

## APPENDIX III: EBD

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## FORM B

Personal History of Informant

160

STATE Michigan

NAME OF COLLECTOR Elizabeth A. Meese

ADDRESS

DATE 19 May 1968

SUBJECT Detroit Local Place Legends

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT

1. Ancestry: Scottish
2. Place and date of birth: 30 January 1890 on Field Avenue,  
Detroit, Michigan
3. Family: Single; parents and siblings dead
4. Places lived in, with dates:
  - 1890 - Field Avenue, Detroit, Michigan
  - c. 1891 - St. Clair, Michigan
  - c. 1892 - Field Avenue, Detroit, Michigan
5. Education, with dates:
  - B.A. (1936) and M.A. (1939) granted by Wayne State University: credits accumulated at Detroit Normal Training School, (cont.)
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates:
  - Taught art in many schools in the Detroit school system: Joyce Jr. High, Barbour Intermediate, Northeastern High School, etc.
7. Special skills and interests: Began teaching in 1909  
Collections of Victorian glass, textiles, lace, jewelry; makes jewelry
8. Community and religious activities:
  - Volunteer work at the International Institute since retirement
  - Religion: Presbyterian
9. Description of informant:
  - The informant is a tall woman with stately appearance. Her hair is white and a little untidy. She wears glasses but sees very (cont.)
10. Other points gained in interview:
  - 5. (cont.) Wayne State University, Ford Center, Detroit Arts and Crafts, University of Michigan, University of Chicago, Columbia University
  - 9. (cont.) little. Her weight is about average for her age.

COLLECTOR'S LOG - EBD

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12 April, - Report of a Conversation with FMS  
1968

When I approached FMS regarding the possibility of interviewing him for my study, he suggested that I go with him to visit his friend, ED. FS said that he had learned much about Detroit from her. I indicated that I would be interested in interviewing both of them. FS said that he would contact ED.

27 April 1968 - Report of a Conversation with FMS

FS informed me that he had spoken with ED regarding the interview; he said that she seemed interested, and that he would like to go with me because he felt ED would feel more at ease. FS said that ED is quite old and sometimes digresses. I suggested some possible dates; FS said that he would check with her and contact me.

16 May 1968 - Report of a Conversation with FMS

I saw FS regarding his contact with ED. He said that he thought ED was "chickening out." I suggested that we forget about the interview since the research deadline was coming close. FS said that he was interested in pursuing the possibility further.

19 May 1968 - Report of a Telephone Conversation with FMS

I called FS regarding the interview with ED, since this seemed to be the last possible date for such an interview. FS said that he could contact ED and call me back.

FS returned the call, reporting that he had arranged the interview for this same afternoon at ED's home. He explained that she was a bit reluctant, but he felt that ED just wanted to be "coy."

- Report of an Interview

FS drove me to ED's home at 626 Field Avenue, Detroit, Michigan. She lives alone in a two story home with five small rooms on the ground floor. ED greeted us when we arrived. She invited us to put our coats on the bed in her room. FS explained that informant's eyesight was failing. So when we deposited our coats in her room, she asked me if I wouldn't also like to remove my hat. I was not wearing a hat, but had my hair up. I explained the situation. Both FS and I were amused and briefly speechless at the awkwardness of the situation. It did not seem to bother ED.

Since FS had explained to ED that the discussion would be taped, we socialized only briefly. FS had warned me that the interview could not be too extensive, because ED tires quite rapidly. We arranged the

furniture and set up the equipment in the informant's living room. ED explained that she had to sit with her back to the window as the light bothered her eyes.

The living room was a long, narrow room full of comfortable old stuffed furniture. The atmosphere is quite dull and gloomy. The colors are dark and everything seems quite old and dusty. ED has many lovely art objects in her home, although the rest of the decor does not lend itself to appreciating them.

The interview went quite well. The three of us each sat facing the other two; everyone was seated about six feet from the others. ED was responsive, repeated herself on occasion -- her fascination with the VanDyke drainage ditch -- but often volunteered and initiated. FS attempted to monopolize and direct the conversation, but ED seemed to be able to control him, and was obviously of an independent mind.

After the taped interview was terminated, ED prepared tea and showed us her collections of china and glass. We socialized for about an hour.

#### 25 May 1968 - Report of a Telephone Conversation with FMS

FS called to say that ED was quite worried about some of the information she had given me. ED wished to have it removed from the tape. I reassured FS that I would call her about the matter.

#### 27 May 1968 - Report of a Telephone Conversation

I called ED regarding the interview. She said that she had been worrying and her blood pressure was already high. I suggested that she could either remain anonymous, or that she would have control over the use of the material. She said that she wanted it removed completely. I said that I would do so. ED seemed quite relieved. She said that she never used to worry about things, but lately such things had bothered her. She said that the rest of the material was fine, could be retained, and that she would be glad to help me in the future. I said that I would respect her wishes. She asked that I promise to call her as soon as the information was removed from the tape. I said that I would not be able to attend to it immediately, but that I would certainly call her as soon as I had.

#### 5 June 1968 - Report of a Telephone Conversation

I called ED, as she had requested, to inform her that the information (Items #27 and #28) had been deleted from the tape. She was very happy. We discussed the matter briefly.

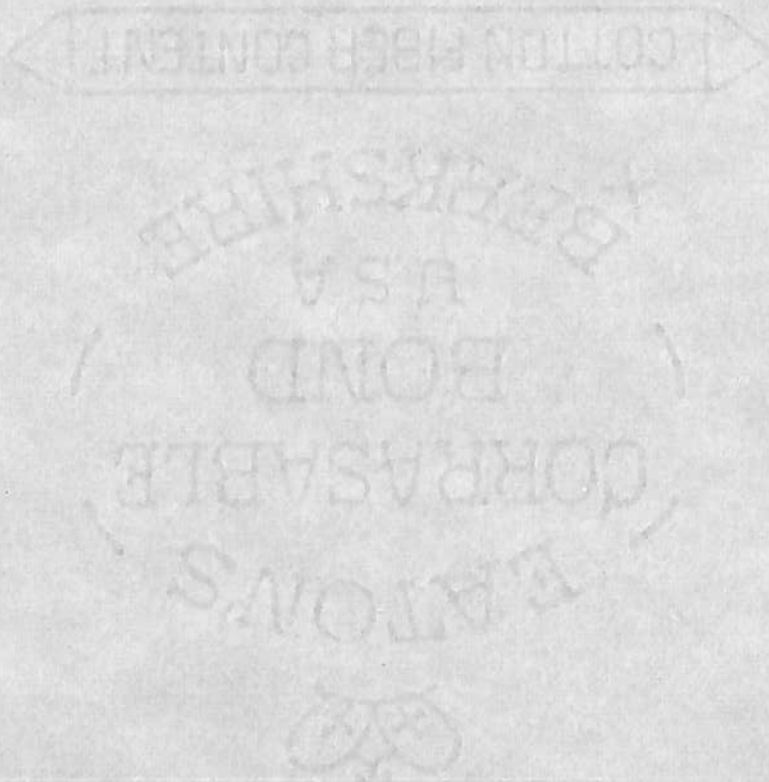
ED told me that she had remembered some other interesting things: the scissor sharpener, the banana man, and a little German band that used to come through the neighborhoods.

ED said that they went to Belle Isle for band concerts. People used to sit in canoes and listen to the music. A favorite present for men was a pillow for the canoe.

I obtained a few additional dates to be included in the informant's background form.

ED said that she could remember when the Spanish-American War was being conducted. Someone who was the beau of a friend of hers was stationed in Arizona, which then, ED said, was a rough place.

ED talked at length about the events of the day, teaching, and civil unrest. She said that she hoped I would come again to visit her. I said that perhaps that might be possible sometime this summer.



TAPE INDEX - EBD-1 - Detroit Local Place Legends

WSUFA accession number:

Recorded: 19 May 1968, 2:30 p.m.  
3 3/4 ips, mono

Elizabeth A. Meese interviewing  
Detroit, Michigan

Situation: The interview took place in the living room of the informant's home. a mutual friend -- both a contact person and informant for this study -- is also present. FS talks too much in the beginning, but ED does not appear to be much influenced by him. ED is seventy-seven years old; her eyesight is extremely poor and she claims that her memory is bad. The latter is not too apparent. The clock chimes on occasion.

TAPE I, SIDE 1

ITEM [Introductory procedure, dating, testing. ED says her voice sounds funny. FS and EM disagree. The company joke about it briefly.]

- #1 EM introduces the study
- #2 ED volunteers information about the first baseball park.
- #3 ED and FS discuss Gary Melchior (sp?)  
--ED talks about Moses Field
- #4 ED talks about Jim Scott
- #5 ED tells about Van Dyke ditch and then Bloody Run
- #6 ED tells about the French farms
- #7 ED and FS discuss the origin of the name Campus Martius
- #8 Collector's Form information  
--father and mother to Detroit
- #9 Continuation of #5 - Bloody Run
- #10 ED tells about early Indian settlements  
--cousin Alice watches the Indians have a pow-wow
- #11 EM asks if the area was marshy and how Field Avenue got its name
- #12 Continuation of #5 and #9 - Bloody Run  
--Elmwood Cemetery
- ✓ #13 ED talks about the ethnic communities  
--Scotch, Irish, Polish, Italians, Negroes

## TAPE I, SIDE 1 (cont.)

## ITEM

- #14 EM asks about the underground railroad and ED responds with Canadian Civil War substitution
- #15 ED talks about her father and mother in Sarnia, Canada  
--compares life in Scotland where people couldn't fish or shoot and life in Sarnia where people ate potatoes, with or without salt
- #16 ED talks about Indian Village and Indians
- #17 ED tells how Belle Isle got its name  
--the first bridge; father, mother, and brother first to cross
- #18 ED tells about the burning of the Belle Isle Bridge
- #19 ED talks about "when the wheels came in," trucks and cars
- #20 ED tells a story about Edsel Ford
- #21 ED tells about Henry Ford's watch plan and his car  
[EM bumps tape machine]  
--response to a motorcycle
- #22 ED explains how she travelled to Sarnia to visit relatives  
--EM mentions Peche Island excursion boat
- #23 ED talks about the old Art Museum  
--ED was interested in the copies of old diamonds  
--McLean diamond that was supposed to bring bad luck
- #24 ED talks about the residences of the Pingrees, Buhls, Seyburns, Hinkel Hass
- #25 ED talks about the Russell House
- #26 ED talks about the theater in Detroit  
--Temple Theater  
--ED and FS discuss the age of the Detroit Opera House  
--Broadway Opera House and Lafayette Theater  
--ED names famous persons who played in Detroit
- #27 (Informant requested that this information be deleted)
- #28 (Same as #27)
- #29 ED talks about rum-running and bootlegging  
--Freddy the rum-runner and the police
- #30 ED talks about the Freer Gallery in Detroit  
--Stratton's Pewabic pottery was in his collection
- #31 ED explains how she learned about Detroit

## TAPE I, SIDE 1 (cont.)

## ITEM

- #32 ED talks about time spent as a family and occasions on which stories were told
- #33 Background on ED's family
- #34 ED evaluates the amount of Detroit information she knows
- #35 ED talks about Electric Park  
--German Beer Garden
- #36 ED tells about the Michigan Stove  
--Gabriel Richard
- #37 ED, EM, and FS discuss the salt mines under the City
- #38 ED tells about Old Fort Wayne  
---cow pasture
- #39 ED and EM discuss frequency of transmission of Detroit material
- #40 ED tells about horse cars and streetcars  
--pressing stick pins on the tracks
- #41 ED tells about jumping on the ice wagon  
--ice cutting and storage

[End of Tape I, Side 1]

## TAPE I, SIDE 2

## ITEM

- #1 ED talks about German community  
[testing interruption]
- #2 ED tells about Dr. Sherman
- #3 ED and FS talk about the Lindbergs
- #4 Collector's Form Data  
--occupational background
- #5 ED tells about Old Captain Stewart in charge of materials for Detroit Board of Education  
--shows problems in school facilities
- #6 ED talks about Detroit in World War I
- #7 Continuation of #4 - Collector's Form Data  
--educational background
- #8 ED tells about Mrs. Stratton and where her pottery can be found



TAPE I, SIDE 2 (cont.)

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## ITEM

- #9 ED relates her feelings about the City  
--trip out to Grosse Pointe Farms, Joseph Berry's house  
[EM bumps machine]
- #10 Continuation of #4, #7 - Collector's Form Data  
--religious and community affiliations  
--special interests  
--ancestry  
--background on informant
- #11 ED tells about the depression
- #12 FS asks ED to tell what has happened to her students; she does so
- #13 Continuation of #4, #7, #10 - Collector's Form Data  
--language spoken, Gaelic  
--ED discusses her interest in dialects
- #14 ED tells how she thinks her mother happened to tell her about Detroit
- #15 ED comments on her own interest in Detroit
- #16 ED tells how the Penobscot Building got its name, and Indian Village
- #17 ED comments on her interest in particular stories
- #18 ED, FS, and EM talk about the Detroit Zoo and one at Belle Isle
- #19 ED comments on other people's interest in Detroit material as well as other things
- #20 Continuation of #4,7,10,13 - Collector's Form Data  
--education

[Interview terminated]

Collector's number EBD-1; WSUFA accession number

Recorded: 19 May 1968, 2:30 p.m.

Elizabeth A. Meese interviewing Avenue, Detroit, Michigan; also present

Subject: Detroit Local Place Legends

Transcribed by Elizabeth A. Meese

TAPE I, SIDE 1

ITEM #3

[ED explains that most of the territory where she now lives--Field and East Jefferson area--was "mostly swamp land." When her father came, it was called Hamtramck Township. Moses Field and various other people bought this land from an ancestor of Gary Melchior's [sp.?]. This ancestor's children all married the old French families, such as the Campaus and the DuBoises. ED says that all of this information is in the title abstract for her property.]

ED And Moses Field was ah eh run down as being a crook of some kind [EM and FS chuckle] when he wasn't because, I think it was thirty-seven years afterwards, eh eh a great descendant of ah, down, of Gary Melchior's came to Detroit and, accidentally I believe, so they sweetly claimed, hired a shyster lawyer, and some of the Campaus and these people joined in with him (EM Ah) to try and get the property back because they claimed that it belonged to them, that ah Gary Melchior's ancestor who had owned the property originally had gone to the old Saint Peter and Paul's Church and had got one gotten one of the priests because, to take over the his property because he couldn't read nor write, and ah they, the priest in the meantime was shipped off someplace else or died and ah (EM Uh huh [clears throat] ) the Catholic Church evidently didn't know about it so they up and sold the property to Moses Field, (EM Oh) who became quite a benefactor because he wanted to donate all the land from Jefferson from the River (EM Uh huh) to Mack Avenue and from the Boulevard to Van Dyke Avenue as a park for the City if they would ah spend you know a few hundred dollars on it (EM Uh huh) but the City wouldn't. (EM Oh) Later on they paid eighty-five thousand dollars, this little piéce down at the end of the street. for

[The area from Kercheval to Mack Avenue used to be called Linden Park and was owned by Moses Field. ED believes that the City could still have had it, but they didn't take it so Field developed the area himself.]

ITEM #4

FS Elsie, why don't you talk about uhm uhm Scott. Let's uhm find out (EM Oh) what you know about Mr. Scott, (EM Have you) the fellow whose

a who donated the ah fountain at Belle Isle.

ED I know very little about him except that he was supposed to be a wicked man. [FS chuckles]

EM Was he?

ED Yes, and ah [chuckles] he ah he owned gambling and prostitute institutes and (EM Oh) things like that in Detroit and ah I can remember clearly, however, that the ministers all over Detroit were preaching against the City accepting the money, (EM Oh they did?) but one preacher I remember got up and said that at least he was giving back to the City some of the money he stole from it, (EM Oh) I don't know. But they wouldn't even build the fountain at first, eh, they didn't build that fountain for Scott over there (EM Uh huh) at first because so many of the people objected to where the money had come from (EM Uh huh) see and the money in the meantime increased and increased until they built all that land from the fountain to the end of Belle Isle with the money (EM Ooh) that was left

[FS interrupts suggesting that the fountain was built two or three decades after Scott's death. ED says she doesn't know if it was that long, but it certainly was quite a while after his death. ED said that she had taught some Scandinavian students who were doing the actual sculpturing; FS said he had always thought that it was Italian.]

EM Did people tell uhm stories about Jim Scott?

ED Well you see I don't remember except ah I knew nothing about him, only what I heard in church (EM Uh huh, uh huh) [ED and FS chuckle] really and heard my aunts and uncles talking about, "Oh no, the City never should accept" there was a great how-do-you-do about ah them accepting the money (EM Hmm) in as much as it had come from such bad and evil places.

[ED says she doesn't know how they finally came to build the fountain. FS says it was after a few generations or decades. ED says no.]

ITEM #5

[ED volunteers information about a huge ditch on Van Dyke from Gratiot Avenue to the River. ED says that this ditch was filled in, just as the Bloody Run had been.]

EM How did that get its name, did you ever hear?

ED Oh the Bloody Run eh got its name because that's that was the last stand I believe of the white eh the French people fighting the Indians (EM Oh) and ah the bat... the worst battle took place right there at ah Elmwood Avenue where the Bloody between Mount Elliott and Elmwood (EM Uh huh) where the Bloody Run was. The worst battle took place between the Indians (EM They did?) and then the French king eh gave grants of to ah all these people after whom those streets

are named down there

FS Sure, Beaubien, and ah DuBois and Chene and Campau

ITEM #6

ED Yes, Campau (EM Yeah) [EM unintelligible] and ah they were as the French farms were in fact they probably were French farms to begin with, which were narrow and perhaps about a mile long see (EM Uh huh) as the French farms are, and then they gathered down toward Jefferson Avenue as I believe.

EM Why were they shaped like that?

ED Well, the people liked to live together, they still are in those in those some of those countries.

[FS comments on the brownstone houses. ED says she remembers going through Hungary seeing all of the people taking a Saturday night bath at the pump. Detroit was a wheel-like place at first, with a village as the center.]

ED And consequently the DuBois and the Chenes and so on owned those streets. (FS Uh huh)

EM Uh huh. Were they really streets then?

ED Ah, yes they were when now some of this of course is just hearsay because I wasn't here

[ED says that her mother told her about the fact that where ED now lives wasn't Detroit initially. Her mother used to leave the baby buggy on the street and take the horsecar downtown.]

ITEM #7

[ED remembers when there was a market on Campus Martius; people used to go there on Saturday night. ED says she really doesn't know how Campus Martius got its name. She comments, "I suppose it was a war of some kind." She says that "Martius" means war. ED and FS discuss this.]

ITEM #9

EM Do you remember when that battle was at Bloody Run? Was that, what century?

ED I can't tell you right now, I taught it once [EM laughs] in history but today my mind doesn't remember.

EM Well, I mean just in centuries. Was it about eight eighteenth century (FS Eighteenth century, seventeen something) or nineteenth?

ED Oh yes, the early eighteenth century.

FS Uh huh.

EM Oh it was?

ED Oh it must have been.

[ED says that there are burials over one hundred years old in Elmwood Cemetery: it is among the oldest cemeteries, "outside of the old Indian cemeteries and perhaps little ones, you know, that they found downtown, when they built the skyscrapers."]

ITEM #10

[FS asks if ED remembers any Indian settlements around Detroit.]

ED I do I do not, but ah my cousin Alice remembers ah when the old racetrack was up here. Now Mother told me about the racetrack. There was a racetrack up here above Van Dyke Avenue, of course, that was outside the City (EM Hmm) and ah Alice's ah uncle bought part of this land or something from the Indians and Alice remembers sitting [slight chuckle] as a child sitting in an apple tree down there watching the Indians have a pow-wow of some kind. [EM laughs]

FS Well now where were the Indians? What part of the City? Did she know? Did, were there sort of settlements or what?

ED Well, they must have lived out they must have lived out here someplace.

FS On the outskirts of the City.

ITEM #11

[ED says she doesn't know if the area was really marshy, except that there was a drainage ditch and the Bloody Run; both drained Detroit.]

ED My mother told me that when she came to Detroit this was from Field Avenue was about the last stand (EM Hmm) and this wasn't Field Avenue, it was Lincoln Avenue then. (EM Oh) But Moses Field, when he bought it, turned it into his name, (EM Uh huh) Field Avenue.

EM Do you know how you learned about Bloody Run? The

ED Well, I had to teach the history of Detroit (EM Uh huh) and that's many years ago [chuckling] and I just don't remember ah (EM Uh huh) ah and today the as I say I can't even remember the man and I did remember the the top Indian but ah (EM Hmm) I can't think of his name today.

[ED says she taught the history of Detroit at about the third grade level.]

ED Of course I knew about the Bloody Run because Mother used to tell me when we'd go to the cemetery.

[ED says that her father had died when she was about two years old so they went to visit his grave there. She says the cemetery was not an outing place. ED describes the cemetery, remarking on an old chapel that was built in 1857 and restored recently: "It's very beautiful down in there." ED says that "most of the old wealthier people of Detroit who were Protestant are buried in that cemetery." ED says that the City has tried to put streets through the cemetery "but these wealthy people have interfered with them doing that." ED observes with feigned surprise that the tape recorder is running.]

## ITEM #13

[FS asks ED to talk about the ethnic communities.]

ED When my father came to this country the people, the Scotch people, were called "the dirty Scotch." [FS laughs]

EM Oh they were?

ED Oh yes. Every n..that's just what people do (EM Oh) when they don't know people you know, (FS Uh huh) they were dirty Scotch. I never saw anybody cleaner than my mother's family [EM laughing] but that's what happened.

[ED explains that the Irish settled in Corktown; "then when the Poles came why that was horrible, they were called Pollacks you know." ED says that the Italians came later. ED doesn't remember any Negroes until about 1925.]

## ITEM #14

EM Did anybody ever tell you about the Underground Railroads, ah the slave, running uhm Negroes (FS Uh huh) up from the South?

FS To Canada, yeah.

ED I don't think that they ah they had them in Detroit. (EM Mmm) I don't think that they ah ah sheltered them very much but my mother had told me that during the Civil War you know the people could ah buy their way out of getting into the army, (FS Uh huh) the Canadians would come over and take their places in the (EM Oh) (FS Uh huh. Oh I never knew that) eh to go to the Civil War.

EM You mentioned Indian Village. How did that get its name?

ED Well. now this I can't confirm at all, uhm because ah I think they just gave it that name (EM Uh huh) but the Indians did have a p... [chuckles] a pow-wow down at the foot there (EM Uh huh) of Jefferson Avenue and ah

EM What do most people say? How, do most people say that because the Indians used to be there that it got that name?

