SF: I thought it was union.

DC: Oh, OK. That was the union organizing it.

SF: Right.

DC: OK. What about, I don't know, things like Little League Baseball or Girl Scouts or things like that? Did you do anything like that?

ER: My, now the oldest one, he belonged to the boys' club, scouts.

DC: OK, Boy Scouts.

SF: He's the only one.

DC: The only one who did that.

ER: Yeah. We got him a uniform and everything, yeah. [interrupted by cell phone call]

DC: I wasn't sure if that stuff was around in your neighborhood. Yeah.

SF: Yeah, it was.

ER: He went out on camping. Bill did, too.

DC: I'm trying to think of what other questions. . . and were you still involved with the church, as well, at that point in time?

ER: Mm-hmm. Every time. I go to three of them every. . .

DC: I know you do right now, but when your kids were younger?

ER: Yeah, we. . . yeah. They all made their confirmation and everything, the whole bunch.

DC: Did your husband ever think about switching to a different job?

ER: No. Well he had one, at Yellow Coach, or Yellow Cab it used to be. And then when he got laid off, they switched him to General Motors.

DC: That was a long time ago.

ER: A *long* time ago they switched him to Pontiac Motors and that's where he stayed.

DC: OK, but did he ever consider moving to a different department o r. . .

ER: No. No, he liked nickel plate.

DC: He liked that. OK, he liked his job. Did he tell you what he liked about it?

ER: Well, it fit him anyway. Because he was a tall guy and he was nickel plate.

DC: He was tall.

ER: Yeah, six foot three.

DC: Yeah, wow.

ER: Yeah, he was a tall guy. All my kids is tall, see how tall she is? And she's the shortest one. All my other boys are tall. Yeah.

DC: Well, do you have to get moving here?

ER: Well how much longer you got?

DC: Well, I don't know. It depends what else we have to say.

ER: I got, I got the other local that I'm thinking—put the cards around and all that stuff and then. . .

SF: Well you're gonna be late for that because it's already 11:35.

DC: Oh, you have to get moving. OK, I'm sorry.

ER: 11:30, it is.

DC: Oh, I don't mean to take up your time, then, if that's. . . ok, if you need to do that. But at some point I wouldn't mind meeting some of these other folks that you play cards with, because it sounds like they would have a lot of interesting stories to tell.

ER: What you should do is come on a Thursday or a Tuesday.

SF: Wednesday's good here in the morning.

ER: Yeah, here, but . . .

DC: Wednesday here, OK.

ER: We got fourteen tables of euchre players!

SF: At 1:00, and they're all seniors. And they work *in* the shop. They're workers.

DC: OK. Yeah. And maybe you could put in a word for me and tell them I don't bite and all that. But then, where's the other hall?

SF: It's 990 Joslyn.

DC: OK, Joslyn's just down. . .

ER: It's at the other union hall.

SF: It's called the Ruth Peterson. It used to be the old union hall.

DC: The old union hall, right. But it's called what now?

SF: Ruth Peterson.

DC: Ruth Peterson, OK.

ER: They—she used to be, had something to do with fish, you know, to donate food and all that stuff for the poor and all that stuff. That's . . .

DC: And you go there on Tuesdays and Thursdays?

SF: Every day but Wednesday.

ER: I go every day!

DC: Every day but Wednesday, OK.

ER: Wednesday I come over here.

DC: You come over here, OK. But that's at 11:30, you say?

SF: 11:30 on Mondays and Fridays.

ER: That, there's hardly nobody there.

DC: Ok, Monday and Friday's not good. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

ER: Tuesdays and Thursdays.

DC: OK, and what time do you meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

ER: 12:30. We start playing cards at 12:30. So you could come earlier.

End of Interview