ED I've never heard that (EM Uh huh) and ah my cousin Alice doesn't confirm it, [EM laughs] and she's nearly ninety years old, so

EM Oh, so it's it is an old name?

ED I think they just gave it to it. I remember when Indian Village started.

[ED explains the location of early families by street and class. When Indian Village opened, people moved there, and then out to Grosse Pointe.]

ITEM #17

EM You live awfully close to Belle Isle, do...have you heard many stories about Belle Isle and how it got its name?

ED Well, ah Belle Isle, now this is ah hearsay from my mother, eh eh had belonged to Canada you know (EM Oh) and the ah the United, Detroit or the United States bought it from Canada. (EM Ah) It was first called Snake Island because it was infested with snakes, (EM Uh huh) then they eh put hogs on there to eat up the snakes and it was called Hog Island. (EM Uh huh) The first bridge must have been built about 1887 (EM Ooh) 1888. My father and mother carried my oldest brother across the Belle Isle Bridge on planks, the first Belle Isle Bridge, (EM Really?) and they were supposed to be the first people, [EM clears throat] except the engineers, my father having been an engineer, to have crossed the old Belle Isle Bridge.

[ED remembers as a child that only a small part of the Island was picnic ground.]

EM How did it get the name Belle Isle then?

ED This I can't tell you.

EM Uh huh. Is that recent?

ED Well, it has been Belle Isle as long as I remember it (EM Uh huh) you know.

EM I see

FS Could it have been possible that the French had called it Belle Isle, and that was the French name?

EM It's possible, I suppose, I don't know.

FS When the French had this territory?

ED I just don't know.

FS Because Belle Isle, you see, is French (EM Uh huh) "beautiful island"

ED Uh huh, beautiful island.

EM I don't know.

could buy (EM Oh) and ah I believe that they ah had so little money they hardly had enough to eat because he was so busy working on ah this watch (EM Oh) this watch plan and planning the cars.

[ED explains that Henry Ford worked in the machine shop that belonged to the father of a clerk from the school at which ED worked.]

ED And ah Henry Ford, of course, had his machine built (EM Uh huh) and had it in a buggy and he was working in their shop (EM Hmm) father's shop and he waited until her brother came home from school to run around after the car, or drive the car while Henry ran around [EM laughs] after it, on the street, the first time it was driven out on the street.

EM Oh. Did they let these people test their [EM turns up tape machine] cars up and down the street?

ED Well, they must have

EM That must have been funny

ED but of course the horses all went wild

FS Yes.

EM I bet they did.

ED I can remember being in a small town and a motorcycle went through and the air was blue with swear words [ED and EM laugh] because the horses were all jumping all over the place.

ITEM #25

[FS asks if ED remembers any restaurants which the wealthy Detroiters frequented. ED responds by saying that the Russell House was the place to eat.]

ITEM #26

[ED says that the first theater she remembers was the Temple Theater on Cadillac Square. It ran variety shows for many years. ED says that she often went to the Detroit Opera House.]

ITEM #27 & #28

[Informant requested that information be deleted.]

ITEM #29

EM Was there much rum-running going on and bootlegging?

ED Oh, yes. Very much. (EM Hmm) In the in that era there was a great deal of rum-running, especially up around Algonac and Marine City, the people up there ah were afraid to report them but they used to load their trucks (EM Really? FS Uh huh) right in their driveways at night up there (EM Ah) and they they still say they find ah



boxes of rum in the bottom of the River along there [unintelligible]

[EM laughs]

FS Didn't they have regular gangland wars on on the River where they would be (ED Oh yes) bringing the liquor across (ED Oh yes) and then the patrol would catch them [EM unintelligible] and they'd dump it all over?

ED and ah and the cute little story that I know is that ah a neighbor of ours, we knew her, my brother used to go up there to fish because he rented a house on Harsen Island (EM Uh huh) and he knew that ah Freddy was a rum-runner. (EM Mmm) Freddy lived [laughs] a few doors from us here and Mother said to Freddy's mother, "How is Freddy?" and she said, "He's fine, eh Miss Duncan, and he'd do all right if it wasn't for the dirty police [EM laughs] who demand so much money for him to run his business." [EM and ED laugh] And she said it very naively, you know. (FS Uh huh) So we had a joke about that for many years.

ITEM #30

[ED says that she went to the Freer Gallery when it was in Detroit.]

ITEM #31

EM Who told you most of the things you know about Detroit? How did you learn these things? A lot of it you experienced, uhm [clears throat]

ED Well, my mother told me, you know

EM Did she?

ED Oh yes, and my aunts, but my mother mostly, having come here in (EM Uh huh) 1883, told me a great deal (EM Hmm) about the people along Jefferson Avenue (EM Uh huh) and so on, but as to the history of Detroit I had to teach it at one (EM Sure) time and had to study about it.

EM I'm interested in in finding out how people ah learn what they learn, you know, and how they, you hear stories from people and (ED Oh yes, uh huh) people teach you a lot of lot of information.

ED I think probably many of these things I heard from my mother who was a great reader (EM Hmm) who cared nothing about novels but was very much interested in history of all kinds (EM Uh huh) and very interested in people (EM Uh huh) [laughs] and she knew she was an extremely interesting person, (EM Uh huh) even if she were was my mother, I couldn't say that [EM laughs] ah speaking objectively she was a person that everybody loved, I would say, and ah but she knew about every everything in the baseball line (EM Uh huh) and things like that she knew, who married whom and so on and so forth (EM Uh huh) and could tell you all about them.

## ITEM #32

[ED says that her family spent time together. The biggest celebration of the year was the ice-cream social at the church. They went on picnics to Bob-Lo.]

ED Oh yes, we spent and we went on many picnics to Belle Isle and the family as a whole ah (EM Uh huh) four of our relatives lived right within a half a mile (EM Oh) of here.

[ED says that they also talked about Detroit. She says, "Well, I think as a child with big ears I heard about them going to the theaters you know and things like that."]

EM Do you did you feel that your family was a close family compared to families now or other families around, was yours a particularly close or

ED I would say so, yes, uh huh.

EM Uh huh. How come do you think that is, or what what about it made you feel that

ED Well ah I don't know but I know that my brother died just a few years ago right in this house (EM Oh boy) and ah of course my sister was married when I was quite young and moved away from Detroit.

## ITEM #34

[ED says that she doesn't think she knows more about Detroit than other people do. She says that the people her age know about Detroit.]

EM So you think that among you friends uhm your friends know as much about Detroit as you do?

ED Oh, I think probably more, I don't know too much [laughs]

EM Oh, I don't know

ED But my mother was great to tell things about old Detroit, (EM Uh huh) you know and ah

## ITEM #35

[ED says that she went to Electric Park when they were "allowed to." They were not supposed to go near the dance hall. ED says she doesn't know why it was taken down, except that the City bought it and built Gabriel Richard Park there.]

## ITEM #36

[ED says that the son of the man who carved the statue of Gabriel Richard carved the Michigan Stove. ED explains that Richard was an early Jesuit. She says she learned about him because "that stove down there I was interested in and the Park, too, Gabriel Richard

Park, when it was open down here, you know." ED says she thinks it's a shame they moved the stove.]

FS Is it wood? I always thought it was iron.

ED It's wood.

FS I thought it was iron, cast iron, yeah

EM I thought it was iron too.

FS because the original stove was cast iron you see that the Garland Company made.

[ED says they used to teach that Detroit was "the most famous city in the world, you know, for four industries anyway, if not five. One was the stove manufacturing..." The others were varnish manufacturing, the drug industry, and automobiles.]

ITEM #39

EM H..do you tell people much about Detroit, or often do you find yourself informing other people about the City?

ED Oh perhaps if we are talking about Detroit, yes.

EM I'm curious about what kinds of occasions come up that uhm in which people do discuss the City and pass on the oral history of the City.

ED This I can't tell you, only somebody says, eh something, we'll say "Do you remember this and that?"

ITEM #40

[ED tells about when the horse car first came by Field Avenue. She describes the horse car.]

ED This isn't for the history of Detroit so cut it out (EM Uh huh) but uhm my younger brother and I started making jewelry when we were very young children. (EM Uh huh) He was a great one to ah ah collect copper wire. (EM Oh) And as I say we were not allowed to go out the front gate. But there was a street car, the first street car ran along here, (EM Hmm) one of the first street cars, it turned here, that is the Electric Park streetcars (EM Uh huh) and ah so we made stick pins galore (EM Ah) all kinds of fancy filigrees and when mother wasn't looking we'd run out and put them on the car track to do the pressing for us. [EM, FS and ED laugh]

[End of TAPE I, SIDE 1]

TAPE I, SIDE 2

ITEM #6

EM What was ah Detroit like in the in First World War, do you remember

what people thought about that?

ED Well. I think we were thinking muchly about the war. (EM Uh huh)  
Everybody we knew was going to the war.

EM Uh huh. Did it change much, the City change when war was ah declared finally?

ED This I can't tell you.

[ED explains she worked at Joyce Intermediate School then, and in the summer went to Columbia, and then to Chicago University.]

ITEM #8

[ED says that Mrs. Stratton was probably considered "the outstanding potter in the world." Mrs. Stratton was elected by the Catholics of the World to make the pottery that went into the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. There is also a cathedral in Marquette that contains her work.]

ITEM #9

EM What do you think about this city? You've lived here for quite a while.  
[clock chimes]

ED Well, it was a wonderful city to live in when I lived here but I, (EM Oh) it was quite different from what it is now, from the days when we could leave the even leave the screen door unlocked (EM Uh huh) or leave your tools out in front and not have them stolen, (EM Uh huh) eh but nowadays you're ah afraid to open the front door. (EM Uh huh) This district of course has gotten very bad. (EM Oh) The police and private detectives walk this street, or are supposed to. (EM Uh huh, huh.) And Jefferson Avenue here was quite a thriving business district and (EM Uh huh) it's all gone, the hoodlums have ah burglarized them and so on, even the druggist down here gave up and refused (EM Oh) after three times he just couldn't take it any more (EM He moved?) and most of the businesses down along Jefferson Avenue here have gone out, and the stores have become vandalized so that it (EM Uh huh) looks really quite terrible.

[When EM asks about positive changes, ED says there have been some, citing the buildings and freeways as examples. ED talks about the trip out to where Grosse Pointe Farms is now. The Jefferson streetcar went out that far.]

ED We were allowed on Sunday, Mother would give us money, we had to stay on the streetcar, however, until it came back, (EM Uh huh) you know, but ah that [EM bumps machine] was a big trip to go that far and back.

ITEM #10

[ED's ancestors on both sides are from Scotland. She explains: "My grandfather had a family of seven children, as many Scotch families were, there wasn't work for these children in prospect when they grew up, so America was the place to come to."]

## ITEM #11

EM Do you remember anything uhm different happening in the City during the depression? How that affected the City and the people that lived in it (ED Ho) or yourself?

ED Up at our school the children ah eh up at Northeastern High School, you know, the children walked from the Eight Mile Road down there to school. (EM Oh) And I had ah ah the the children at that school were very talented in art (EM Uh huh) because ah ah the ah when I first went there because ah they were the descendants of ah European families. (EM Uh huh) I think we counted up one day, we had twenty-one nationalities there.

[FS asks if they weren't primarily Polish and ED says they were actually all different nationalities. ED says they were talented and often won prizes in poster competitions.]

ED So one day during the depression, four girls I had had won prizes and they were to get these prizes down at Hudson's store I think. (EM Uh huh) I took them down there and only one of those children ever had remembered about being downtown. (EM Oh) They had, these children mostly had been on welfare (EM Uh huh) all the time and ah in fact the teachers would get together and ah but a dress for them to graduate with (EM Mmm) when they were allowed to wear white dresses (EM Uh huh) I think that's when the caps and gowns they got wear let them wear caps and gowns they found was cheaper because the children were going to excess (EM Uh huh) buying and most of the children couldn't afford it. (EM Uh huh) But I took these children in to get an ice cream soda and ah the girl that sat next to me, asked her what she would have, and she started shaking all over and ah she said, "Miss Duncan, will you please select something for me, I have never tasted any of those things."

[ED says that before the girl graduated she brought ED some paper flowers as a gift. ED adds, "But that child was so entranced with downtown that she walked from the Eight Mile Road downtown every Saturday for eight straight weeks." Only one of the other children had ever been downtown.]

ED The depression was quite horrible. (EM Uh huh) Ah we used to I remember one Christmas the teachers got together and took baskets of food to some of the children and we paid into a fund to give them glasses of milk, I know that. We had hundreds on the welfare. (EM Hmm) Course that was considered the worst district at that time. (EM Uh huh) But it ah really was a, it was really almost unbelievable to get back to the depression.

[ED says they were paid in scrip but were not allowed to cash it, sell it, or exchange it for money. For a while (two weeks or months) they weren't paid, but continued to work. In 1935 school closed at the end of May, due to lack of funds. The teachers used to gather up clothes to take to school. ED says "I can remember picking shoes up out of the alley and taking them to school, that some people had thrown away." ED says they dressed the children so they could continue to come to school.]

ED And the sad very sad part of it is that when the ah the welfare people, we had children whose fathers drank up the welfare money (EM Oh) before they got home. They got desperate (EM Uh huh) and you probably can't blame them for that but I remember one little girl wasn't in school, a very dear little girl, I asked her why and she said, well, her father used up the money before he got home and she had to go down to the welfare to get them something to eat. (EM Oh) (FS Elsie) The times were that desperate.

ITEM #13

[ED says that her mother's father would not allow the children to speak Gaelic "because they wanted them to speak good English."]

ITEM #14

EM Do you know how your mother happened to tell you about uhm Bloody Run and and about uhm Belle Isle?

ED Well my mother was ah ah ah person who liked to read (EM Uh huh) when she had time. (EM Uh huh) She didn't care for novels, but she was very fond of history, (EM Uh huh) and so anything in the line of geography or history my mother read (EM Uh huh) and ah knew. Anyway we knew about Bloody Run because our cemetery was down there (EM Yes) for one thing. Then I taught about it in school. (EM Uh huh. Do you) 'Course that's all filled in. That was a regular river down to Jefferson Avenue, down to the (EM Oh) to the River, eh a small river (EM Uh huh) of some kind, but it had all been filled in and great pipes put underneath to drain it off (EM Uh huh) just like ah up at Fox Creek and some of these places up here the ah land has been filled. in (EM Uh huh) ah and just a short distance there is ah Fox Creek and these other creeks left. Just like the huge ditch that was up here on Van Dyke Avenue (EM Van Dyke ditch) which I remember nothing about.

ITEM #15

EM Have you ah been particularly interested in Detroit yourself?

ED Oh yes, having lived [chuckles] here I have been.

EM Uh huh. I just won..how do you, how do you remember all these stories about Belle Isle and Bloody Run Creek?

ED Well, I used to have what people said a very wonderful memory, but ah as you get older the the mind doesn't jump as fast somehow or another and I go to tell people something and you don't remember. But I was always interested in that kind of thing.

EM What what about it is in..do you find particularly interesting? Do you know?

ED About what?

EM About Detroit history.

ED Well, all these things I'm interested in (EM Uh huh) remember when the old Majestic Building was built, (EM Oh) the first skyscraper we had, which was eight stories high it was

EM What was that? Was that the Majestic Building? [unintelligible]

ED It's now a bank building (EM Oh) down there at Cadillac Square, you know, it's a huge bank building now. It was torn down a few years ago. (EM Oh; FS Yeah; EM Oh) But it was the first skyscraper, the first and only skyscraper we had, was eight stories high. (EM Hmm. That's [unintelligible] )  
And across from it ah kitty-corner, was this famous eh hotel, the Russell House. (EM Uh huh) My if you went to the Russell House you

EM That was it, huh? [chuckles]

ED you went someplace.

ITEM #16

EM Have you ever heard how the Penobscot Building got its name? Most people ah

ED Well, that's an old Indian name.

EM Uh huh. And so somebody just named it that?

ED Just named it that. Just like the streets in Indian Village, eh

FS [interrupting] Iroquois and et cetera

ED eh eh they weren't eh to my knowledge there was no Indian village there. (EM Uh huh) Eh not in my day nor my this older cousin's day, but ah they named the streets after the Indians.

ITEM #17

[ED says that she doesn't believe that any of the stories are more interesting than any others: "I think they're all interesting to me."]

ED I've always been very interested in most things (EM Uh huh; FS Elsie uhm) I mean I've had an inquisitive sort of a nature (EM Uh huh) and ah been interested in in things. (EM Uh huh) I can't say that any of the stories are more interesting than others.

ITEM #19

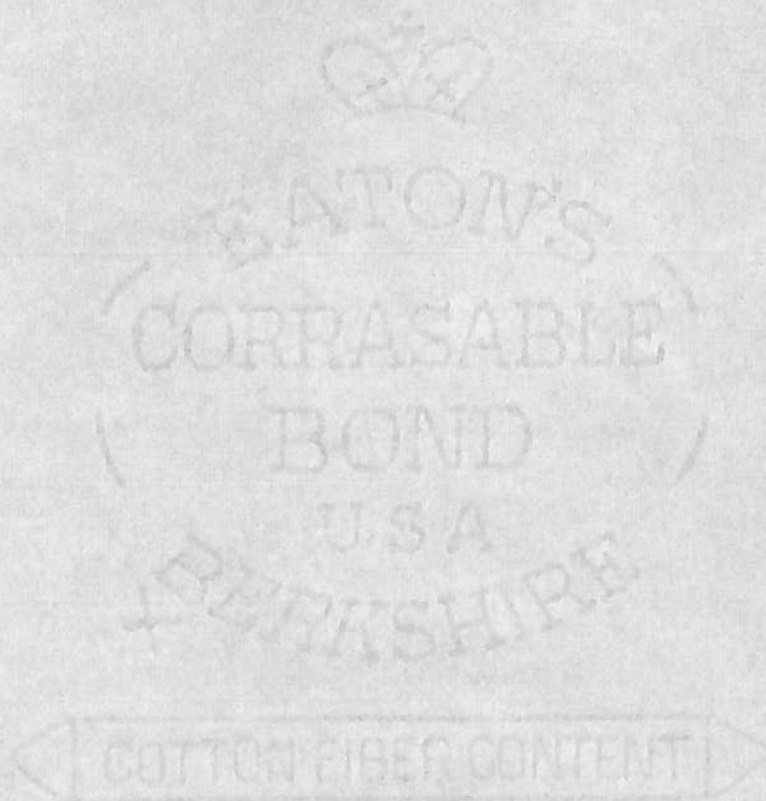
EM Do you find that people uhm are very interested in learning about Detroit?

ED Well, [chuckles] having known a great many people, some are and some aren't.

[ED draws an analogy of people who would and wouldn't like to go back to Europe.]

ED But ah that I think is the attitude of most people. They're interested in other things from (EM Uh huh) from what we are interested.

[Interview terminated.]





APPENDIX IV: FMS

CONTENTS

|                         |   |
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| BACKGROUND OF INFORMANT | 1 |
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MEMBER COMPLETED

MEMBER

NEW

BOND

COMPLETION

2/10/74

END

## FORM B

Personal History of Informant

185

STATE Michigan

NAME OF COLLECTOR Elizabeth A. Meese

ADDRESS

DATE 15 April 1968

SUBJECT Detroit Local Place Legends

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT

1. Ancestry: Greek (Samian)
  2. Place and date of birth: 29 December 1931 on Harper St.,  
Detroit, Michigan
  3. Family: Single; living at home with mother and brother; one  
married sister
  4. Places lived in, with dates:  
1931- Harper, Detroit, Michigan  
1939- Piquette, Detroit, Michigan  
1940 to present- 15750 Appoline, Detroit, Michigan
  5. Education, with dates:  
B.A. in Art, WSU-1957; MFA at Cranbrook 1958; fellowship for study  
in Mexico, 1958; Teacher's certification
  6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates:  
Worked in father's business U.S. Army - 1952-1954 Taught art  
in Detroit School system 1960-1963 Taught art at Michigan State (cont.)
  7. Special skills and interests:  
Art, cooking, painting
  8. Community and religious activities:  
Taught art in a number of programs in Detroit  
Religion: Greek Orthodox, does not attend regularly
  9. Description of informant:  
The informant is of medium height and build. His hair is brown and  
medium in length. His eyes are blue and his face is slightly pocked.
  10. Other points gained in interview:     | The informant has a tendency  
  | to talk continually.
6. (cont.) University 1963-1968     Substitute teaching in  
Detroit School system 1968

## COLLECTOR'S LOG - FMS

I have known the informant for approximately one year. I was introduced to him through my acquaintance with Dr. Ellen Stekert. After that time, I continued to go to FS's brother's restaurant on occasion. I saw him frequently, and established my own contact with FS over the last four months.

## 12 April 1968 - Report of a Conversation

I met the informant at Mr. Mike's restaurant, and approached him regarding the possibility of interviewing him over the weekend. He was initially willing and interested. He also suggested that he take me to visit Elsie Duncan, a native Detroitter of Scottish descent, who is about eighty years old and from whom FS had learned many of his stories. I indicated an interest in interviewing her too. He then became quite concerned about what the project was all about, what he would be expected to do, believing he would just have to perform on tape for an hour or so. He was especially concerned about historical accuracy, and whether personal, subjective experience was legitimate material. He posed some hypothetical example, using Elsie Duncan rather than himself as its subject in order to demonstrate potential subjectivity and historical inaccuracy. He told me about how Oakman Boulevard got its name, describing the Oakman house and Mrs. Oakman. I suggested that that was very interesting, in fact just what I was interested in. He said he felt Elsie Duncan would be better because she had lived longer. I explained that for my interest, it was quite important to study people in other generations, as well. He said he would go home and ask his mother some stories. I suggested that I thought it would be better in terms of my study if he didn't ask her until after our interview was over, since I was interested in what people remembered naturally.

He resisted fixing any definite interview appointment for this weekend. He agreed to come to my apartment, took my telephone number and a map. He said he would call. I said I would be free to interview him on either Saturday, Sunday, or Monday, although Monday seemed the best possibility for both of us.

## 15 April 1968

Since I had not heard from FS, I called Mr. Mike's (871-6722) for his home phone, 342-1291. I was unable to reach him at home.

## - Report of an Interview

At about 1:00 p.m. the informant arrived at my residence, ready to be interviewed. The apartment consists of the upper floor -- five rooms -- of a white frame house (705 Purdy, Birmingham, Michigan). The interview took place in the living room which is about ten by twenty feet. It is light in color and quite cheerful. The informant sat on the sofa, and I sat in a chair placed about five feet from him.

FS asked me to start by asking him questions. I did so. While the

interview was being conducted, FS sat upright, poised on the edge of the sofa, rather than assuming a more relaxed position. He often gazed away, as though he were choosing his words carefully. At the break he requested, he asked to hear the tape. I played no more than his request to take a break and told him his voice picked up well. He responded that he thought his voice sounded "Jewish." He said that he considered himself a "big talker."

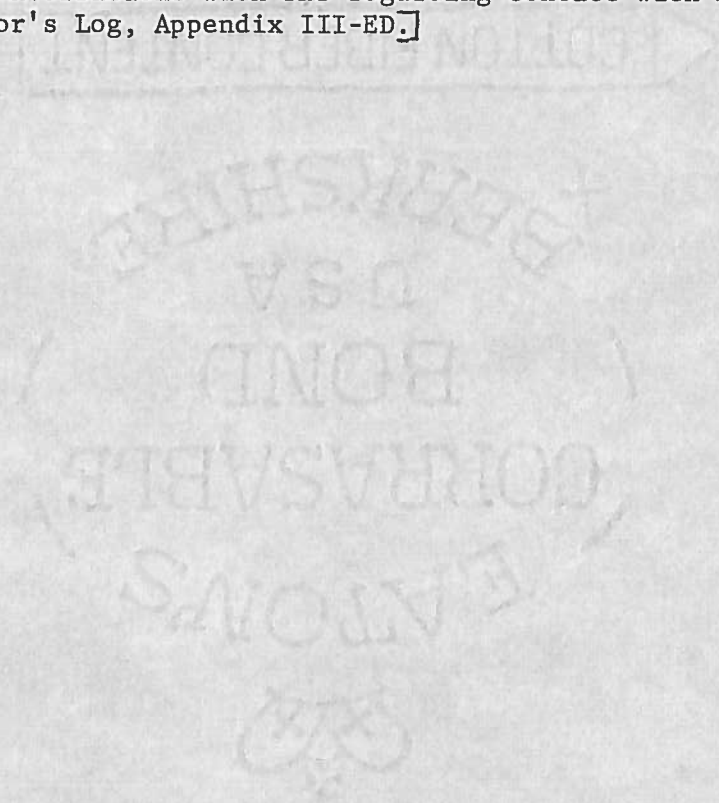
Near the end of the interview, both of us had a drink; we had previously been drinking coffee. Following the interview, FS asked if I wanted to have lunch with him, so we went out.

Note: All of the information FS reports learning from his relatives was learned in Greek. He is often vague, however, on whether this was learned from relatives or from his friend EBD.

27 April 1968 - Report of a Conversation

Informant stopped by my house at 1 p.m. He asked if I needed to interview him any more, and said that he thought he had already told me all of the information he had. I said if I had any questions I would contact him. He informed me that he had spoken with his friend Elsie Duncan regarding the possibility of my interviewing her. He said he would pursue this further. We then socialized for a while.

[Further conversations with FMS regarding contact with EBD are entered in Collector's Log, Appendix III-ED.]



TAPE INDEX - FMS-1 - DETROIT LOCAL PLACE LEGENDS

WSUFA accession number:

185

Recorded: 15 April 1968  
3 3/4 ips, mono

Elizabeth A. Meese interviewing :  
Birmingham, Michigan

Situation: The interview took place in the living room of the collector's upstairs flat. There were no other persons present. The collector and informant begin the interview drinking coffee; at the beginning of the second tape, they each have one alcoholic drink. Street noise can be heard occasionally.

TAPE I, SIDE 1

[Introductory procedure, dating, and testing.]

ITEM

- #1 FS gives Collector's Form data  
--family background
- #2 FS describes immigration to Detroit in the early twenties
- #3 Continuation of #1 - Collector's Form data
- #4 FS talks about the effects of the depression and how well members of his family made out financially
- #5 Continuation of #1 - places lived and schools attended  
--children coming to school barefooted in the winter during the depression  
--a long digression on his father's business and ill health
- #6 FS talks about labor union struggles in the thirties
- #7 FS discusses children's participation in his father's business and the nature of the clientele at that time, especially the Finnish
- #8 Continuation of #1  
--death of his father and FS tour of duty in the Army (1952-1954)  
--education  
[Tape off for about ten minutes]  
--long digression on Mexico  
--occupational background
- #9 How Corktown got its name
- #10 Continuation of #1 - Collector's Form data

## TAPE I, SIDE 1 (cont.)

## ITEM

- #11 FS discusses early Detroit - founding, Father Gabriel Richard
- #12 FS talks about French remnants in Detroit
- #13 FS talks about Indians, primarily in the Lansing area
- #14 FS tells how Oakman Boulevard was named after the Oakman family
- #15 FS explains how Belle Isle was named
- #16 FS describes Water Works Park and talks about the Pewabic Pottery Works, Hecker, Merrill Palmer
- #17 FS discusses Freer and the Freer Collection
- #18 FS talks about the Michigan Stove
- #19 FS says he hasn't heard of Bloody Run Creek
- #20 FS tells about the burning of the Belle Isle Bridge

[End of Tape I, Side 1]

## TAPE I, SIDE 2

[Introductory procedure]

## ITEM

- #1 FS mentions the Licavoli Gang, then goes on to talk about rum-running and blind pig raid involving Eastern High School teachers
- #2 FS talks about the Purple Gang
- #3 Continuation of Item #20 (Tape I, Side 1) - the burning of the Belle Isle Bridge
- #4 FS tells about going to Belle Isle as a child
  - people slept there in summer
  - double-decker Belle Isle buses
- #5 FS talks about the Jim Scott Fountain
- #6 FS has not heard of Electric Park
- #7 FS talks about going to Bob-Lo
- #8 FS is asked about recreation in Detroit, but talks about Albert Kahn and the Fisher Building

## TAPE I, SIDE 2 (cont.)

## ITEM

- #9 FS is asked about the Penobscot Building and talks about the Buhls  
--describes the VNA building, which he thinks is the Buhl home
- #10 FS discusses Cranbrook
- #11 FS talks about Pingree
- #12 FS talks about Whitney
- #13 Continuation of recreation, #8 - FS talks about Talented Art Program  
--talks about the Rivera murals
- #14 FS talks about family - his mother and aunt - regarding the  
transmission of Detroit material  
--prostitutes on Grand Boulevard
- #15 FS describes his family when he was a child
- #16 FS discusses his ethnic background
- #17 FS tells his feelings about Detroit  
--Civil War collectanea in the Burton Collection  
--growth of town
- #18 FS talks about Latin place names  
--Grand Circus Park and Campus Martius
- #19 FS tells how family spent leisure time  
--FS talks about his aunt and uncle going to the baths  
in Mount Clemens
- #20 FS talks about speaking Greek, the value of it in the Greek community
- #21 FS and EM discuss ethnic affiliation
- #22 Continuation of #19 - leisure time  
--the theater in Detroit  
--the Old Detroit Opera House
- #23 FS talks about Jessie Bonstelle
- #24 FS explains how he met Elsie Duncan in 1956
- #25 FS discusses the members of his family  
--long digression on relatives from Greece who came to  
Galveston, Texas
- #26 FS discusses his family affiliation
- #27 FS tells about peer group affiliations

## TAPE I, SIDE 2 (cont.)

## ITEM

- #28 FS tells about transmission of Detroit material by family members
- #29 FS tells about the good story tellers in his family  
--digression on Cinderella in Greek
- #30 FS discusses his own transmission of Detroit material  
--digression on the large German community in Detroit
- #31 FS talks about how he has learned about Detroit
- #32 FS tells about seeing Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt going down  
Woodward  
--Truman and Margaret  
--Douglas McArthur  
--Carmen Miranda  
--Edward G. Robinson in the Museum
- #33 FS's view of self as bearer of tradition
- #34 FS talks about Henry Ford's funeral  
--his father worked for Ford in depression
- #35 FS doesn't know about French pear trees
- #36 FS tells about Mariners' Church
- #37 FS comments on the authenticity of Detroit material
- #38 Continuation of #30 - transmission  
--good sources of Detroit information
- #39 Continuation of I, 1 - #1 - occupation, interests, skills  
religious and community work

[End of Tape I, Side 2]

## TAPE II, SIDE 1

[In the interim FS has remembers Mrs. Henkel-Hass]

[Introduction and testing]

## ITEM

- #1 FS talks about Mrs. Henkel-Hass; her visits to the Museum  
and her home
- #2 FS says he doesn't know where the Whitney home is  
[confused with the Buhl house]



TAPE II, SIDE 1 (cont.)

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ITEM

- #3 FS talks about dancing in Detroit  
--The Graystone
- #4 FS describes the Botsford Inn
- #5 FS talks about the horse drawn vehicles
- #6 EM asks about Ledyard Street, Joe Bedore, the "Brunette Venus"
- #7 FS talks about horse-racing  
--State Fair, Windsor, and Northville  
--Police station for horse maintenance
- #8 FS talks about Barnum and Bailey Circus at the State Fair
- #9 FS talks about the "Japanese Wrestlers" and the old Art Institute
- #10 Continuation of I, 1 - #1 - Background information - religious  
affiliation  
--FS gives his view of Christ
- #11 FS discusses at length the Greek Community, especially the celebration  
of Easter
- #12 FS talks about gypsies in Detroit
- #13 FS talks about the Ukranian section, ethnic settlements and  
occupations

[Interview terminated]

Collector's number FMS-1; WSUFA accession number

Recorded; 15 April 1968

Elizabeth A. Meese interviewing [redacted]  
[redacted], Birmingham

193

Subject: Detroit Local Place Legends

Transcribed by Elizabeth A. Meese

TAPE I SIDE 1

[Introductory procedure, dating, testing machine.]

ITEM #1

[FS gives Collector's Form data. His father, in his early twenties, immigrated to the United States in nineteen-sixteen or seventeen, and his mother in nineteen-twenty at age seventeen. An older aunt and uncle were already here. FS's mother and father were not married when they came. This is all explained in great detail. FS says his father left Greece so that he wouldn't be drafted. In about 1923 his father and mother married and moved to Detroit.]

ITEM #2

[FS explains that in the early twenties, "people from all parts of the world were pouring into Detroit to work in the factories -- the Poles, the Italians, the Armenians, the Hungarians -- so you had all kinds of little communities, foreign communities all over Detroit." FS gives the location for various ethnic communities. FS says that industry really grew then; his father had worked at Ford for a while.]

ITEM #3

[FS discusses his family and the Samian colony in Detroit.]

ITEM #4

[FS says that the family was quite comfortable until the depression when his father "lost everything." "He really was hit bad, he was wiped out." "He lost his restaurant, his car, everything." FS discusses Greek resiliency in the face of such disasters.]

[FS has told the following story on a previous occasion.]

EM Te..tell me again ah (FS Huh?) what happened to your father uhm with the chili and the [unintelligible] [laughs]

FS Well, during the depression years he had gone into business down by the River, I don't know if you remember the old Bob-Lo boat ah I think it's still in the same general area (EM Uh huh) but it's moved a bit. Well in those days, in the thirties, as I recall, of course, Woodward Avenue was right smack to the base of the you know

to the start of the River (EM Uh huh) there and there was an old Vernor's gingerale factory there, you know, and opposite that was my father's little hot dog - chili joint (EM Uh huh). Now these were the depression years and he didn't have money for the rent, you know, (EM Hmm) and ah I guess the landlord had let him go as long as he could and finally he had given my father enough warning, well my father kept saying "Well I you know eh I--" my father was kind of an aggressive man, --and he kept saying "Well I'll pay you next month" and next month never came because he never had the money. So finally th' the landholder couldn't landlord couldn't ah wait any longer and he went in there with a crew and put his pots and pans out on the sidewalk [EM laughing] and the chili was still in the pots and pans and the steam was coming up, you know, and my father and this landlord had words there on the sidewalk, so I guess it was a pretty hectic moment, you know, of course it depressed my father (EM Uh huh) it was very hard for him to eh

[FS says that in Greece people rarely pay for things on time. FS says that he has heard from his mother and his aunt that consequently his father did not quite understand this procedure. FS says his father recovered quickly so that they were never really hungry.]

ITEM #5

[FS talks about the places he has lived; they were generally near the business. FS attended the Palmer Elementary School and remembers "one winter little Southern kids in the kindergarten coming to school barefoot. Those were really hard times. And you see many Southerners poured into Detroit in those early years to get jobs in the factory, probably from the Appalachian area -- Kentucky, ah Tennessee, Arkansas, Alabama, ah Georgia. And many of these kids were so hard up that they didn't have any shoes to come to school in the mid of winter." FS says that is how bad things were in the depression years. FS describes the old art education facilities.]

ITEM #6

[FS says that he vividly remembers the struggles of the labor unions in the late thirties. He heard this constantly, because the union hall was next to his father's restaurant. He recalls when some of the union officials who worked next door "were beaten up badly... by hired Pinkertons." He describes the era as "bad" and "violent," one of "the worker against the industrialist." FS explains that "often times they hired ah secret police, like detectives, the Pinkertons, you know they were. And these people would try to intimidate some of the union officials er to pay them off or something, you know, and so the union people were really a hard bunch of characters. They had to be in order to survive, you see. (EM Yeah) They were tough and were willing to, you know, take chances."]

ITEM #7

[FS discusses the clientele at his father's restaurant. There was a considerable exodus of young men from the Calumet area of the Upper Peninsula. They had been working in the copper mines, but FS says

that "by the twenties and the thirties they [the mines] had folded up and there were people out of jobs up there, so many of them flocked to Detroit to get jobs in the factories." FS says that these men missed the Upper Peninsula, "the city of course was nothing but concrete, smoke, and work, you see, and to them Calumet was a kind of symbol of freedom and a kind of closeness to nature."]

ITEM #9

EM Why was Corktown called Corktown?

FS Because in the eighteen-eighties it was populated by Irish (EM Hmm) and possibly I think, now I don't know, I'm not too sure about this, but I assume that it was called Corktown because many of the Irish who settled there were from County Cork (EM Uh huh) in Ireland, you see.

EM Ah. Did anybody ever tell you that?

FS No, I just assumed that because (EM Ah, because of the name) why would you call it, yes, Cork, you know. I think someone did tell me that, but I'm not sure now.

ITEM #10

EM Were you ever told any stories about early Detroit?

FS Oh yes, sure. Yeah, sure.

EM Old Detroit? Uhm, like how it got its name for instance?

FS Sure.

EM How how was it named?

FS Well it was named it was a French name, D'etroit, it means "the city on the straits," of the two Rivers meaning eh (EM Hmm the Detroit River and the) the River and the Saint Clair (EM St. Clair) isn't it, yeah, uh huh.

[FS says it was a French settlement, and Cadillac established the fort.]

FS If you go downtown someday (EM Uh huh) and you're around uhm Lafayette Street where the Old City Hall used to be, ah one of the bank buildings has a plaque on it and it says "Here ah was the first establishment of uhm of French settlers and the first Catholic Church (EM Oh really?) was established at this site" and it's now a bank building and it's about a block from Jefferson.

[FS says that this is now the banking and stock area of Detroit. He learned about the founding of the City, how it got its name, in elementary school. They had history of the City and the State; the unit lasted for about one month. They had a text and "read about Father Gabriel Richard and ah De LaSalle" He remembers that Richard "established Catholic missions in the State of Michigan, not

only in Detroit.." FS says that he "read somewhere where ah some of the relics that he used in the mass were found." They found these relics, the communal cup among them, in the Upper Peninsula somewhere. FS says he believes he saw this in "one of the Sunday supplements." ]

## ITEM #12

FS Uhm very little of the French has ah has remained in Detroit, now some of the French families

EM Are there any remnants of it that you can think of?

FS Yes there are.

EM What?

FS Well, the names of some of the streets, like Beaubien. (EM Uh huh) Joseph Campau, which is the main street of Hamtramck, (EM Uh huh) is named after a Frenchman (EM Uh huh) uhm

EM Any other ones?

FS I'm trying to think now -- Indian Village, you see.

EM How did that get its name?

FS Well that was once an Indian village, you see.

EM It was?

FS Uh huh.

EM Real Indian Indians?

FS Yes, yes.

[FS said that the French and Indian wars ruined the French families. Many went to Canada and others to Louisiana.]

EM Who told you how Indian Village got its name?

FS I read it somewhere.

[FS says that Indian Village became "fancy gold coast of the City, this is where the early wealthy community built their mansions, and you can still see the homes are very stately. That's where the early Fords, and the early ah Chryslers, and people lived." As the City became more populated the wealthier residents moved out Jefferson to Grosse Pointe.]

## ITEM #14

[FS says that the whole area where the Fisher Building and the General Motors Building are today was owned by a man named Oakman. Oakman

had an old mansion near Grand Boulevard. He sold his property to various companies. The house remained there, and FS comments: "And it was kind of odd to see skyscrapers all around and ah ah all of a sudden go down Milwaukee and see a Victorian mansion in the heart of ah you know the business section."]

FS When I came back out of the Army I remember the first few days that I was home. I drove down and I went to the bank and I crossed over to Demery's and the house was no longer there. It had been ripped down after her [Mrs. Oakman's] death you see (EM Hmm) and it was made into a parking lot, and it was kind of a sad moment (EM Oi) because it was a little bit of the nineteenth century still holding out, you see. (EM Uh huh. Yeah.) And I had always remembered it as a child with its beautiful iron fence around it, magnolia trees in the front lawn, beautiful Austrian lace curtains in the window, marvelous ah ah panelling on the inside of the house that you could see when the lights were on in the evening (EM Uh huh) when we strolled by, a marvelous turret on the top of the house, (EM Uh huh) It was always very romantic, yeah. (EM Yeah) Beautiful oriental ah procelains that you could see (EM Uh huh) as you walked by, through the big windows.

ITEM #15

EM Do you uhm do you know how Belle Isle got its name?

FS Well, I'm sure it comes from the French, belle isle, which means "beautiful island." (EM Uh huh) Of course at one time it was called Hog Island, (EM Uh huh. Why?) ah because they had lots of snakes on the Island and I guess the snakes had ah become so ah prominent that people were being bitten right and left (EM Uh huh) so the City thought they had to do something about it, so they got a bunch of hogs (EM Uh huh) and let them loose on the Island. Now the hog can kill the snake ah but it can't be poisoned because its h'...hide (EM Oh) is so tough that the poison can't penetrate (EM I see) so that's why it was called Hog Island for a while.

to

EM And then they changed it <sup>to</sup> Belle Isle?

FS [overlapping] To Belle Isle.

EM Why did they change it to Belle Isle?

FS Well I don't think Hog Island was its original name. (EM Uh huh) It was called that because they brought in the hogs (EM Uh huh) the original name was Belle Island (EM Ah) Belle Isle (EM Uh huh) you see and they went right back to Belle Isle after they got rid of the hogs. [EM and FS laugh]

[FS says that he thinks the Island was originally much smaller; "they dredged it, you know, and they brought in more land and made it larger, and made it a municipal park, you know, for the City." FS says that they are still dredging up land. FS says that he learned about Belle Isle's name from his friend Elsie Duncan. She also told him about Water Works Park and Pewabic pottery.]

ITEM #16

[Mary Stratton who began the Pewabic Pottery Works was married to the man who designed Old Main and the Women's City Club.]

ITEM #17

[FS explains that Freer was a nineteenth-century Detroit millionaire. Colonel Hecker had been a colonel in the Civil War; he was a very wealthy Detroit industrialist, making his money on carriage wheels. The street was known as millionaire row because of all the millionaires who lived there. Freer and Merrill-Palmer lived on that block. Freer "was a great friend of Whistler," and was very interested in oriental art.]

FS Now our museum at that time was just becoming important and the collections were just being organized. (EM Uh huh) We had a German who was the director of our museum called Doctor Valentiner [sp?] (EM Hmm) He was brought from Germany (EM Uh huh) to direct the museum, he was one of probably one of the most brilliant directors we've ever had there (EM Really?) and was responsible for some of the prominent collections we have,

[FS says that one such prominent collection is the German Expressionist collection which Valentiner "personally organized and bought, through the protest of Grosse Pointe, in fact he was practically threatened by Grosse Pointers who thought this was a horrible period of art to collect, you see."]

FS Valentiner ah was approached by Freer -- by this time Freer was getting pretty old (EM Uh huh) by the twenties, you know (EM Uh huh) -- and he approached uhm the director Valentiner and said "I would like to leave my entire collection to the museum (EM Hmm) on one condition, that you exhibit it in its entirety." And Valentiner said, "I'm sorry we can't do that because we have to break it up according to periods." (EM Uh huh) You know, the Baroque in one room, the Oriental in another, et cetera, et cetera. (EM Uh huh) Well Freer being a bit of an eccentric and a little bit arrogant, didn't like this (EM Uh huh) and he turned right around and left all of his money and his entire collection to the city ah Washington, and a museum was built, right next to the Smithsonian, (EM Uh huh) to house all of the Freer oriental (EM Uh huh) masterpieces that he had collected. But he did leave us some minor things (EM Uh huh) so we do have some of his stuff.

EM Who told you about him?

FS Well I read about him. (EM Oh) I knew about him because oh he was a very prominent figure in Detroit. (EM Uh huh) There are all kinds of stories about him and there are many people still around who knew him.

[FS says that Freer used to give "fantastic parties." Mary Stratton's letters mention attending these parties.]

FS He was an old eccentric bachelor. He had a beautiful gallery set up on the top floor of his house, and he used to have his butler bring in one painting at a time. He didn't like to look at things together. He wanted to see things singularly, (EM Uh huh) and this is of course the aesthetics of Japan and (EM Uh huh) China, ah which (EM Ah) influenced him a great deal.

[FS repeats that Freer was a good friend of Whistler's.]

EM Who told you the story about the butler bringing the paintings in?

FS Oh that's a quite a common story, you know. Everybody knows that.

EM [overlapping] You don't remember?

FS I don't know where I heard it from.

EM Have you told it very often?

FS No. Uh huh.

EM No?

FS No.

EM Do you remember

FS Very few people know who Freer is, to be perfectly frank, you know, (EM Really?) and if I told it they wouldn't even it wouldn't mean anything to them.

[FS says that Elsie Duncan may have told it to him, but he thinks he may have read it somewhere, perhaps in the Saarinen book, The Proud Possessors, which had a chapter on Freer.]

ITEM #18

EM Have you ever uhm do you know what that Michigan Stove is that they have at the Fairground?

FS The one that was on, yes. Now [EM unintelligible] that used to be the Garland Stove Company was a very very successful stove ah company here in Detroit for many many years (EM Ah) and they made those old iron stoves. My aunt had one years ago, I remember them.

EM Really?

FS Yes, I remember her using it, back in the thirties, she had it as late as 1938 or '39. (EM Uh huh) And they were old black ah steel stoves (EM Uh huh) wrought iron, not wrought iron but ah iron stoves.

EM Uh huh. So why did they make that great big [unintelligible]

FS And the company was located on Jefferson and Belle Isle you know, where, and the Grand Boulevard, (EM Uh huh) you see. And they had a



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big replica of this stove standing there (EM Uh huh) because the company was right there. (EM Hmm) Of course, later on the company was ah moved elsewhere and the building was destroyed and I think the rubber company built a factory there (EM Uh huh) but the stove was left there for many years. (EM Ah) And as children when we went to Belle Isle by bus (EM Uh huh) we always looked to see if we could see the stove so we knew when to get off, [chuckles] you know, (EM Uh huh) because that was the point where you got off at.

EM Oh, lovely.

FS It wasn't moved to the Fairgrounds until maybe the latter part of the fifties. (EM Mmm) But it was always, for many many years, on Jefferson and the Grand Boulevard, (EM Uh huh) the Garland Stove Company, you know.

EM Hmm. Were there many stove companies in Detroit?

FS That I don't know. There must have been. Everybody had to use a stove (EM Uh huh) so I'm sure there must have been. But I remember the Garland Stove Company because practically everyone owned one, you know.

EM Uh huh. A Garland stove?

FS Yeah. Garland, yeah. That was it.

[FS said that his mother didn't have one, but his aunt did, and his father had one in the old restaurant. FS says that they were "flamboyant" in their design. They have a few at Greenfield Village Museum.]

ITEM #20

EM Have you heard anything else about Belle Isle, besides how it got its name?

FS Well, there was a famous fire that burnt the uhm wooden bridge, you know, before they had this concrete (EM Uh huh) bridge put in, (EM Uh huh) they had a wooden bridge and that was burned, that was a famous fire (EM Hmm) that the older generation, of course, people in their eighties would remember that pretty well.

[End of TAPE I, SIDE 1]

TAPE I, SIDE 2

[Introduction]

ITEM #1

[FS remembers the Licavoli gang, as EM was turning the tape.]

FS And they were around Jefferson Avenue and Field, in fact, they lived in the old Field Hotel that's on Field Avenue a block over from the

Grand Boulevard. Elsie Duncan can remember much about them because ah there were a number of murders that they were responsible for in the twenties (EM Ah) and then they were tangled up with prohibition and (EM Uh huh) rum-running. (EM Ah) Of course there was quite a steady flow of ah liquor being brought over from Canada to be sold (EM Really?) in the Detroit market during prohibition days, and I guess there were regular gangland wars on the River (EM Ooh) and when the police found out that ah you know they were bringing stuff across they'd chase them with their own boats, you know, the Motor -- what are they called -- the Patrol? The River Patrol? (EM Uh huh) And they would dump the whiskey overboard. (EM Oh) My father used to say there was more whiskey on the bottom of the Detroit River [EM laughing] than anywhere, and I guess the speak-easies were located all along Jefferson Avenue. (EM Mmm) I remember some of the old-time teachers that I taught with ah used to reminisce about the prohibition era (EM Uh huh) and of course in the twenties the teachers weren't paid very much (EM Uh huh) and so they would go to the speak-easies to have lunch because usually they had free sandwiches at the bars. (EM Uh huh) So Elsie Duncan tells a story about ah a bunch of teachers going out to lunch to the pro... to the speak-easies, the blind pigs, (EM Uh huh) because they could get free lunches there. (EM Oh) They would go in and buy a beer and have a free sandwich (EM Uh huh) and so maybe ten or twelve of these teachers from Eastern High School, I think it was she mentioned, went there for lunch and they raided the place, (EM Oh no) and they took all of these teachers in [EM laughing] you know and they didn't come back from lunch, and the and you know, they called up from the jail and the principal had to go down and get 'em out. [Laughs]

EM Oh. Who told you that?

FS Elsie Duncan. (EM Elsie told you? ) Yeah.

EM Oh boy.

FS I think it was Elsie. I'm not sure now.

EM Uh huh. Did many do many people know about the the rum running and ah

FS Oh yeah, that was common knowledge, (EM Uh huh) a lot of people made much money out of it.

EM Oh boy.

[FS says that the house next to his aunt's home on Milwaukee was a speak-easy. FS says that Licavoli was of Italian descent; he thinks that his son is in jail now "for some murder or some such thing."]

ITEM #2

FS There was another gang called the Purple Gang of the twenties and these were primarily of Jewish ah origin and they were located in the old Jewish neighborhood of Detroit which (EM They were in Detroit, huh?) was Twelfth Street, you see, Twelfth Street was the Jewish area of Detroit (EM Ah) then in the twenties.

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EM Ah. (FS Uh huh) What did the Purple Gang do?

FS Well I think they were involved in ah, in ah ah liquor and ah all kinds of things.

EM Uh huh. Who told you about them?

FS Oh, that, everyone knows about the Purple Gang. (EM [simultaneously] Everyone knows about the Purple) Sure. Yeah, even Hollywood I think somewhere along the line made a movie on the on the Purple Gang. I think it was a B movie and it wasn't too...

ITEM #3

EM You were telling me about the bridge when we flipped the tape over [unintelligible]

FS Oh well there was a famous fire that burned the wooden bridge (EM Hmm) that connected Belle Isle with downtown Detroit, you see. (EM Uh huh) And after that they built the concrete one that we have today.

EM How did it how did it catch on fire?

FS Oh I don't know (EM Hmm) I I really couldn't say off hand (EM Uh huh) but I'm sure it's written down somewhere.

[FS says he thinks that the concrete bridge is in that old location.]

ITEM #4

[FS says that he remembers as a child, taking the ferry boats to Belle Isle. He went often: "that was the only park in the City you see."]

FS In fact, when the temperatures soared to ninety and (EM Uh huh) in the nineties somewhere, people would flock to Belle Isle with their pillows and their blankets and they would sleep there.

EM Oh no.

FS Yes, it was quite a common thing.

EM Did you ever do it?

FS No, we never did it but ah I remember people sleeping you know in Belle Isle (EM Uh huh) and at night when we left.

[FS explains that Belle Isle was "the only place to get a breath of air."]

ITEM #5

EM Do you know about uhm ever heard about the Jim Scott Fountain on Belle Isle?

FS Oh yes, oh he was a notorious Detroit ah millionaire who had gotten his money by devious means, he had an a notorious reputation, a white slaver and ah and ah (EM Oh really?) other things. A yes. Well it was never proven, I've never read it anywhere, (EM Uh huh) but that was the story that was circulating about him.

EM [overlapping] Yeah, what did they say he did?

FS Well, he was a white slaver I think. He owned a string of bordellos in Detroit (EM Uh huh) in the eighteen-nineties and ah saloons and ah (EM Uh huh) gambling also I think, he was involved in. (EM Uh huh) Well, I guess he had an attack of conscience toward the end of his life and (EM Oh really?) he started promoting all kinds of civic things. In fact, he donated all of the money for the Scott Fountain at Belle Isle, (EM Uh huh) this beautiful kind of Renaissance fountain that you that you see there. (EM Hmm) Have you ever seen it at night?

EM I've never seen the fountain.

FS Oh it's gorgeous. It's beautiful. It reminds me of one of those Roman fountains. In fact I think the Roman fountains were an inspiration for it. (EM Hah) In fact I think it was made in Italy and shipped over.

EM Was that made before he died?

FS Oh yes.

EM Oh it was?

FS Yes.

EM I see.

FS And his statue is right next to him, next to the fountain (EM Uh huh) a little ways, the bronze statue, that seated figure, you know.

EM Uh huh. What kinds of civic good works did he do?

FS Well, there, I think he ah had ah statuary (EM Uh huh) made to be placed in various parks around the City (EM Uh huh) and other fountains, plus I think he donated a lot of money to the public libraries (EM Uh huh) and to charities in general.

ITEM #7

[FS says it was " a very lovely" boat ride to Bob-Lo. He thinks the park is Canadian, "because the red-coats always used to be there when the boat landed and it was a big thrill to us when we were kids to see the red-coats, you know, the Canadian ah police, you know."]

ITEM #8

[FS talks about Albert Kahn who designed the Fisher Building.

FS explains, "it was done in the style of the skyscraper of the twenties, you know, very much reminiscent of the New York skyscraper. And we were pretty proud of that building, 'cause it was a beautiful structure, and it still is, I love it." FS says that the building is named for the Fisher brothers of Fisher Body.]

ITEM #9

[FS says that the Penobscot Building was owned by the Buhls. He says that the Visiting Nurses' Association building was Buhl's mansion. (It is actually the Whitney home.)]

ITEM #11

EM Have you ever heard any stories about Pingree?

FS Oh yeah, Hazen Pingree. Yes, (EM Who did) but he was sort of an upright ah moral type of character. He wasn't too colorful.

ITEM #12

EM What about ah David Whitney?

FS I don't know much about Whitney.

EM Who was he?

FS He was also a wealthy millionaire. (EM Uh huh) Early the ah eh I think these people didn't really last too long because their children married New Yorkers or ah (EM Uh huh) ah other prominent social families in other parts of the country and they went to live elsewhere. (EM Uh huh) So that family sort of died out really ah.

ITEM #13

FS I remember Rivera as a little youngster, as a very young child of maybe five or six, going into the Museum, into the fountain room, (EM Uh huh) then we had a fountain in the Museum, they've taken it out now and made it the sculpture court (EM Uh huh) and I remember my father and I standing in the doorway looking up and seeing this huge figure of Diego Rivera standing on the scaffold painting the murals there. (EM Hmm) I can still see this big figure sitting up there (EM Uh huh) on the scaffolding.

ITEM #14

EM Did your mother ever talk about the City, anything, tell you any stories about the City [unintelligible]

FS Not as, yes, she did, but not as much as my aunt.

EM Your aunt?

FS Yeah, [EM unintelligible] now my mother was here before my aunt, (EM Uh huh) but my aunt didn't have much children, eh didn't have eh,

what am I talking about, didn't have uhm a family, you see.  
 (EM Uh huh) She didn't have a family so she had much time to roam around and shop and and she socializes much more than my mother did, you see. My mother had children and couldn't get out much (EM Uh huh) and what little time she had left over she helped my father in the store. (EM Hmm. Uh huh.) But my aunt remembers the City ah in the twenties and she has often mentioned that ah the Grand Boulevard was kind of the end of the City (EM Ah) and that prostitutes walked on the Grand Boulevard, and it was kind of a marshy street, this was before it was paved, (EM Uh huh) and ah she remembers ah the women of the streets walking the ah wooden sidewalks. (EM Ah) They didn't have cement sidewalks along the Grand Boulevard then (EM Uh huh) and the women of ill-repute, (EM Oh boy) you see, painted up, with ankle bracelets, would the Grand Boulevard. (EM Uh huh. Oh.) My aunt said that the good women never showed their ankles, eh, they wore high boots (EM Uh huh) you see, and their dresses were long, and then if you did show your ankles you were asking trouble [laughs] and this was the street where [EM laughs] they solicited.

## ITEM #15

[FS says his father "was from the old school, he was a disciplinarian" and "ran the entire show, he made the decisions." The life of the family was geared to helping in the business, Their social life was primarily with other immigrant Greek families; FS says, "so uhm [brief pause] we were kind of limited socially." He says that by limited he means that they didn't have many friends other than Greeks.]

EM Did your family spend much time together?

FS Oh yes, yes. We were constantly together. (EM Uh huh) We never went anywhere alone as children. We always went with other adults or with my mother (EM Uh huh) or father.

EM What members of the family were usually together?

FS Ah, what do you mean?

EM The whole, was it the whole family that was usually together, or, you know, the children or your mother and your brother and you, you know?

FS We were always together.

EM Always, all of you?

FS Yes. Yes.

EM Uh huh. Often?

[FS said that they played games, went to Greek school (his father made them speak Greek at the table), "and he never let us forget that we were Greeks, you see!"]

## ITEM #16

EM How do you consider yourself? Do you consider yourself a Greek?

FS In spirit, yes, I think I'm very much a Greek in spirit. (EM Uh huh)  
I think I'm a a mixture of both the American and the Greek, really.  
(EM Uh huh) But I react as a Greek, (EM Uh huh) I think, to situations.

EM Mmm. What do you mean?

FS Well, spiritually I'm very Greek.

EM Uh huh. What kinds of situations do you mean, like aesthetically or socially?

FS Well, aesthetically, aesthetically I am Greek. Greeks are very ah sensuous people. (EM Uh huh) They delight in simple pleasures, good food, good company (EM Uh huh) a beautiful work of art is to be enjoyed (EM Uh huh) and discussed. (EM Uh huh) A good deed done by a member of your family should be honored (EM Uh huh) and recognized. Evil deeds are equally recognized and talked about. We're a very verbal race, and uhm a race that enjoys the sensual pleasures of life.

EM Uh huh. To what, what part of you then do you feel is American, to what extent do you feel American?

FS To what no well, uhm, I feel that I'm part of the American culture because I was educated here (EM Uh huh) I taught here, I grew up with American youngsters, (EM Uh huh) I understand the American way of life, ah

EM Do you participate in it?

FS Of course I do.

EM You do? You do.

FS I feel very much a part (EM Uh huh) of this country, and this City which I happen to love very much. (EM Uh huh) I've had a choice of going elsewhere to live but I always seem to gyrate back to where I [unintelligible]

## ITEM #17

ES Why do you like Detroit?

FS I like it because it's comfortable (EM How come?) and it's familiar (EM Uh) and I can put my hands on things very quickly and easily (EM Uh huh) uhm maybe I'm a little over-sentimental about it, but it's home, it's like an old shoe.

[FS says that "maybe it's ego, I don't know what it is, but I can go out shopping to Northland or downtown Hudson's and I'll run across some of my ex-students who will stop me and chat with me. I enjoy this. I like to be recognized. It makes it gives me a kind of attachment." FS says that he feels "rootless and suspended" in other cities in which he has lived; he doesn't feel this way in Detroit.

He mentions his attachment to the Detroit Public Library and the Art Institute.]

FS It's just familiar (EM Uh huh) you know I don't think about the City. I know where to go when I want something, where to get it from. I know where the good restaurants are ah (EM Uh huh) it's comfortable. (EM Uh huh) I can anticipate uhm the reactions of the City toward certain ah happenings, you know, and it's very comfortable. (EM Yeah, ah) It's not a beautiful city, I don't think it has ever been a beautiful city from the standpoint of uhm ah the layout of the town. (EM Uh huh) Detroit is one of those towns that sprang up all of a sudden (EM Ah) in the twentieth century. Before the twenties it was nothing, it was a village really.

[FS talks about Detroit participation in the Civil War, and the holdings of the Burton Collection from this era. FS says that the general layout of the town is much the same as in its early days.]

FS But in the twenties you see with the influx of immigrants the town just began to grow quickly, (EM Uh huh) at such a pace that they really didn't organize the growth of the town. (EM Uh huh) So it's badly organized.

EM It grew because of all the immigrants coming in?

FS Yes, uh huh, there was no real plan (EM Uh huh) for the city, it just grew quickly (EM Uh huh) all of a sudden. (EM Uh huh) And because of that I think the City is pretty well chopped up and kind of a mish-mosh (EM Uh huh) of things.

ITEM #18

[FS says he doesn't know where the names Grand Circus Park and Campus Martius originated. He says they are Latin, Roman names. He thinks it is because education then emphasized the classics: "so I think a lot of the names like Campus Martius (EM Yeah, I'm trying to think of some street names. Can you think of any?) and Grand Circus Park were in were in homage to ah ancient Rome."]

ITEM #19

[FS says that when his father got a car, the family spent leisure time going for drives. FS says they used to take his aunt and uncle to the baths at Mount Clemens. He remarks that "in fact you could smell Mount Clemens about five miles before you got there."]

ITEM #20

[FS explains that in the Greek community, "this was a sign of social prestige if you could ah speak the mother tongue."]

EM It still is I think.

FS And I think it still is. Of course it's dying out out because there's a been a great deal of intermarriage and ah (EM Uh huh) dissemination



of the (EM Uh huh) first generation.

ITEM #21

EM Do you think uhm most of your friends are Greek or American?  
Most of the people you see [unintelligible]

FS Right now, I think most of my friends are Americans. (EM Uh huh)  
What is American, tell me. [laughs]

EM I don't I don't know what it is. Well, at least, don't have an  
active uhm ethnic-group ah (FS Yes) affiliation.

FS I think the only reason they are American is that uhm well I'm a  
teacher, you see. (EM Uh huh) And you have a tendency to pick your  
friends from your own profession. I'm a teacher artist so ah  
(EM Uh huh) naturally ah I automatically make friends with the people  
in my profession (EM Uh huh) 'cause I see more of them than I do of  
the Greeks. (EM Uh huh. Yeah) The Greek friends that I have are  
usually close friends of the family (EM Uh huh) that I've known over  
the years, you see..

ITEM #22

[FS explains that the children spent leisure time on weekends going  
to the Museum and the movies. He was quite interested in the theater.  
FS says, "In a way, I think that theater was probably better then  
than it is today. Today it seems very commercial in Detroit." FS  
explains that because the theaters were small, "there was an intimacy  
between the viewers and the performers."]

FS Now the older people who knew Detroit in the twenties say that this  
was a marvelous theater town in the twenties, before the depression hit.

EM Who told you that?

FS Oh a lot of people. My father said that he could remember the old  
ah Sam's cut-rate department store, that was the old depart the old  
Detroit Opera House. (EM Ah) That was a legitimate opera house  
(EM Uh huh) before the depression and all the greats sang there.

[FS says that the old Gaiety Burlesque house was the vaudeville theater.]

ITEM #23

[FS talks about Jesse Bonstelle. The Bonstelle Theater was originally  
a synagogue. FS says that Victor Jory told him about Jesse Bonstelle.]

ITEM #25

[FS says that his aunt Mary Angelus was really a part of their family.  
She lived only a few blocks away. FS's mother is the youngest in the  
family, so her sister dominates her even today.]

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## ITEM #26

EM Do you feel that you had a close family?

FS Oh yes, very close. I think too close (EM Really?) in many instances.

EM Why? What about it made you [unintelligible]

FS Well, I think during my teenage years, ah I found it oppressive at times (EM Hmm) you know.

EM Why, what what kinds of requirements did they have, I mean

FS Well you see my aunt was really not too well educated in her own country (EM Uh huh) and she never really became a part of the American society as such. We maintained Greek households, (EM Uh huh) you know, not American. Although, as the years went by, the American values infiltrated slowly, (EM Uh huh) they were unconscious infiltration, you know what I mean?

[FS says that his aunt never really learned English.]

EM If you maintained a household would you think it would be primarily a Greek household too?

FS I doubt that (EM Uh huh) really. (EM Uh huh) How could it be, I'm eh you know the very ah the you know, how could you possibly? I've been raised here. I'm not really Greek, I discovered that when I came back from Greece. [EM chuckles] I'm Greek in spirit (EM Uh huh) you know ah inwardly in spirit I'm very Greek, but out...outwardly I react very in a in an American way (EM Uh huh) not a Greek way really, (EM Uh huh) you know.

[FS says he is both, depending on the circumstances. In Greece he was referred to as "the American."]

## ITEM #27

[FS says that he "had a few friends but I never really had gangs of kids." He was not affiliated with a real group until he got into high school; then he was in school-sponsored clubs.]

## ITEM #28

[FS says that his father, mother, and aunt used to tell him stories about Detroit.]

EM Did they all three of them tell you those things about Detroit in Greek or in

FS Well, the things that my mother and my father and my aunt told me were personal things about personalities and not about ah (EM Uh huh) the City itself.

[FS says the material dealt with their own personal experiences.]

EM Well what on what occasions would they tell you things like that?

FS Oh in family gathering or when they well now my aunt ah -- she's up in age -- and she's constantly, she constantly reminisces about the past (EM Uh huh) or ah when they just discuss ah the early years in Detroit they'll bring up an area where they lived or (EM Ah) people they knew (EM Uh huh) and in that reference, (EM Uh huh) you know.

EM Would it would the they usually talk about these things when the family was as a group or (FS Yeah) in individual pairs or

FS Well, ah, both situations.

EM Both?

FS Yeah.

ITEM #29

EM Is any one of them ah a particularly good story teller?

FS Oh they're all good story tellers.

EM They are?

FS They're marvelous story tellers. Gee I wish, I I learned all of my fairy tales in Greek, from my mother and from my aunt. (EM Uh huh) My aunt was a notoriously good story teller. (EM Uh huh) She could fascinate the daylights out of us, you know.

[FS talks about Cinderella in Greek.]

EM What was what's good about the way she told stories?

FS Well the Greeks are very dramatic you see, (EM Hmm) and when they tell stories you know they emphasize (EM Uh huh) and make facial expressions and ah (EM Uh huh. Do you think) they enthrall you really. Yeah?

EM Do you think they're better story tellers than you are?

FS Oh yes much, much. Much better. They put a lot more enthusiasm into the story (EM Uh huh) ah they act out the part, you know (EM Uh huh) with gestures and facial expressions (EM Uh huh) and of course to a youngster this is far more impressionable than (EM Mmm) telling a story straight (EM Yeah) verbally.

[FS explains that Greeks have always been notoriously good story tellers.]

ITEM #30

[FS says that he "very seldom" tells people about Detroit because "most people generally are rather bored with this kind of thing."]

FS I mean uhm unless you're interested in the arts all of the stories about Pewabic pottery or Mrs. Stratton or Colonel Freer wouldn't be much of much interest to you.

[FS says that he enjoys talking about Detroit with CK (see CK-1) "because you know he has many many stories, he remembers it ah vividly."]

ITEM #31

EM Where do you think you've learned most of this about most of what you know about Detroit?

FS Through people, I think through people and of course reading and ah I once (EM What what people?) belonged to the Historical Society (EM Oh did you?) and I I used to attend many of their lectures (EM Uh huh) and I've taken in most of their exhibits (EM Uh huh) you see and you do pick up (EM Uh huh) information about your own city.

EM What people primarily do you think uhm told you things about Detroit, besides Elsie, I know she's significant?

FS Well it's kind of hard to say really because at the time you weren't really conscious of the sources (EM Uh huh) and over I think a lot of this material is gathered over the years.

EM Uh huh. [brief pause] Yeah.

FS You know you can get it from people (EM Uh huh) in general conservation. (EM Uh huh) Old timers too will reminisce about Detroit and you'll pick it up (EM Uh huh) from them.

EM Uh huh. Do you hear uhm many people in Mr. Mike's that talk [unintelligible]

FS [overlapping] Oh definitely. Sure. Oh yes, oh yes. Over the years, many of the people that used to come into my father's place of business were old Detroiters (EM Uh huh) and they would talk about the old days. (EM Uh huh) Yeah.

ITEM #33

FS [pause] You know we haven't even touched the surface. There are many many other things that I could tell you that I (EM Can you think of them?) can't think of right now.

EM Do you think you know more stories about Detroit than uhm (FS Oh I don't think so) a lot of people do?

FS I don't think so.

EM You don't think so?

FS No I don't. Not at all.

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[FS has indicated before and confirms again his assertion that he is a verbal person. He says, "Have you ever met a Greek that wasn't verbal? That's the national sport, talking, you know."]

FS Uhm I'm trying, you know I know many more stories

EM I know you do.

FS but the situation eh [pause] has to bring them out, you know.

ITEM #34

FS My father once worked for Henry Ford. During the depression years, after the crash, you see, many of the workers waited in lines, you know, for jobs, eh and he was out of a job and out of business (EM Uh huh) so he waited in those lines for hours (EM Hmm) before they would open the doors, you know (EM Uh huh) and once they came out with hoses to shoo them away (EM Uh huh) and he was squirted with a hose (EM Oh) and he was so mad [EM chuckles] he turned around and he shook his fist at Henry Ford's factory and said "I will never work in a factory as long as I live" and he never did. He went into business.

[FS says his father told him that. FS maintains that Greeks "have a notorious amount of dignity and self-respect." He says that they thrive on their own and are highly individualistic.]

ITEM #36

FS You know the Mariners' Church don't you?

EM Yeah, what's the deal with Mariners'?

FS Well, the the ah sailors that worked on the boats on the Great Lakes you see would pray at that church...

[FS explains how it was moved.]

EM Who told you about Mariners'?

FS Well, it's a known fact.

[FS tells how Elsie Duncan knows about it because her relatives worked on the boats.]

ITEM #37

EM Do you believe that most of most of the stories that people tell about the City are true?

FS Well, you know. with the passage of time things get distorted a bit and exaggerated. (EM Uh huh) How much of the tales they tell are true I couldn't say. (EM Uh huh) I think uhm there is a bit of truth in it and I think there's a little bit of (EM Uh huh) fiction in it too. (EM Uh huh) The only way you could tell is to

trace it down, you know (EM Uh huh) go to the library and pinpoint it (EM Uh huh) and refer to what some scholarly (EM Uh huh) eh book.

ITEM #38

EM Do you like talking about Detroit?

FS Oh I love it, (EM Do you?) why not? It's free and it's a (EM Uh huh) kind of fun.

[FS recommends the following books: Art in the City by Joy Hatkinson.]

End of TAPE I, SIDE 2

TAPE II, SIDE 2

[FS tells how Mrs. Henkel-Hass, a wealthy Museum patroness, always checked on her own paintings when she came to the Museum.]

FS If there was any dust or anything around the painting that bothered her, or if there was a placement of one of the paintings that didn't ah ah suit her standards, she made ah loud vocal reference to it [EM laughs] and guards would be running around trying to calm her down or what have you.

[FS explains that in the Talented Art Program, one day, they were working in the Renaissance gallery. She came in that day; one of her favorite paintings was up.]

FS And I don't know what we were doing, somebody splashed some water from the water colors on the wall and she became furious. (EM Hmm) She walked over and she said [FS mimicking in a loud voice] "Young man! Do you know what you're doing over here? Do you know how many thousands of dollars that painting costs? And I want you to be very careful! Can't you wash your brush out more carefully than that?" She said, "Well I'll have to show you!" And she sh... proceeded to show us how to wash out our brushes (EM Oh no.) and shaking her finger at us, you know. [EM laughs] So we thought that was very funny, yeah.

[FS refers to her as "Old Lady Henkel-Hass." She would inspect everything in the Museum. FS says "I even saw her once ran put her finger on something to see ah ah if it was dusted."]

ITEM #9

[EM asks about the "Japanese Wrestlers." FS says that in the old Art Institute there "was a lot of junk that was donated by Detroiters who thought that they had bought terrific art, you see." Since they didn't know what to do with it, they stuck it in the basement of the old Museum. FS says that they had a life-size statue of two Japanese wrestlers; he has heard older people refer to them.]

ITEM #11

[FS says that the Greek church in America attracted the men; he

thinks it became more of a "social center." He describes the celebration of Easter -- a candlelight procession through the streets -- in the Greek section of Detroit. FS says "It was really very impressive and and lovely and I'm very sorry to see these things go. We no longer do this because of the traffic tie-ups, you see." FS volunteers: "You know, I believe in integration and the mixing of ethnic groups, but in a way, I don't, because I see a little bit of the Old World leaving, the little that we had, leaving, and there's a sameness beginning to permeate America, which bores me." FS says that within our lifetime we "are going to see a blending of all the races, you know (EM Maybe) we are going to see that and we're seeing it already, and which is probably very healthy, but yet, in a way I kind of regret seeing some of the old European customs going."

ITEM #12

FS Gee I remember, in the Hungarian quarter [EM coughs] the Delray area (EM Uh huh) I remember gypsies roaming the City that came from Delray.

[FS says that the king of the gypsies lived here.]

FS And when he died, they gave him a wild gypsy funeral.

EM Oh, how'd you know about him?

FS It was in all the papers!

[FS says he was a Romany gypsy.]

FS And they used to roam around downtown Detroit, and I you would see

EM What'd they look like? Gypsies?

FS They were dark, (EM Uh) they wore colorful dresses with coins on their foreheads (EM Uh huh) and they went from store to store telling fortunes, you know (EM No kidding) uh huh and they had tambourines, some of them (EM Uh huh) and they looked like gypsies, the old stereotyped gypsies (EM Uh huh) that you would expect to see. (EM Gee) And many of them would ah would rent store fronts and live them and live in them, you know, (EM Hmm) old empty stores, and they would (EM Uh huh) rent them, and they would set up signs, you know eh (EM Hmm) fortune telling here, palmistry, or what have you. That's all gone, I never see any.

[FS says he was warned about the gypsies when he was a child; "of course, in Greece they have a notorious reputation." His grandfather used to chase them off of the property. His mother said that gypsies could give the evil eye; they were reputed to have hypnotized and kidnapped children, FS says they used to come to his father's store.]

ITEM #13

[Regarding ethnic settlements in Detroit, FS says that he thinks "that there's a certain amount of security in congregating with your own kind."

[Interview terminated.]

APPENDIX V: TGJ

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OLDFIELD FIRE CONTENT

FEDERAL SHIP

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## FORM B

Personal History of Informant

STATE Michigan

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NAME OF COLLECTOR Elizabeth A. Meese

ADDRESS 705 Purdy, Birmingham, Michigan 48009

DATE Spring 1968

SUBJECT Detroit Local Place Legends

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Professor Thelma G. James  
591 West Hilldale  
Detroit, Michigan 48203

1. Ancestry: Paternal: Canadian-English; Maternal: English-Swiss
  2. Place and date of birth: Euclid and LaSalle Blvd., Detroit, Michigan  
on May 30, 1899
  3. Family: Single; parents dead
  4. Places lived in, with dates:  
Euclid & LaSalle Blvd. 1899-1916  
6505 16th Street 1916-1923  
Calvert & Woodrow Wilson - a few years (cont.)
  5. Education, with dates:  
B.A., University of Michigan, 1916-1920; University of Michigan 1923;  
M.A., University of Chicago, 1927-1929
  6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates:  
Taught English in Detroit 1920-1923; Professor of English and  
Folklore at Wayne State University, 1923-1967; now Professor Emeritus
  7. Special skills and interests:  
Antique furniture, oriental rugs, folklore
  8. Community and religious activities:  
Episcopal; President at International Institute, Sophie Wright  
Settlement, various phases of community
  9. Description of informant:  
The informant is of medium height and overweight. She has short,  
grey, tightly curled hair. The informant wears glasses. She is not
  10. Other points gained in interview: [a physically attractive woman.  
The informant generally controlled and directed all of the  
conversation; this is reflected in her daily behavior.
4. (cont.) Commonwealth & Hancock - until 1935  
Second Avenue 1935-1938  
Merrick 1938  
With Mrs. Hicks - Merrick & Cass 1938-42  
Webb Avenue 1942  
Dundee, Huntington Woods 1948  
Pleasant Ridge, #5 Poplar Park, 1954  
591 W. Hilldale, Detroit, Michigan 1961-

## COLLECTOR'S LOG - TGJ

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I have been acquainted with TJ for approximately four years, having met her through Alumnae functions of the Martha Cook Building at the University of Michigan. The acquaintance developed when I came to Wayne State University in 1965, especially since 1967 when I demonstrated an interest in folklore. My own interest was based on a friendship with TGJ's colleague, Dr. Ellen J. Stekert (7407 Curtis, Detroit, Michigan 48221). From that time to the present TGJ has often given "kindly" and largely unsolicited advice regarding my future in folklore. It was in such a context once that she volunteered her feeling that she should be collected from because of her familiarity with Detroit history and folklore.

I made a number of unsuccessful attempts to interview TGJ. She had planned to come to my home for dinner, Friday, January 12, 1968, but called to say that she was ill and could not come. She suggested that I call her at the end of the weekend to arrange another appointment.

## 13 January 1968 - Report of a Telephone Conversation

I called TJ and she was still suffering from her cold. She said she had lost her voice and that it would be a while before she could be interviewed. Her doctor had told her, she said, to stay at home.

## 21 January 1968 - Report of a Telephone Conversation

I called the informant regarding an appointment. She said that she still had a cough, but would be at the University some time during the next week. She suggested that I "catch her" at school where she would be doing some work.

## 23 January 1968 - Report of an Interview

Since previous attempts on my part had been unsuccessful, Doctor Stekert arranged this interview with TJ / who happened to be working in the Folklore Archive on this particular evening. The informant agreed to be interviewed, although she was still in the recovery stages from her illness.

The interview took place in one of the Listening Rooms (230) of Wayne State General Library. Doctor Stekert showed me how to operate the equipment and then departed; she returned only briefly having left her keys in the room.

The room was a very small, confining, sterile place that is used by students who wish to listen to records. It contained only two chairs and a table. I was seated about three feet from the informant, facing her. The room was approximately ten feet wide and perhaps fifteen feet wide.

The informant maintained a friendly, yet distant and professional manner throughout the interview. She seemed always in control of the

topics and depth of discussion. I felt as though she was quite concerned with impressing me with her gentility, and that there was a definite class conflict within the informant.

The informant evidenced some discomfort at the beginning of the second side of tape one. This was displayed through staring at the tape throughout that portion of the interview. I would imagine that some of her awareness of the machine was due to my ineptness at changing tape; that this had called her attention to the recording event.

The informant became very tired in the course of the interview. She finally suggested that the interview be continued at some other occasion. This was due to the fact that she was recovering from her illness and the fact that it was quite late in the evening and she had not yet had dinner. I asked for the essential background information, and the interview was terminated. She did not give me all of the information I wanted, and said that she would give me a copy of her vitae sheet.

24 January 1968

My own urgency in wishing to secure this interview was due to the fact that TJ planned to leave for a six-month European trip at the end of the month. Wishing to reassure and reinforce her, as well as to convey my appreciation, I sent her the following note and a potted plant:

Dear Doctor James -

I have listened to your tape of last night and find that it contains -- as I had expected -- a wealth of valuable information. You gave me so many leads for further work, and even more, those beautiful personal remembrances you shared with me.

I hope that the session wasn't too tiring, and that your health will continue to improve. If you find a break in the next few busy weeks -- at any time -- please call me. If we could talk for only one more hour sometime before you leave, it would be such a help. I hope you enjoy this small counterpart of a much larger appreciation.

With gratitude,

Liz

Although I had hoped to have a brief follow-up interview, as the note suggested, the informant made no further contact with me -- not even to acknowledge the note and plant -- before she left the country.

3 June 1968 - Report of a Telephone Conversation

I called TJ to check some of the background information that seemed lacking. Her housemate, Mrs. Hicks, answered and could not find TJ. Mrs. Hicks took the message and said that she would have TJ call when she returned.

TJ returned the call within an hour. She spoke briefly of her European

trip. TJ was abrupt, warm, and cold -- a very common mixture. She gave me the necessary background information in a very business-like fashion. She said that she hoped to see me at the University next week, after she had put her household and personal business in order.



Tape Index - TGJ-1 - Detroit Local Place Legends

WSUFA accession number:

Recorded: 23 January 1968, 6:00 p.m.  
7½ ips, mono

Elizabeth A. Meese interviewing Thelma G. James at the Wayne State University Library, Detroit 2, Michigan

Situation: Informant and collector are alone in Listening Room 230. At the beginning of the recording, however, Dr. Ellen Stekert demonstrates the use of equipment. She leaves, although returns briefly for keys.

ITEM TAPE I, SIDE 1

[Introductory procedure, dating, and testing. Dr. Stekert leaves.]

- #1 TJ talks about local history texts
- #2 TJ tells about the founding of the City and old maps
- #3 TJ discusses early history
  - relationship to Canada
  - early churches
- #4 TJ talks about French names
  - strip farms
- #5 TJ discusses the Detroit 1951 survey of ethnic group
- #6 Continuation of #4 - French influence
  - strip farms
  - French pear trees
- #7 TJ tells about eating beaver in River Rouge
- #8 TJ talks about Fort Detroit
- #9 TJ tells about Joe Bedore
- #10 TJ discusses Judge Woodward's plan
- #11 TJ tells about flying over Detroit and her joke about how Detroit is north of Canada
- #12 TJ tells about the village atmosphere in Detroit
  - culture and Freer collection
- #13 TJ talks about the Freer collection
- #14 TJ talks about wealthy families and Detroit's excellent reputation

## ITEM TAPE I, SIDE 1 (cont.)

- #15 TJ discusses relationship to Canada, especially the work of  
Father Gabriel Richard
  - #16 Continuation of #12 - the village atmosphere
  - #17 TJ discusses early transportation
  - #18 Boston bicycle factory burns
  - #19 Jackson Wagon Works
  - #20 TJ describes horsecars and Detroit interest in horses
  - #21 TJ discusses the Grosse Pointe area
  - #22 The Michigan Stove
  - #23 TJ discusses the name, Belle Isle and trips there
  - #24 Mariners' Church
    - her father an organ builder
    - racial sympathy in Detroit
- [End of TAPE I, SIDE 1]

## TAPE I, SIDE 2

## [Introductory procedure and testing]

- #1 Continuation of 1, #23 - Belle Isle name
  - amusement there
- #2 TJ talks about cultural life in Detroit
  - theater
  - going as a child
  - symphony
- #3 Continuation of 1, #13 - Freer Collection
- #4 Continuation of 1, #12 - the village atmosphere
  - Art Institute
  - one room school house
  - chased by bull
  - describes environment, relationship to church, and  
school business
- #5 TJ talks about early Detroit
  - Indian burial mounds
  - Detroit houses
  - Christmas

## ITEM TAPE I, SIDE 2 (cont.)

- #6 Labadie Collection and TJ's research
- #7 Architecture and destruction of homes
- #8 Brief continuation of 1, #22 - the Michigan Stove The  
burning of the Belle Isle bridge  
--Belle Isle name heard from father
- #9 TJ gives background information on her father  
--Saturday night shopping trips  
--chicken spared

#10 Collector's Form Data  
--ancestry

#11 TJ begins discussing the depression  
[End of TAPE I, SIDE 2]

TAPE II, SIDE 1

[Tape test]

#1 Continuation of I,2-#11 - the depression  
--grandfather's bank loan

TJ suggests that the interview be terminated, due to the hour.

#2 Collector's Form Data with general comments interjected  
--her old neighborhood  
--dancing

[Interview terminated]

Collector's number TJ .1; WSUFA accession number

Recorded: 23 January 1968, 6:00 p.m.

Elizabeth A. Meese interviewing Thelma G. James at the Wayne State University Library, Listening Room 230

Subject: Detroit Local Legends

Transcribed by Elizabeth A. Meese

TAPE I SIDE 1

[Doctor Ellen J. Stekert gives instructions on the use of the tape recorder.]

ES Let me ask you um What is your name? See...just answer in a conversational tone

TJ Thelma James, native born Detroiter

EM Are you? I didn't know that

[Turns machine off]

ES Let's practice with the set enough [unintelligible] I think that that should be about right um. Miss James, where were you born in Detroit?

TJ At what is now Euclid and LaSalle Boulevard, used to be the Joy Farms, owned by the Joy Family.

[Machine played back, was all right. Dr. Stekert makes a few more comments on recording procedure. She leaves. We begin talking, and Dr. Stekert returns for her keys. Leaves after a few remarks. EM makes a few introductory remarks.]

ITEM #1

EM What I'm really studying I think is local history

TJ Uh huh

EM And ah although I wasn't [TJ coughs] born in Detroit myself ah my parents weren't Detroiters and so I find that I don't know anything about the city and I've never heard anything about it. I think probably because we lived in the suburbs instead of the city, but

TJ Have you read the various histories of the city?

EM No

TJ You should go back to the old Farmer's history, George Stark's, (EM Oh) Alice Marsh's (EM Uh huh) and include in this the histories of Highland Park by Ellen Hathaway and others. (EM Uh huh) There are some very good (EM Um) local histories of the area. (EM Un huh)



TJ And in our archives there are some manuscripts that students (EM Uh huh) and others and (Em Uh huh) myself have turned in

EM Uh huh

ITEM #2

TJ But Detroit was founded in 1701 (EM Uh huh) by the French, Monsieur Cadillaç, and it's generally forgotten that there was an Italian, Tonty, with him

EM Oh

TJ So the Italians are very proud of this also

EM Uh huh

TJ And ah it's informative to look at a map of the city of Detroit ah in a series from the older maps up to the current maps, which have been of course completely distorted by the expressways.

EM Uh huh. H'..Have you seen such ah maps?

TJ These maps exist and the Historical Museum has them, (EM Oh) the Burton Historical. (EM Uh huh) There's magnificent material here, and ah the late Professor Joel Norris did a whole series ah on of pamphlets (EM Hmm) that are in the Detroit Public Library for Detroit's two-hundred-and-fiftieth birthday. (EM Uh huh) They were done by the University (EM Uh huh) under that grant (EM Uh huh) and ah the city was of course, from its name, the city straits. (EM Uh huh) It made a defensible point with ah the fur trade being the central thing.

EM Uh huh

ITEM #3

TJ And ah you'll find ah that you can't separate the city of Detroit and its history from Canadian history across the water (EM Oh) Nor from the history of the fur trade, nor the lumbering trade, nor the railroads

EM Uh huh

TJ They all centered in here

EM Uh huh

TJ And the ah this area at one time of course was Canadian territory. And we sent ah representatives to Amherstburg and the Canadian courts in this area

EM Uh huh

TJ Seriously, on the other hand, the churches ah were founded from the French Canadian Roman Catholic, and later (EM Uh huh) Episcopal Churches, coming this way across the river. But it was um it's very interesting still to find the French names down on Grosse Ile

EM Um  
ITEM #4

TJ Ah there's quite a few traces of the French families that were there.

EM How are they ah how do you find them on Grosse Ile, you mean residents or ah

TJ By studying the maps, street names, (EM Uh huh) and ah some of the little area names

EM I see

TJ You'll find them there

EM Uh huh

TJ And ah you'll find in the early maps and still visible, including the land on which this University is founded, the evidence of the French strip farms (EM Uh huh) as in France so that everyone had a bit of river front

EM Uh huh

TJ And also so that one's neighbors were close by

EM Uh huh

TJ Instead of being a mile away if you had a square piece of land. And you find those names still in St. Antoine, Beaubien, (EM Uh huh) Joseph Campau, (EM Uh huh) and those streets that are just east of Woodward that you still know of course, Chene, and many others

EM [interrupting] Where did you learn about the French farms?

TJ Well I've always known about them.

EM Uh huh

ITEM #5

TJ And further, when Detroit had its two-hundred and fiftieth birthday in 1951 I was on the board

EM Uh huh

TJ And we did a good deal of the history. We had to [unintelligible] the ethnic groups. And ah under my direction a survey of the ethnic groups was published (EM Uh huh) which of course took us back into the history of the groups.

EM What year was that the survey was

TJ [interrupting] 1951

[Continues discussing the study, an earlier one done in the late twenties, and then Dr. Ellen Cassidy, corrects herself, Dr. Florence Cassidy doing one now.]

TJ And of course this is necessary because the ah growth of the city has [Short pause] (EM Uh huh) obliterated much of the value, except historic, of the others.

EM Uh huh

TJ But um

EM The value of ah the study

TJ As exact ah figures

EM [overlapping] Oh I see

TJ They are now out of date of course,

EM I see, yes

ITEM #6

TJ But if you will look at the current exhibit in the Historical Museum of the University Centennial (EM Hmm) you will find a yellow strip farm indicated (EM Uh huh) and this being part of one of those.

EM Uh huh

TJ Also you will find evidences in the War Memorial and on the old Murphy Estate of the French pear trees

EM Oh

TJ which were planted by the French, a type of prickly pear. And I have seen them down there by the river where the War Memorial is.

EM Why did they plant prickly pears?

TJ Well [extended] they imported these from France. They brought them with them.

EM Uh huh

TJ And ah they settled of course on the river front for its fishing its safety, and also that they might ah intercept British traders.

EM Uh huh

ITEM #7

TJ And you'll find curious evidences in ah certain food habits you'd like to investigate. For example, down on the southwest side in River Rouge, there is a little known meat exemption on Friday. Ah down there, it is permitted, always has been, to eat beaver on Friday (EM Mm) when the fishing seasons were slow. And a few of them extended that of course into beef as you can well imagine.

EM Uh huh

## ITEM #8

TJ But the basic ah structure was the fort, which was about where the Detroit Bank and Trust main building stands.

EM Uh huh

TJ And one of our um archeologists, Dr. Pilling, has done a good deal about that particular site

EM Uh huh

TJ And ah [coughs] has found the pilings for the fort and so on.

EM Uh huh

## ITEM #9

TJ And ah the ah French Canadians have spread up through, and the French have spread. Dr. Stekert and I were talking and I believe she tells me that a study has been done of the late Joe Bedore who was up the old [unintelligible] Flats whom I grew up with as a child.

EM You knew him?

TJ Yes

EM Oh

TJ Um I used to fish up there (EM Uh huh) and go up in the old Frank E. Kirby.

EM Uh huh

TJ And I used to catch strange things two and three inches long

EM [laughs]

TJ And he would always say to me ah "You catch em, missy, and by gar, Joe, he cook them for you."

EM Um

TJ And he did, and would present them with a flourish. I understand the study was done by a nun.

EM Uh huh

TJ And I challenged Dr. Stekert to ask whether she recorded any of Joe Bedore's language, and ah ah she indicated that the nun knew her limitations, and ah, Joe

EM That was her failing

TJ had ah rarely a word ah against another that didn't have a bit of ah profanity

EM Uh huh

TJ sandwiched between the two, very colorful, very interesting [?].

EM What did he do?

TJ Well he ran a ah sort of little resort up there that was called Joe Bedore's.

EM Uh huh

TJ And it was very famous for its fish foods and all, and the people would go up on the old Frank E. Kirby, or their private boats

EM Uh huh

TJ or, later on old Put-In-Bay always stopped there.

EM Uh huh

TJ And you could catch your own fish or he would serve these wonderful fish dinners (EM Uh huh) for you. And he took out fishing parties there on the marshes.

EM I see

TJ And ah hunting parties in the autumn (EM Uh huh) and ah was one of the very colorful characters and there's a great deal of lore still to be found up there about him.

EM Wh' ah is the site still there of the resort itself?

TJ Yes, the resort is still there

EM It's still there?

TJ And you will find it ah I think it's called the Star Island.

EM Hum

ITEM #10

TJ It's right close in there and anyone could indicate (EM Uh huh) the old Joe Bedore (EM Uh huh) location to you. But ah this, to go back to the structure of the city. If you will look at what is called the Woodward Plan (EM Uh huh) Judge Woodward's plan (EM Uh huh) it was on the form of a wheel of which Woodward was to be the more or less north-south spoke

EM Uh huh

TJ East Jefferson, West Jefferson, Grand River, and Gratiot (EM Uh huh) were to be the others. And this is still very visible if you go east of Hudson's, those wheeling streets (EM Hm) which make horrible cul-de-sacs

EM [slight chuckle]

TJ down around the old Medical Center, all they needed to do was make

some of them one-way streets and nobody could find ah where he was going. And ah it was a very pretty plan, ah somewhat effective in its early days, but now quite a headache. And with the ah expressways crossing them [?] much of that is obliterated. (EM Uh huh) But you find a rather nice view of that if you stand in ah Grand Circus Park (EM Uh huh) by the Whitney monument and look up you can see Woodward, uh Jefferson, and Gratiot, and Grand River sort of angling (EM Uh huh) and then the park's intervening

EM By what monument is that?

TJ The Pingree monument (EM Oh) that's just north of the David Whitney Building

EM Uh huh

ITEM #11

TJ You can [?] stand there and you sort of see the whole thing, or if you fly over it, probably sometime you should take a low-flying plane trip, it it's quite fascinating.

[EM agrees. TJ describes the beauty of flying into Detroit to Willow Run Airport, and seeing Windsor on the south.]

TJ A little bit of folklore on that ah Canada's south of Detroit but everybody makes fun of it of course.

EM Uh huh

TJ Because Windsor is south, and ah, new hands we generally confuse by saying we're going south of the border to Canada.

EM Have you ever done that?

TJ Oh many times! (EM Oh) With all new faculty members practically.

EM Uh huh [laughs]

TJ Serve to confuse them.

EM [still chuckling]

TJ They cannot understand how Port Huron is Canada north, but Windsor is Canada south because of the queer little loop in the River (EM Oh) that is there [?].

EM Oh [starts to ask question]

ITEM #12

TJ [keeps talking] Detroit grew up [pause] with all of its history, and it tis a fascinating one, very much in a village sense, and there are still many evidences of it.

EM Hum [knock on listening room door, started to say something, but ignored person]

TJ When I was a child here in Detroit, ah on the [brief pause] outskirts

of the city, ah as it now was the city limits came to the, what is now the Grand Boulevard, the East and West Grand Boulevard, running from Woodward, a little east of Woodward, around making a sort of horseshoe shape East and West Grand Boulevard there (EM Uh huh) coming along by the Fisher Building, heading south at Grand River, and heading south over beyond Chene somewhere in there (EM Uh huh) This was the limit of the city and curiously still the inner city in a way. And as a child ah this kind of weather we raced our horses and our cutters there on Grand Boulevard, there was nothing north of it at all just a house or two. And the um quality of the village was in its ah trees for one thing, magnificent trees, and this university was surrounded with (EM Hmmm). My memory as a youngster coming to Central High School in 1912 was of simply over-arching, cathedral arches, on Third, Second, [brief pause] Woodward, Cass, John R, Beaubien, uh all now cut down. (EM Uh huh) And the student of this university ringed those trees over in front of the Federation (EM Uh huh) several nights and tried to save them (EM Uh huh) but couldn't of course. And the village quality was kept probably because of the German population that came (EM Hmmm) and with its great love of music and the theater, uh, gave it a very warm and friendly (EM Uh huh) quality. And there is still something of that even though as [?] Detroit may have in its area nearly two million people it is not like Paris or London or New York (EM Uh huh) it's a rather different ah type and newcomers are puzzled, they don't understand this. And Detroit had ah a superb cultural background, if you look at letters that I have read in France ah the French travelers in this area spoke of the books, the paintings, the wisdom, the learning, the scholarship, and the courtesy and the beautiful china and ah that sort of thing (EM Hummm) that was in Detroit. And again you can find all of this in the ah Burton Historical (EM Uh huh) and so even today it is curious, part of the village aspect is that there are magnificent paintings, and the Detroit Institute of Arts, ah now knows fairly well and hopefully ah keeps an eye on these as future contributions, but if you will look at the contributions that have been made to the Detroit Institute of Arts from local donors it's not surprising. (EM Uh huh) Then we must not forget that the National Museum in Washington was started within six blocks of where we sit from the Freer home which is now part of the Merrill Palmer (EM Hmmm) and that was offered to Detroit as the nucleus of a great painting and art institute if the city would build a building, it wouldn't, and so it went to form the basis of the National Gallery.

ITEM #13

EM Oh, who ah

TJ Freer (EM Mr.) F-r-e-e-r

EM Mr. Freer

TJ Yes

EM Offered [TJ interrupting] it (Yes) with that provision

of the city, ah as it now was the city limits came to the, what is now the Grand Boulevard, the East and West Grand Boulevard, running from Woodward, a little east of Woodward, around making a sort of horseshoe shape East and West Grand Boulevard there (EM Uh huh) coming along by the Fisher Building, heading south at Grand River, and heading south over beyond Chene somewhere in there (EM Uh huh) This was the limit of the city and curiously still the inner city in a way. And as a child ah this kind of weather we raced our horses and our cutters there on Grand Boulevard, there was nothing north of it at all just a house or two. And the um quality of the village was in its ah trees for one thing, magnificent trees, and this university was surrounded with (EM Hmm). My memory as a youngster coming to Central High School in 1912 was of simply over-arching, cathedral arches, on Third, Second, [brief pause] Woodward, Cass, John R, Beaubien, uh all now cut down. (EM Uh huh) And the student of this university ringed those trees over in front of the Federation (EM Uh huh) several nights and tried to save them (EM Uh huh) but couldn't of course. And the village quality was kept probably because of the German population that came (EM Hmm) and with its great love of music and the theater, uh, gave it a very warm and friendly (EM Uh huh) quality. And there is still something of that even though as [?] Detroit may have in its area nearly two million people it is not like Paris or London or New York (EM Uh huh) it's a rather different ah type and newcomers are puzzled, they don't understand this. And Detroit had ah a superb cultural background, if you look at letters that I have read in France ah the French travelers in this area spoke of the books, the painting; the wisdom, the learning, the scholarship, and the courtesy and the beautiful china and ah that sort of thing (EM Humm) that was in Detroit. And again you can find all of this in the ah Burton Historical (EM Uh huh) and so even today it is curious, part of the village aspect is that there are magnificent paintings, and the Detroit Institute of Arts, ah now knows fairly well and hopefully ah keeps an eye on these as future contributions, but if you will look at the contributions that have been made to the Detroit Institute of Arts from local donors it's not surprising. (EM Uh huh) Then we must not forget that the National Museum in Washington was started within six blocks of where we sit from the Freer home which is now part of the Merrill Palmer (EM Hmmm) and that was offered to Detroit as the nucleus of a great painting and art institute if the city would build a building, it wouldn't, and so it went to form the basis of the National Gallery.

ITEM #13

EM Oh, who ah

TJ Freer (EM Mr.) F-r-e-e-r

EM Mr. Freer

TJ Yes

EM Offered [TJ interrupting] it (Yes) with that provision



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TJ Yes, and they refused

EM And they refused

TJ Yes, because [unintelligible]

EM Why did they refuse?

TJ Well, the village short-sightedness, this is the kind of aspect of a village short-sightedness that was here

EM Uh huh

ITEM #14

[TJ continues, discussing the old lumbering families up the state, their wealth, how they sent their children east to school and to Europe. At Christmas she had met some descendants of these families who wintered in Genoa and whose children debuted in Paris. Her mother went to debut parties on East Jefferson.]

TJ But this is little known in Detroit (EM Uh huh) and it's very curious, that is you read journals and letters of visitors to Detroit (EM Uh huh) they knew this ah and Detroit was a much regarded (EM Hmm) city. It's sort (EM Hmm) of like a prophet without honor in his own country.

EM Do you know ah in what particular period um in journals I might be able to find that around what years or what journals specifically?

TJ Well, you can go any time from eighteen-eighty on (EM Uh huh) and you can go backwards earlier (EM Uh huh) because you see the French were in this territory you'll find in the Upper Peninsula near the Tacquamenon Falls--I saw it first in nineteen-twenty-three--the burial ground of French soldiers twenty years before the American Revolution.

EM Really

ITEM #15

TJ They are there. And there's much ah ah touching of the Old World (EM Uh huh) that is here that is much overlooked (EM Uh huh) and the um link with the Canadian missionaries, the Jesuits and others who came in bringing their culture and the early printing presses here in Detroit, the early books, uh (EM What, whose...) Father Gabriel Richard (EM Hum Uh huh) excellent studies have been made of him

EM Hum. In what, do you recall any of the specific ones? That I might [interrupted]

TJ Uh (EM [still talking] that I might consult) Professor Maynard, who is retired, (EM Uh huh) there's one done at the University of Michigan of Father Gabriel Richard

EM Oh really

TJ And in ah Joel Norris's studies that were done in nineteen-fifty-one

(EM uh huh) there's one ah (EM Uh huh) Father Gabriel Richard and ah the ah Detroit Public Library has also been very conscious of the book holdings.

EM Hmm

ITEM #16

TJ And fairly early, the date escapes me, in the city ah whole group of young men's cultural societies were formed and I know that when my father was a young man he belonged to a number of these cultural societies and ah they read and ah had discussions and ah had small libraries (EM Uh huh) and ah there was [unintelligible] that went on in the (EM Hum) quiet village way (EM Uh huh) and if anything we could think of it as it's sort of like some of the old European towns, rather quiet, seemingly sleepy (EM Uh huh) but ah behind the doors ah lovely flowers and ah so on. And the yards and uhm (EM Hmm) the flowers beds were beautifully cultivated and we see something of this in the Waterworks Park and parts of Belle Isle that are now in sad shape (EM Uh huh) and the ah old City Hall that is now gone, that used to have its very pretty front gardens

EM To what um [interrupted]

TJ and ah in ah a park that is now completely ruined, LaSalle Gardens and North and South LaSalle Boulevard and all of the beautiful old trees were laid out by a Frenchman from Paris with whom I lived for a year (EM Oh) and some of these my father helped to plant. (EM Uh huh) And these were laid on the trees of the French countryside, the great rows of poplars, and the park that made a um cruciform center (EM Uh huh) was cared for by an old ah Danish gardener whose entire devotion was to that little park (EM Uh huh) and who raised peony trees as they (EM Uh) raised them in Denmark, rose bushes, and made of it a beauty spot

EM How lovely

TJ In the thirties came to be vandalized of course

EM Where was that located?

TJ LaSalle Gardens (EM [overlapping] LaSalle Gardens) North and South, and there's still a go-around, but the beauty of the park is of course (EM Uh huh) hopelessly gone

EM How [interrupted]

TJ Detroit had many, many of these under the German and French influences (EM Uh huh) I would say, ah as you might ah see them, and since I've been in Europe, it's a little bit like coming home (EM Uh huh) to see these and to recognize designs and ah (EM Uh huh) see the sources of them

EM Do you uhm for how long do you think this village ah atmosphere was characteristic of Detroit, or do you think it still is in part?

TJ Oh there are parts of it you can still see some of the village influence (EM Hum) uhm this began to break up as such around nineteen-thirteen, fourteen, the war (EM Uh huh) the First World War, and the coming of the automobile factories, ah (EM Uh huh) brought burgeoning populations, and also began the first acquisition of the suburbs, and Detroit really grew by acquiring suburbs. There was Redford (EM Uh huh), Sandhill, and it never went as far as Birmingham and Royal Oak, they stayed (EM Uh huh) inside the Eight Mile, but up to the Eight Mile, those were practically all and up Grand River (EM Uh huh), out Gratiot (EM Uh huh) ah were practically all suburbs, and some of them still b'.bear the names like Roseville (EM Uh huh), East Detroit, Redford ah (EM Uh huh) you can still find this in some of the postal stations, you might be interested in looking up the old postal stations

EM Oh

ITEM #17

TJ And these were rather clearly marked, I remember so [?] clearly as a youngster, Grand River was a log road. And I saw the first, and so was Woodward (EM Uh huh) and I saw the first lane of the first mile of hard surface road in the world, ah or in this country at least (EM Uh huh) there between Six and Seven Mile by Palmer Park. (EM Hum) And we used to drive great distances in the early automobiles to ride on that (EM Uh huh) one mile (EM Uh huh, [laughs]) But when we went as a youngster to the Fair grounds with our horse and carriage, I carried three of the large pennies which you can still in the Museums, patterned on the British pennies, and these were the price of a toll gate which I think was at Six Mile and Woodward ah (EM Uh huh) somewhere along in there. And you paid this if you went out Grand River, (EM Hum) also, and so I saw these roads go in my comparatively short lifetime from log and plank roads, and these were sometimes called plank road (EM Uh huh) and toll roads and log roads up to the present ah high-speed four lane. (EM Uh huh) I look at Woodward Avenue now and ah as I try to cross it (EM Uh huh) marvel at it. But it was the coming of the automobile, the growth of factories, and the factories grew in Detroit because we had the technicians here. (EM Oh) We had a group of people who had grown up in boats and carriages. (EM Uh huh) It is generally forgotten also that we had a huge bicycle industry here.

EM Oh we did?

ITEM #18

TJ And one of my memories, in fact one of my earliest memories, is at the age of about three-and-a-half, being taken to Boston with my mother and seeing a great and terrible fire that was called a bicycle factory fire. And it held up (EM Hum) the train, one of my earliest memories. And there was a very large bicycle, carriage, and blacksmithing ah skill here, and this it was attracted the automobiles. (EM Uh huh) And has kept them here, probably.

EM Do you know who established that ah

ITEM #19

TJ I don't know them individually. I that they w' they were established further out like the Jackson (EM Uh huh) Wagon Works

(EM Uh huh) Mrs. Hicks's ah family, with whom I lived (EM Oh) was associated with that (EM Uh huh) and we have on the fireplace now a little iron frog, an advertising device, "Croak, for the Jackson Wagon Works" (EM laughs) so this was some material advertising. But the men ah were attracted from Ohio and from all over by this craft (EM Uh huh) and this meant the end of the village as such. It became uh (EM Uh huh) the center of a manufacturing business and with its soot and smoke and (EM Uh huh) and crowds. And ah [brief pause] I never saw the horsecar and my mother told me and ah rode on the horsecars ah and spoke of them with ah pity on a cold night.

ITEM #20 EM What did a horsecar look like?

TJ Well it looked like a small streetcar. You'll find pictures of these and you should look at them in the Burton Collection (EM Uh huh) and it was pulled by two horses and ah my mother said they were heated by little coal stoves, (EM Hmm) straw on the floor, and of course occasionally the straw caught fire (EM Uh huh) and it's quite a good uproar (EM laughs) and they had turntables at the ends for the poor nags to pull (EM Uh huh) the horses around. Ah there was always an interest in horses here in Detroit, and fine horse racing, and fine horses.

EM Where do you think that came from?

TJ I think part of this was ah from the fact that there were excellent farms all around Detroit with (EM Hmm) ah good farm horses, but in addition the wealthier people, having travelled, had seen good horses.

ITEM #21

[TJ mentions having spoken with a woman in the past week who rode to the hounds where Christ Church Grosse Pointe stands now. People still ride to the hounds in the Detroit area.]

TJ But ah Grosse Pointe you see was a summer resort. And the people from inside the Boulevard and what is now Indian Village (EM Uh huh) had their summer homes out where Grosse Pointe is now. (EM Uh huh) And the earliest of these ah stands on Doctor Whittaker's land ah ah on the out Grosse Pointe way. (EM Uh huh) He is on our Board of course. (EM Uh huh) I'm afraid that building is in bad repair now and should be saved.

EM His home?

TJ No, this, the first of these old summer homes (EM Oh) that was (EM Oh) out on the shore

EM summer home

TJ and um you will find ah still some of the old, tall, wooden homes ah (EM Hmm) on both sides of Jefferson out (EM Uh huh) and these were the summer homes (EM Uh huh) ah where the people

EM [interrupting] It would be out north?

## ITEM #22

TJ It would be north of Cadieux (EM Uh huh) and ah toward the River, Jefferson, ah east of Cadieux in through there (EM Uh huh) and almost anywhere ah this was ah a very long drive to the Fairgrounds (EM Uh huh) and then it was also by horse-carriage a long trek to Belle Isle (EM Uh huh) and I remember the big stove that was there, the Michigan Stove that is now out by the Fairgrounds.

EM Oh, where was that before?

## ITEM #23

TJ That was up by the Belle Isle what is now the Belle Isle Bridge, (EM Uh huh) and that to me as a child was the end of the world when we got to the Belle Isle Bridge we were a long way from home. Our little horse thought so too. [EM laughs] But to compensate for that there was ah -- here is part of the village ah -- the boats ran [brief pause] the Columbia is one, I can remember just one or two of these names, (EM Uh huh) from the foot of Woodward Avenue to Belle Isle. (EM Uh huh) When my father came here as a young man this was called um Snake Island, but then he used to tell me how he saw them put pigs on, and it was called Pig Island because it was um to get rid of the snakes

EM They put the pigs on

TJ Pigs on to get rid of the snakes (EM Ah) so it was called Snake Island, Pig Island, and then there were wild horses on the island and it was sometimes called Horse Island, which is curious because down on Grosse Isle there is now still Horsemill Road where there (EM Oh) were horses and a mill and I believe there were wild horses [unintelligible]

EM [interrupting] How did the horses get on there?

TJ Over the ice (EM I see) in the winter (EM Ah hah) and foxes and wolves got (EM Uh huh) on there too. And then these boats would go with a nice band ah, Finzel's usually, and for ten cents, you could ride all day, round and round from the foot of Woodward to Belle Isle and back if you didn't get off, (EM Uh huh) and then Father would come down at six o'clock and we would go over to Belle Isle and ah, our neighbors and friends might be there, (EM Uh huh) and we would have a delightful picnic, and for ten cents more we would come back in the evening breezes, and then would enjoy Vernor's ginger ale there at the foot of the River with a peanut stand and ah this was in the lower part of what was Mariners' Church which used to be on Woodward (EM Oh yes) and was moved east to its present location.

EM Why did they move it? Do you know?

## ITEM #24

TJ To get the expressway through. (EM Oh) Again you (EM Of course [laughs]) see the expressway. It was a magnificent job of moving (EM Uh huh) and preservation. There was (EM Uh huh) much talk of tearing it down and this would have been a sad loss. It was built for the mariners and ah ah shipmen, but the ah, my mother, by the way, was the organist in that church for quite a while (EM Oh) and since my father built organs, he was very much interested in

the organ.

EM Was that his profession?

TJ Yes, he was a builder of organs (EM Hmm) the old Farrand and Votey Organ Company. (EM Uh huh) And ah [brief pause] this is part of the village lore, it sounds very simple now that for ten cents you rode all day, but you had the breezes and you didn't have the long ride (EM Uh huh) and of course then you had to take a bobbing streetcar home [EM laughs] and walk [? unintelligible] quite a distance. But these were gentle sports. (EM Uh huh) No one lockéd a door. There was a great neighborly feeling, and one thing I would emphasize, absolutely no racial feeling of any sort.

EM Really

TJ One of the astonishing proofs of this has come to me again and again. It was not only that in my own household with some Quaker background, I was brought up to feel no racial lack of sympathy whatever (EM Uh huh). It wouldn't have been tolerated, but (EM Uh huh) in addition it was typical of the whole city. It is not too long ago that a very prominent friend of ours who was Jewish died, and Mrs. Hicks had known her from high school and I'd known her thirty years, a very prominent Jewish woman...

End of Side 1

Tape I, Side 2

[Some discussion of machine, testing it.]

ITEM #1

EM Oh you were just telling me about Belle Isle and (TJ Oh) going there for picnics and I'm really interested in that spot because I know a lot of people went there, a lot of people still do go there.

TJ Oh yes, but of course it's no longer as beautiful by any means, the trees have ah fallen and there was a long period where municipal funds weren't adequate (EM Uh huh) but it was an island that you will find mentioned ah in the Paris journals and all travelers (EM Oh) and it was world famous ah (EM Uh huh) "the beautiful island" as it was called.

EM That's ah why it's named Belle Isle?

TJ Belle Isle, yes, so it's been Snake Island, Hog Island, Horse Island, and now Belle Isle.

EM How did the hogs get on there?

TJ To kill the snakes (EM Oh) that got on to it.

EM When did they do that, did somebody (TJ Well) specifically put them (TJ Yes) on there?

TJ [overlapping] it was specifically done, (EM Oh) yes. (EM Uh huh) And ah it became in time with its well laid out roads and its ah casinos (EM Uh huh) and so on a ah very famous, world famous island, and visitors knew about it ah when they came here and had to be taken to see it. It was one of the sites of America.

EM It had casinos on it?

TJ Yes

EM What kind of casinos?

TJ For food and (EM Uh huh) for dancing (EM Uh huh) and that sort of thing and for skating (EM Oh) and ah for horse races (EM Uh huh) and there were horse races up and down the frozen River, and ah

EM Did you go to, did you go to those

ITEM #2

TJ [overlapping] Oh yes, I used to drive my own little horse and my father's favorite sport was ice boating (EM Oh) and so that was always held high around there (EM Uh huh) To us, more deadly than modern professional football but (EM Uh huh) he still loved it [EM chuckles] because he'd grown up in Canada where that was, and for us ice skating (EM Uh huh), but [clears throat] there was a, in my childhood here in Detroit ah, must not be overlooked, that we had a vast and wonderful cultural life. There were five theaters, of first caliber, playing every night in the week, the Old Detroit Opera House, the New Detroit Opera House, the Garrick, the Bonstelle, and the Shubert. (EM Hmm) And there were the early ah places like the old Temple Theater, which is where the just around the corner from where the new building on the old Kern site will stand (EM Uh huh) This is one of the first movie houses, where we saw The Perils of Pauline and (EM Hmm, [amused] ) so on. And where all of the great vaudeville ah people played. (EM Hmm) and loved it. W.C. Fields, all of them were (EM Really) grew up here.

[TJ continues her discussion of Detroit as a "tryout" place, mentioning Jessie Bonstelle's theater and Mr. Goodale, [sp.?] a critic on The Free Press.]

TJ On a Friday evening, those of us growing up to high school, would have a quarter, a nickel, and two blue car tickets, the blue car tickets were three for a quarter, the nickel was for between the acts to decide on a slab of ice cream or peanuts [EM amused] and the quarter was for what we called peanut heaven or the nigger gallery, which was the very top ah called heaven sometime (EM Uh huh) and which gave us a completely vertical view of the stage and to this day I am puzzled by a horizontal view of the stage [EM laughs] I never feel comfortable.

[Says she saw all of the great actors of the world who came to Detroit because it had such good and critical audiences, and also because of Mr. Goodale's fine criticism. She names personalities met here, as the audience "had the privilege of going backstage."

Musical performances were held at the Light Guard Armory, "which stood back where the Old County Building was." Music and theater were loved because of the German population. She compares the availability and quality of performances then with those now, finding today's inadequate; discusses musical instruments and Detroiters' interest in music. Tells how, in 1919, as a senior in Ann Arbor, she sold milk bottles to get enough money to come in to the Detroit Symphony concert: "This is what we did in those days." Elaborates on her Symphony attendance, especially one given by Mr. Gabrilovitch [sp.?].

TJ And when I hear old Detroit spoken of as just a prim, primeval little village in the wilderness (EM Hmm) I have seen too many people like that (EM Uh huh) in my day who ah the Booth family for example ah building um the Episcopal church at Trumbull and Grand River, Trinity (EM Uhm, Uh huh) and having it copied from England and their now-destroyed home which I thought was a great loss, the Scripps library became the Hecker home over here (EM Uh huh) the Freer, the Palmers that I've spoken of

ITEM #3

EM Do you remember uhm how you learned about the Freer collection, that's a fascinating story?

TJ Well, it's a fairly well-known story, and to me a very bitter one.

EM Yes

ITEM #4

TJ Because we had had the Young Men's Society which built the early Art Institute down on the East Jefferson corner (EM Uh huh) and I grew up as a child going in to see the old Japanese Wrestlers which ah (EM Hmm) was a sort of famous thing and I'm sure that Mr. Woods has now hidden it (EM Uh huh) in the darkest corner of the Art Institute. But ah the point I'm trying to make is, in this quiet village even today the village thing holds on, ah the old families of great wealth play it down (EM Uh huh) you've seen this I'm sure. (EM Uh huh) There's a good deal of the nouveau riche flashing about, and ah these people still live very quietly and joyously (EM Uh huh) and ah it was my good fortune to know many of them as a child and to uhm often accidentally in curious ways to cherish them. At the other end of the scale, when I was a youngster, in this location it was then called Greenfield, it wasn't even part of Detroit there at Euclid and LaSalle Boulevard, and I went to a little one room country school at what is now Joy Road and Linwood, and it was a mud road with great ditches on both sides and I remember being chased by a mad bull and [EM gasps] saving my life because I had the sense to go from telephone pole to er yes telephone pole to telephone pole and he couldn't get up the ditch fast enough to catch me. (EM Hmm) And also a wolf that followed my father and me down in that area in a bad winter, a hungry timber wolf (EM Hmm) and ah I have picked up Indian arrowheads through that whole area. And in this little country school I was amused as I was cleaning out my files the other day, preparatory to going away, (EM Hmm) to come across my report card from the first to the second grade, and there was a ninety-five to my amazement in arithmetic [EM laughs] an eighty-five in orthography, and a seventy-five in conduct [EM laughs] and



I'm still puzzled to know [laughs, and EM continues laughing] what caused that. But a [EM laughs] tremendous debate occurred in this little one room school. Father was on the school board (EM Uh huh) whether these farmers would buy a dictionary and Father was all for the purchase of the best and biggest dictionary that could (EM Uh huh) be bought and they didn't think it was necessary. That was pretty fluttery and flousy (EM Uh huh) and in those days the roads were cared for because each man in the district was required to give three or four days a year of his time ta to ah level the roads and to work on them. (EM Uh huh) Father took his turn with the rest. You either did it or hired somebody. (EM Uh huh) And in this curious little country atmosphere as I say, I picked up Indian arrowheads, all through there, grew up with wild flowers and strawberries and ah as a child alone, reading enormously (EM Uh huh) and ah growing up "born free" I might use that phrase on myself, and with a curious egalitarian spirit. (EM Hmm) Ah, if our friends had a new carpeting, generally we did, and if we (EM Uh huh) didn't they didn't, and ah those who had a great deal more money didn't flourish it around (EM Uh huh) particularly. And ah there was a great deal of help, a great deal of interest in the beauty of the place, and it was a lovely, lush, rich (EM Uh huh) farm land area. (EM Uh huh) And ah a considerable interest in the churches (EM Uh huh) which everyone supported, not only in money, but in kind. I know Mother baked magnificent angel foods, we didn't have any money (EM Uh huh), but anything that we sent to the church a twelve-egg angel food, never cost anything. (EM Hmm) It was for the church and somehow (EM Uh huh) it never cost anything. And the whole church groups were built by these bake sales (EM Uh huh) and ah the women gave generously of their time. (EM Uh huh) I think of that little schoolhouse and the magnificent training that I received from Mr. and Mrs. Warner, I have never forgotten their names all these years. When I came then to the Detroit schools, I was promoted two grades, because of my reading and spelling, even though my conduct might not have been [unintelligible]

EM [laughing, overlapping] Was only seventy-five

TJ Was so far ahead of my time [EM still laughing] And they taught us by the old phonic method and ah (EM Uh huh) by little letters in little cloths [?] and with a slate and a sponge which we spat on and (EM Uh huh) in most unsanitary fashion and prepared to write on again. And to this day my spine cringes as I think of the sound of a (EM Hmm) slate lead pencil on a slate (EM Ah) which was a common sound. Not too many years before I retired, a student writing on the blackboard scratched a fingernail (EM Uh huh) on the blackboard and as my hair rose on the back of my head, this sight of the little old schoolhouse ah came to mind.

ITEM #5

EM You mentioned finding arrowheads.

TJ Yes

EM I've heard something and I I have no specifics on it at all about

an Indian burial ground in the Detroit vicinity. Do you know anything about it

TJ [overlapping] Oh there are several

EM Are there?

TJ of them, and ah, I think Dr. Pilling could identify those for you (EM Oh) because I think he has excavated some (EM Uh huh) but ah I have I was looking at my desk at home the other day, a rather nicely pointed flecked Indian arrowhead that I picked up just outside of that schoolhouse (EM Uh huh) and ah we must remember that this area was so heavy and thick with trees that some of the early journals indicate how the Indians came down to the River to get sunlight (EM Hum) and we see out near Farmington and ah beyond Redford, those (EM Uh huh) eroded clay lands, it's very much too bad. (EM Uh huh) And particularly rich in black walnut (EM Uh huh) and you will find uhm as I think I saw one in Detroit the other day, one of the early black walnut houses ah that won't take paint and it looks run down because it's gray (EM Hmm) this lovely (EM Uh huh) silken gray. Because as I say, the ah oil prohibits the taking (EM Uh huh) of paint. But one of the delights of Detroit [TJ sniffles] was the little cottage type of house, now pretty well gone, there may be some still standing around Myrtle and Fourteenth, Ash, Spruce (EM Uh huh) and there's some on the east side, east of Chene, near ah Sophie Wright Franklin Settlement in through there. And these were very common for the average and more than average people, with a bay window, no basement, lace curtains, and ah generally one bath (EM Uh huh) and ah at Christmas time, with the snow on the ground, real Christmas trees, real candles, in the curtained windows, trimmed with uhm popcorn (EM Hmm) and cranberries and apples, and the carved wooden figures, and to ride in our cutter, with a good horse and silver sleigh bells on a moonlight Christmas Eve past those little cottages was as near heaven as I ever want to get. (EM Hmm) The one dread was to get home before Santa Claus did, [EM laughs] that pushed the horse many times. But the lodges in Detroit, I think this is a thing that you might like to start somebody on (EM Hmm) ah the history of the Masons in Detroit, I think this has been (EM Oh) partly written up, the history of the Oddfellows, (EM Uh huh) or the Woodmen of American (EM Uh huh) ah I think some of these records must be in uh the Burton Historical (EM [overlapping] Collection) if not in Ann Arbor in the Labadie Collections.

ITEM #6

EM What is that? You, I've never been (TJ The Labadie) I've never seen the Labadie. Is it labor, is it a labor collection [garbled, TJ also talking at the same time].

TJ It's in the upper floors of the ah library, the central library (EM Hmm) the University of Michigan, a magnificent collection of labor materials (EM Uh huh) and with our own uh Labor Archives here, one of the great collections of the world. (EM Uh huh) And nobody has investigated the folk items of that Labadie [EM coughs] Collection (EM Really?) and there are tons of material up there.

(EM Hmm) I made a small exploration here and (EM Uh huh) my little article on "the boss" that I did at Boston (EM Hmm) for AFS [American Folklore Society] it's just to (EM Uh huh) call public attention to what we have (EM Uh huh) up there. But the um

EM Did you publish the paper on "the boss"?

TJ No, I haven't, (EM Oh) I've got to do this when I come back.

EM That's too bad. I'm looking for one of yours right now (TJ Which) and I don't know if I'll ever be able to find it

TJ Which one is this?

EM The one you did on urban folklore and Ur-types

[Discussion continues. Says it's been printed in Germany. TJ says that she will loan me a copy of the article. It was published in the proceedings in Kiel.]

ITEM #7

[TJ goes on to discuss architecture, that it should be studied in Detroit. Much was destroyed in the Lafayette area last summer. There were fine cottages in the area around St. Paul's Cathedral.]

TJ And it was a desecration as bad as the swinging ball has been in many cases (EM Hmm) Not much of that had been rescued.

ITEM #8

EM You said that that old stove that's now at the Fairgrounds (TJ Uh huh) was at at the entrance (TJ Yes) to Belle Isle. (TJ Yes) What was that from? I've never known [TJ Next line overlapping] I've seen it at the Fairgrounds all the time

TJ From the Michigan Stove Works. Well it was ah, it was an advertisement for the Michigan Works, which was one of the great ah cooking stove ah things (EM Uh huh) I think it had another location a little farther west at one time (EM Hmm) but it uhm [brief pause] it was a great landmark and ah as well known and since it was put close to the approach to the Belle Isle bridge (EM Uh huh) the new Belle Isle bridge, the old wooden one burned of course

EM Was it in the same spot? The old wooden one?

TJ Ah not quite, ah I wouldn't know the exact thing (EM Uh huh) again in the Burton Historical you can get exact (EM Uh huh) specifics on that. But it burned ah, and one of my childhood memories is the horror of that fire (EM Oh) and ah the building of the new one, but ah, these are just some of the memories and if (EM Hmm) you want to talk more another night we can before we ah

EM Could I (TJ Sure) ask you (TJ Sure) just a few more questions (TJ Sure) uhm do you remember how you learned about the Belle Isle name? Did you

TJ My father told me that.

- EM Did he tell you?
- TJ Uh huh
- ITEM #9
- EM Was he a a native Detroiter? You say he was
- TJ [overlapping] No, he was born in Perth, Ontario (EM Oh) in Canada, n' naturalized. (EM Uh huh) My mother was born in Dearborn. And ah
- EM Oh, so you your family goes quite a ways (TJ Uh huh) yeah, (TJ Yes) really rooted in Detroit
- TJ Yes
- EM D' Was your father very old when he came here?
- TJ Father was a young man of nineteen when he came (EM Hmm) and ah didn't see much ah opportunity in Canada (EM Uh huh) And of course he came out of a totally contained farming unit there. (EM Uh huh) I remember he was telling me they was no, they were Methodist, there was no work done on Sundays at all (EM Uh huh) so everything was done on Saturdays, and that there was nothing imported onto their farm, except salt, [brief pause] baking powder, soda. (EM Hmm) They raised all their grain, hides (EM Uh huh) so on. And ah once a year the bootmaker came, and once or twice a year the dressmaker and the tailor came.
- EM That's incredible.
- TJ And they were completely, almost completely, self-contained. And one of the things that he used to lament was the weekly trip to the grocery store [EM chuckles] which was a delightful experience, ah we might end with this ah taking our horse and buggy and on a Saturday night, going down to the Campus Martius, which is the place now between the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument (EM Hmm) and the Old County Building. (EM Uh huh) This was lined with butcher shops, stalls, (EM Uh huh) for fruit of all sorts, and ah everyone went down there on Saturday night (EM Uh huh) and ah all your friends. And Father never understood this, and it was a matter of some debate. He loved to meet his friends, but he couldn't understand why anybody ever had to go (EM Uh huh) to the grocery store (EM Uh huh) because his mother never had. [EM laughs] And ah his father wouldn't have tolerated it, he said. (EM Uh huh) And I remember the difference in the speed, the reluctance with which Tap [?] that was my horse, usually attached to the carriage (EM Uh huh) went down, but the fleetness with which he came scampering home, (EM Hmm) because at the end he always had two apples (EM Uh huh) and he remembered that. And ah was uhm a temperamental little handsome beast (EM Uh huh) And those ah Saturday night shoppings are pretty well typified ah by the village spirit again (EM Uh huh) of everybody going down on a Saturday night. And I never saw any roughness, (EM Uh huh) I saw rough characters, but perhaps this little incident [laughs] will typify. At one time we bought a little fat hen, alive, as you did in those days (EM Uh huh) feathers and all, very much alive, came later to be known as

Biddy [EM laughs] she was to be consumed on Sunday for dinner (EM Oh) but on the way home on Saturday night she laid an egg on my mother's best coat. [EM laughs] And ah nobody in our household could do away with little Biddy, [EM chuckling] and she lived to a very ancient and honorable age. [EM laughs] She died of natural causes and ruled the henyard for I think three or four years. (EM Oh, no, [laughs]) So I often remember that what we had that next day was ah bacon and eggs [EM laughs] and bread and milk while little Biddy safely strutted down in the barnyard (EM Oh) And this was rather typical of the gentleness of the village (EM Uh huh) people.

ITEM #10

[Data on father's and mother's parents. See Form B  
 Father's parents were Canadian-English; mother's were English-Swiss. TJ's maternal grandfather was born in Bern, Switzerland, a woodcarver for the Popes in Italy. His brothers were "giants," guards to the Pope. He was a Quaker. Left Bern with his wife to escape military service. His wife, TGJ's grandmother, was nineteen, and expecting a child. Grandfather spoke seven languages, but none of them were English. His wife died at sea in childbirth. His name was Indermulle. They had a large family, gives details of her grandfather's remarriage and family composition. Her grandmother died, but she says she has memories of her grandfather.]

ITEM #11

TJ But ah it was very interesting when the banks closed in the thirties.

EM Oh, yes.

TJ That depression is a story of terror because it began in Detroit and it I lost everything (EM It did?) I had and my family did too in it. Yes, it began with the closing of the Detroit banks [? unintelligible].

[Says she had grown up with those banks.]

End of Tape I, Side 2

Tape II, Side 1

[Tape test.]

ITEM #1

EM Now, you were telling me about the nineteen-thirties and the oh banks shutting down

TJ In relation to my grandfather it was very interesting, as the old papers of the bank began to be produced (EM Uh huh) at the Old ah People's Home in Wayne County at the corner of Michigan and Griswold, which had been a fine old bank, through the years. They called me one day and said that they had come across a paper that they thought might be of interest to me, (EM Uh huh) and they showed me a request for a loan of five thousand dollars, which my grandfather had made back around eighteen-fifty, and why in the world he wanted that sum of money I don't know. (EM Hmm) But it interested me that the paper said in effect, that Friedrich

Indermülle, a Quaker, wishing to borrow the said sum of money, and by his belief, not answering [?] to get any paper, none was required, and the money was given to him. And attached to it was another paper, that within three months the same Friedrich Indermülle, having kept his word and bond, the debt was paid, and all obligations cancelled. No papers having been given, signed or exchanged.

(EM Uh huh) And I was very proud of this and (EM Sure) wondered how I would fare today if I went down to take [EM gasps] what would be I suppose a fifty thousand dollar [chuckles] loan with no ah papers given or exchanged.

EM That's incredible.

TJ And ah it was, it's been a matter of considerable interest (EM Uh huh) and pride, and as I say I'd still like to know how and why he ah (EM Hmm) got this because at one time he seems to have owned the land where the present ah Federal Building stands (EM Uh huh) and the land where the present ah still remaining County Building from the across the street from the [EM chuckles] Union Guardian stands. I wish he still owned it (EM Uh huh) ah it'd be pretty priceless today. But uh these ah ah memories of the early part of Detroit I'll continue another time for you, Liz

ITEM #2

[TJ suggests that the interview be terminated due to the hour, going on eight. EM asks for information for collector's forms. (See forms) TJ remarks that it would give her mother horrors if she were to drive her by where she used to live -- Putnam and 12th Street -- "What had once been a beautiful old neighborhood... lined with elm trees, inhabited by doctors and so on." Says her mother's family lived in Dearborn, near where Henry Ford lived. They used to entertain themselves by getting into potato bags and rolling down the banks of the Rouge River to see how close they could come to the edge of it. Her maternal grandparents came to Detroit, and her grandfather owned a grocery store at Grand River and Sixteenth in about 1885. She said, "They used to come down by ox team from Greenville to the Eight Mile and Grand River Botsford Inn to dance. And it would take two days down and two days back and they danced until they wore out a pair of shoes." She said her mother was amazed at what Henry Ford did with Botsford Inn. TJ responded that she doesn't know much about Henry Ford, but Mrs. Hicks does. She gives a little background on Mrs. Hicks's family, whose grandmother came down from Lyons, New York the day the Erie Canal opened. She says Mrs. Hicks's uncle built the old Arsenal in Dearborn.]

EM They would like information on where you learned these things and how you learned them, and you said that your father told you some of it

TJ [overlapping] My father and mother much of it and through my own experience (EM Uh huh) living (EM Uh huh) with it (EM in the City) and since I was an only child and in those days better than my seventy-five percent conduct item indicated (EM Uh huh) I was taken everywhere [EM chuckles] because (EM Uh huh) I grew up with adults much more than children. (EM Oh) and so ah was taught to

be very observant (EM Uh huh) and I can see that as I look at it now.

EM Was there any ah kind of local history ever taught in the schools? Do you remember that?

TJ Not much local history (EM Uh huh) not too much.

EM So your father (TJ Uh huh) and mother ah pretty much transmitted it.

TJ [overlapping] They were both very much interested. Uh huh.

EM They were interested in it themselves.

TJ Very much, uh huh.

EM I see.

TJ One of my father's hobbies was maps (EM Uh huh) and ah fine horses, and so on, and ah flowers and birds.

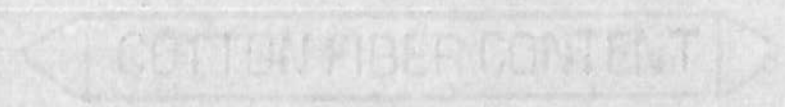
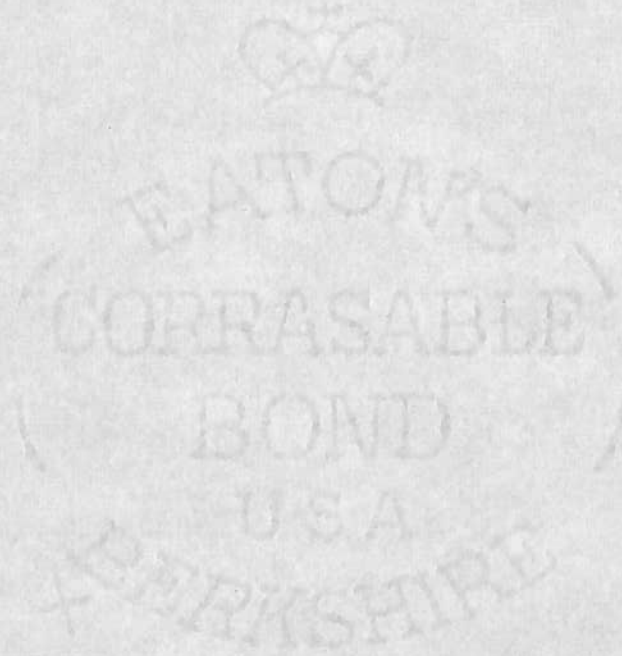
[Interview terminated.]

COTTON FIBER CONTENT

APPENDIX VI: WCH

CONTENTS

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## FORM B

Personal History of Informant

STATE Michigan

247

NAME OF COLLECTOR Elizabeth A. Meese

ADDRESS

DATE Spring 1968

SUBJECT Detroit Local Place Legends

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT

1. Ancestry: English
  2. Place and date of birth: 12 April 1921; Grayling, Michigan
  3. Family: Married - wife, Mildred; one child Ann, 10 years old.  
Father (William) and Mother (Daisy Spooner) are both dead
  4. Places lived in, with dates:  
Grayling - c.9 months - 1921  
Detroit until 1941 - Lived in a number of homes (Baltimore, Curtis, Outer Drive) East Lansing, at MSU Detroit, Hamtramck,
  5. Education, with dates: [Highland Park  
BA - Michigan State University 1946-1950; M.A. Wayne State University - 1965; PhD in English, Wayne State University - 1967
  6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates:  
Served in Army 1941-1946. WH says there are too many companies to list: Square D Electric, 7 mo.; Rickel Malt, 5 yrs.; 1 yr. slate (cont.)
  7. Special skills and interests:  
Baseball, painting, sculpturing, guitar, piano, bridge, and golf.
  8. Community and religious activities:  
Family was Roman Catholic; WH has no religious affiliation.  
WH has been quite active in the Democratic Party in Michigan.
  9. Description of informant:  
The informant has a unique appearance in that he has an unusual reddish, thin beard and thinning, closely shaved hair. He is of (cont.)
  10. Other points gained in interview:  
The informant;s normal manner is abrupt and direct. He initially seems quite aloof, but is really a warm person.
6. (cont.) company; played professional baseball for two summers; taught in three school systems.
  9. (cont.) medium height and good build. He has a nervous habit of wrinkling his nose and blinking his eyes.

## COLLECTOR'S LOG - WCH

I have been in classes with and a colleague of this informant for the past two and a half years. About three months ago I approached him regarding the possibility of interviewing him for this study. He had been boasting about knowing more about Detroit politics than another colleague. He was quite receptive to the idea of being interviewed. I said I would contact him in the spring quarter.

17 April 1968

I discussed the interview again with WH. I explained that the project required two, one-hour interviews. He was still willing to be interviewed. I asked if he considered himself a native Detroiter; he said that he did, as much as he considered himself a "native anything." He suggested that I ask him questions rather than just asking him to talk. He said he was not very good at just talking. I said that I had questions I could ask him.

I arranged to interview him in his office on April 29, 1968, at 2:30 p.m.

29 April 1968 - Report of an Interview

The interview took place in the informant's office at 2:00 p.m. WH helped arrange space for the equipment. The office is a small room filled beyond its capacity. It is located on the fourth floor of State Hall. The informant sat at his desk and I sat about four feet from him.

The interview went quite smoothly, though definitely suffered from a lack of focus. WH is generally direct and challenging, but possibly more so on this occasion, due to my inability to make my intentions clear. WH evidenced little nervousness and seemed to respond honestly and willingly; he did not generally initiate, however. I would say that he viewed himself as little more than a participant in a student's project. He was obviously attempting to cooperate.

9 May 1968 - Report of Correspondence

I left a note inquiring as to the possibility of having a second interview on May 15. WH responded that he taught at Highland Park on Wednesdays, but that any other day after 1:00 p.m. would be all right.

14 May 1968 - Report of a Conversation

I saw WH in the faculty lounge and asked if it would be possible to interview him on the afternoon of May 17. WH said that that would not be possible because he planned to go to Muskegon for the weekend.

17 May 1968 - Report of a Conversation

Again I saw WH in the faculty lounge. WH said that he hoped I did not think he was lying to me about the interview for today, but that his plans had been changed and the family had been unable to go away for the weekend.

23 May 1968 - Report of a Conversation

I saw WH in the corridor in State Hall and asked if I could see him for about an hour on the following day. He agreed and an appointment was made for 2:30 in the afternoon.

24 May 1968 - Report of an Interview

(See 29 April for a description of WH's office.)

Since the initial interview on 29 April, daily interactions with the informant seemed, with the exception of 17 May, to be much less formal and more open.

The interview again seemed to indicate a failure on my part to make my intentions clear. It is a possibility, which WH suggests indirectly himself, that the anxiety the informant is experiencing on leaving Detroit has some effect on his response to the subject of the interview.

Before the interview began, we spent about fifteen minutes discussing WH's new academic position in the Department of English at Central Michigan University (Mount Pleasant, Michigan). After the taped interview, the conversation continued for about twenty minutes. At this time, WH described some of the members of his boyhood gang, specifically two Albino boys who had none of the skills usually desired by this particular group. These boys, however, were definitely looked after and sought by the other "in-members." I remarked that the situation seemed unusual, but WH replied that anybody who was a freak was "in." Those shut out were pathetic, especially because of the reason for which they had been ostracized. Here WH seemed to imply that the group's judgement was a valid one. Upon rejection, the undesirable traits seemed more apparent. WH explained that self-pity was one of the most despised traits. In addition, it was extremely bad if a boy's parents placed demands on him, in terms of hours and roaming.

I asked if there were stories told by members of the group. WH said not really. He said that there were some stories that clustered around several older members of the community -- an old lady in black who carried a shopping basket, and an old man who managed to drink his paycheck before he got to the edge of the community -- but even so these were not too significant.

WH felt that my analogy to a gang in the country in describing his group and environment, was an appropriate one. He said that he thought that parents did not worry because of the rural physical environment.

The conversation soon lapsed into casual conversation and drew to a natural, comfortable conclusion.

TAPE INDEX - WCH-1 [Side 1] - Detroit Local Place Legends

256

WSUFA accession number:

Recorded: 29 April 1968, 2:00 p.m.  
3 3/4 ips, mono

Elizabeth A. Meese interviewing  
Wayne State University, Detroit 2, Michigan

Situation: The interview took place in the informant's office. No other persons were present. Periodically, students and colleagues can be heard talking. The informant's swivel chair squeaks throughout the interview.

TAPE I, SIDE 1

[Introductory procedure, dating, and testing]

ITEM

- #1 WH discusses the Belle Isle name
- #2 WH talks about the burning of the Belle Isle Bridge
- #3 Continuation of #1 - Belle Isle
- #4 WH comments on books written about Detroit and how uninteresting local history is
- #5 Continuation of #1, #3 - Belle Isle
- #6 WH talks about the Scott Fountain
- #7 WH discusses gambling in Detroit  
--the Reading administration
- #8 Continuation of #6 - Scott Fountain
- #9 Background Form Data on WH, including his situation during the depression
- #10 WH tells about the depression
- #11 WH discusses recreation during his childhood
- #12 WH talks about transportation, his own Model T
- #13 WH talks about Henry Ford, Harry Bennett, buying jobs at Ford
- #14 WH tells briefly about the families for whom Detroit buildings have been named  
--Ford, Buhl, Whitney, Stott, Penobscot

TAPE I, SIDE 1 (cont.)

251

ITEM

- #15 EM asks WH about sources of Detroit street names  
--Grand River, Beaubien
- #16 WH talks about Hazen Pingree
- #17 WH talks about the Michigan Stove
- #18 EM asks WH about other local places  
--Conners, Bloody Run Creek, Elmwood Cemetery, Corktown,  
Electric Park
- #19 WH talks about the transmission of Detroit material, and then  
discusses his views of Hamtramck
- #20 WH talks about the University
- #21 Continuation of #19, transmission with a digression about Tiger Stadium
- #22 WH talks about Detroit streets with military names
- #23 WH discusses his family background  
--Collector's Form Data

Collector's number WCH-1; WSUFA accession number

350

Recorded: 29 April 1968, p.m.

Elizabeth A. Meese interviewing  
, Wayne State University

Subject: Detroit Local Place Legends

Transcribed by Elizabeth A. Meese

TAPE I SIDE 1

[Introductory procedure, dating, testing the machine.]

ITEM #1

EM Do you know ah how Belle Isle got its name?

WH I don't know how it got its name; I know what its name used to be.

EM What'd its name used to be?

WH Ah, Pig Island, you know.

EM Pig Island?

WH Yeah. Because ah when the before the old wooden bridge was built which burned down, I mean like before I was born, (EM Uh huh) ah they used to keep thousands, apparently whoever owned the Island, there [?] the people who owned the Island used to keep lots and lots and lots of pigs over there. (EM Oh) And ah people used to take their garbage over and dump it, apparently, and the pigs would eat it up. That's, and I no I don't really, I don't know how it got its name [WH's chair creaks throughout interview] except that I know it was not named Belle Isle until after the first bridge was built, so many [?] people could get back and forth you know.

ITEM #2

[WH explains that he thinks the wooden bridge burned about nineteen-ten or nineteen-fifteen. There was no bridge then for four or five years, and then the current one was put up in about nineteen-twenty or nineteen-twenty-one. WH has no idea how the first bridge burned.]

ITEM #3

EM How did you know ah that Belle Isle was called Pig Island?

WH [sighs] Oh I don't know, I just everybody who's been here for a long time has heard of it one time or another you know it's called Pig Isle, (EM Uh huh)

EM Uh huh. Did anybody tell you?

WH Yeah, but I don't know who, (EM Uh) you know.

EM Did anybody in your family ever talk about it?

WH [sighs] No because Belle Isle was you know that that was another world entirely, where I got where (EM Oh, really?) I grew up was way out in the Northwest side of Detroit.

[WH explains that he went to Belle Isle four or five times in elementary school, for a sports contest. He thinks they stopped having the event because "they used to have a lot of fights over there." WH says he hasn't heard of Belle Isle having any other name; he asks EM if she has. EM says that she has heard it referred to as Snake Island. WH: "Yeah, seems to me, now that you mention it, I have heard that." WH doesn't know why. WH says that he's sure Horse Island is out of the question as a reference to Belle Isle.]

ITEM #4

[WH says that he has only "read snatches of one or two" books about Detroit, because "most of them the have ever been written are so bad." WH says that Malcolm Bingay's books are awful. He has read a little of George Stark's material. WH volunteers, "There's nothing as uninteresting as the history of your own town, you know."]

EM You don't find it interesting?

WH Not very, because it's ah -- well most of it you already know (EM Uh huh) in a general kind of way, and the stuff that you don't know is always about the the early people who had a lot of money, you know (EM Uh huh) [unintelligible] who cares anything about that? (EM Yeah) And so you read all about the Buhls and oh the Lodges and the whole (EM Uh huh) damn tribe of people that owned all the land before (EM Uh huh), you know.

[EM asks how you find out the history of your town if you don't read books. WH says, "Well I guess you really don't, except you know in fragments here and there from people who've lived here even a lot longer than I have." WH says that he doesn't really know much about the history "except in way, in this fragmentary kind of way."]

ITEM #5

EM Have you ever body, ever told anybody how Belle Isle eh had this other name?

WH I don't remember ever telling anybody. Nobody ever asked before. [WH and EM laugh]

[WH says that he has never heard why people called the island Belle Isle, although he is "sure that you know Stark or Bingay or one of these people mention it someplace in one of the books."]

ITEM #6

[WH says he hasn't heard anything about the Belle Isle bridge burning.

EM asks if WH has heard anything about monuments on the Island. WH asks for more specific direction. EM suggests the Jim Scott Fountain. WH says that he has heard about that. He explains that Scott was a gambler.]

WH Yeah, and ah, you know I've heard and this is ah [unintelligible] hypocryphal, but I heard that he gave the money for the fountain because he hated the City or for some reason he was angry and ah it ah he had the thing purposefully made as ugly as possible and he donated (EM Oh really?) yeah, and I'm very vague in my mind. I know Scott was a gambler, ah this I know. (EM Uh huh) One of the really big ah operators in Detroit, and ah apparently rejected by most of the Detroit society (EM Hmm) at the time. And this is apparently also one of the reasons that he had given the money to the City to build a fountain, or given it, I don't know who he gave the money to build the fountain you know. (EM Uh huh) It is a hideous thing.

[WH says that he doesn't know when Scott lived; the fountain has been there as long as WH can remember. He imagines that it was built in about 1924 or 1925, and that it was built "not too long after he died." WH tells briefly about Scott's gambling establishments.]

ITEM #7

[WH says that there were all kinds of gambling establishments in Detroit up until the Second World War. He says that people "just knew" about them. Northwood Inn was such a place. WH talks about the corruption of Mayor Richard Reading's administration. Reading was "one of the real spectacular mayors in the City of Detroit history." WH said that he had met him a number of times at the Twin Gables at Lindsay and Six Mile. Reading used to come in with his bodyguards. Shortly after that a one-man State Grand Jury sent Reading, his son, the Police Commissioner, and others to jail. WH describes Reading and his son: "Great huge men, eh you know, five-nine, ten, two-hundred and forty, fifty pounds, very impressive [EM laughs] real gangstery looking." WH says that the Twin Gables wasn't a gambling establishment. WH says that he has been in a few, however. WH doesn't know of any places in Detroit now for gambling, but adds, "I'm sure there might be." WH explains "I'm disengaged from that part of the world now."]

ITEM #8

EM Do you know how you heard about the Jim Scott Fountain? How that happened to be built and everything?

WH [sighs] No, this's another thing, you just you know, everybody sort of knew. At least ah

EM I had never heard of that before. (WH Yeah) I never heard about him. (WH No?) Uh uh.

WH Yeah, ah, in fact, eh it seems to me I heard it on the radio, Bud Guest, you know or one of these (EM Uh huh) kind of guys has mentioned it ah some in the last two or three years, it seems to me,



I've heard it (EM Uh huh) said or mentioned on the radio.

[WH says that he listens to Bud Guest once in a while.]

EM Have you ever told anybody about the Jim Scott Fountain?

WH I may have, I don't remember ever telling anybody, you know (EM Uh huh) that's ah...yeah, I guess I told my wife once or twice when we've been on the Island (EM Uh huh) and driving around, I mentioned it.

[WH explains that his wife is from New York.]

ITEM #9

[WH gives background information for Collector's Forms. When he lived in the Southfield-Six Mile area, WH says: "Oh, well we lived in about seven different houses, and during the depression we lived until the landlord would foreclose on us, or until we had to pay the ... [chuckles]." When WH moved out there, it was an area completely surrounded by farm land.]

ITEM #10

[WH says that he was born in 1921 and was about eight years old in 1929. He says that he really remembers the depression.]

EM What was it like...in Detroit?

WH [sighs] I I it's kind of hard to say, I you know, my recollection of it is ah is not a harsh one (EM Uh huh) because everybody that lived in our neighborhood, almost without exception, was in the same spot that we were. (EM Hmm) We were on welfare for like seven years you know, it's a little longer than average but most of the other people were on and off and ah so like you [unintelligible] you know it was a kind of, everybody knew everybody (EM Uh huh) and there was a lot of business of four or five families that'd have dinners er dinner together whatever you could scrape up (EM Uh huh) and kind of stuff. Ah so, you know, nobody had any clothes, and all the kids in our neighborhood, you know, used to you'd take your shoes off on ah the first of April and you didn't wear shoes again until the first of October because you couldn't stand it anymore (EM Uh huh) because you got one pair of shoes every three years or (EM Uh huh) two years [unintelligible] (EM Uh huh) ah you know, everybody was ragged, and ah that's about all, you know really that's the oth.. the bad memory of it is that I can remember, you know, my father and his what in general happened to him because of it was a pretty terrible thing (EM Uh huh) but ah as far as my own personal welfare was concerned, you really didn't bother it that much I mean not any of the other kids around..ah you know, you know there was lots to do, you didn't need any money. (EM Uh huh) I think nineteen thirty-two or three they started paving Outer Drive and they dug way down so there was a big, big river there for about three years (EM Oh yeah?) after they quit, they stopped building it after while and it was down in the ground twenty or thirty feet, er twenty feet and it

filled up with water, so you could swim in it (EM Uh huh) and skate on it in the wintertime. And when they pumped it out they had little railroad trains running up and down the thing that carried sand and gravel and this sort of thing and (EM Uh huh) and we'd ride around in that.

[WH says that one child was run over by the train, which cut off his foot.]

ITEM #11

[WH says that during his childhood recreation was a private thing. WH says that, for example, he learned to swim in the water tower at Greenfield and Eight Mile Road. They used to swim in a pond that existed before the City dump came along, but the dump finally covered it over. Then they started swimming in the water tower. They would enter through the big steel door at the top and swim around inside in the dark. They never had the money to take the excursion boats on the River, except perhaps once to Tashmoo Park. WH says that Tashmoo was more exciting than Bob-Lo; he also says that he thinks they went to Put-In-Bay once.]

ITEM #12

[WH says that at age thirteen a friend and he bought a Model T Ford for five dollars. They would work on it all week "in order for it to run one day." He said there were no horses and buggies around, except perhaps "in the center of the City," but there were many horse-drawn commercial vehicles.]

ITEM #13

[WH says that he has heard people tell stories about Henry Ford, but he "really can't remember any of them."]

WH I know that, you know, that Ford and the Ford Motor Car Company is ah was ah an ever-ready topic of conversation from the time I was about fourteen until, well until I went in the Army, because ah at that time, you know, at the tail end of the depression, one of the big things for any kid, especially where I lived, was to be able to get into Ford Trade School. (EM Hmm) And so there used to be all kinds of ah sort of half-rumors about what one had to do to get into Ford Trade School you know "You have to know somebody there" or your father had to work there (EM Uh huh) which I suppose it was probably true. I think if your father worked there you could get in easily (EM Uh huh) but Ford Trade School was about, you know, the nineteen-thirty-five equivalent of being able to go to the university now, in my neighborhood (EM Uh huh) they [?] hardly ever went to college anyway. (EM Uh huh) Ah [clears throat] and then there were a lot of stories round about Bennett who was you know, employed ah, the ah Ford's bodyguard. Harry Bennett.

[WH says that Bennett was just some tough guy "Ford had picked up." He ran Ford's security division.]

WH But again you know the, Ford ah, this is a thing so distant from most people in Detroit (EM Uh huh) that you sort of made up things (EM Uh huh) about, you know, ah

EM What, like what did they make up about him?

WH Well I that I can't remember, it, you know, it's something that comes and goes, it (EM Uh huh) you hear it and forget it because it really doesn't, it it's only immediately important you know. (EM Uh huh) Ah you know there was always ah the business ah of buying a job at Ford, and apparently there was a good deal of foundation for this, that if you knew a foreman or somebody (EM Oh) you know in the thirties (EM Uh huh) if you ah for whatever number of dollars you could get a job, and the job would last for whatever length of time, you know.

[WH says that he never knew anyone that knew anything about the Ford family, so he hadn't heard anything about them, whereas the Company was "an immediate issue." WH says he worked there himself for about three days. He explains, "Well, that's all I could stand."]

ITEM #14

[WH says that he doesn't know much about the Buhl family, except that the Buhl Building was named for them. He doesn't know how they got their money. WH says, "Most, as a matter of fact, you know, most of the buildings down there, not most I suppose, but a great many of them are named after ah the old big families in Detroit, David Whitney Building, for example, (EM Uh huh) Buhl Building, ah the David Stott Building." WH explains that the Ford Building was not named after Henry Ford; it is named after "the old Ford family," William B. Ford. They were the big social family. WH says: "Old Henry, of course, was never accepted socially, and Edsel, just barely." These two Ford families were not related until a later intermarriage. WH says that the Penobscot Building gets its name from the Penobscot Indians.]

EM How'd you know about uhm how these buildings got their names?

WH Well again, you know, the the families were still, like when I was twelve, fifteen and then and saw the buildings, heard the names, the families were still around, and still important enough so that the association was very easy to make.

[WH says that the Whitney family used to race horses here at the Detroit Race Track; they were known throughout the United States for horse-racing. WH used to skip school to go to the race track. The William B. Ford family is still quite important in Detroit. These families were not talked about among the people that WH knew.]

WH In fact, in retrospect I can I'm sure that I, you know, these little things that I do know about them, which is very limited, I learned later (EM Uh huh) ah except the Whitney family (EM Uh huh) and ah some of those.

EM Ford?

WH Yeah, Ford, I know I know about that later, because it has come up, oh I can recall it coming up in a sociology class at one time, and somebody pointing out, that ah you know, that the hierarchy, social hierarchy in Detroit it depended [?] (EM Huh) if you wanted something done, ah fund drive or something like this, the first place to would be to go to William Ford, and if he okayed it then it was a a a thing as good (EM Ah) as done (EM Uh huh) if he didn't you might as well not bother, you know.

[WH says that the Henry Ford family was never in the social pages of the paper. Henry and Edsel never really made it "because ah, you know you know that's sort of a Johnny-come-lately family as far as money, big money in Detroit's concerned, there were a lot of other families that were much much older." WH cites the Hecker family as one of the older ones.]

ITEM #15

[WH says he doesn't know how Grand River got its name. Beaubien, WH says, comes from the Beaubien farm "which fronted on the Detroit River, and the street got its name from the farm because it ran originally I guess from the northern edge of the farm out, north or whatever, you know." WH says he only knows this, "not, you know, historically so to speak."]

WH Most of the French names, at least ah, in the inner part of the City, are the names of families of French French families who lived here originally. A lot of them are still around.

EM The original families?

WH Yeah. Well, as original, I suppose, as a family can be in Detroit. (EM Uh huh)

[WH names Gratiot, Beaubien, and Cadieux as examples. He says he has seen this in "Michigan histories or Detroit something about, you see them on maps, every once in a while you run across an old map of Detroit." He says that he used to work at the Rickel Malt Company, where he began to write a history of the company. Many of these things were mentioned in the material with which he was working at the time; most of the material, however, was only useful for the purpose of preparing the public relations material for the company. He says the only really historically interesting thing was that one of the family - Shiloh Rickel - was named after a Civil War battle.]

ITEM #16

EM Have you ever heard uhm anything about Pingree, Hazen Pingree?

WH [sighs] Well [?] I know about him? There's a statue of him some, downtown, that's about all I do know of him. He was I think a senator.

EM Was he a senator? I don't know.

WH Seems, yeah, it seems to me that he was senator. Eh and I'm not on

very s'...sure ground. Yeah, I'm almost positive (EM Uh huh) but eh I'm even more sure he was a mayor of Detroit at one time. (EM Hmm) You know, I'm not positive of either one but (EM Uh huh) I don't know much about him. Nothing, in fact.

[WH says he hasn't heard any stories about Pingree's statue either.]

ITEM #17

[WH says that the Michigan Stove came from the Chicago World's Fair or the St. Louis Fair in about the eighteen-nineties. It was put up at the Fair by the Michigan Stove Company. Then they brought it home and put it up at the entrance to the Belle Isle Bridge, where it remained for many years. WH says that it was not moved too long ago, when they widened the approach to the Bridge.]

ITEM #18

[WH says that he doesn't know how Connors got its name. When asked if he has ever heard of Bloody Run Creek, WH replies, "Heavens no!" He has been in Elmwood Cemetery and volunteers that Hamtramck is buried there. WH indicates that there has been some "altercation" over moving his body to Hamtramck. WH says that Corktown was so termed because for many years it was an "almost eh total Irish ah sort of ghetto, but not ghetto in the pejorative sense." He used to live near there. He doesn't know who named it and replies, "I think almost every city in the United States that has a big Irish population, the Irish center is called Corktown." WH says that he expects that the name probably comes from the Irish themselves. WH says "I know that when I was in high school we used to go down there on Saint Patrick's Day and roll oranges under the swinging doors of the saloons, you know." WH says that he recalls the name but can't really remember Electric Park; he associates it with a large amusement park, which he said used to be on Belle Isle. He says he remembers going to it; it was taken out in the late twenties or early thirties. He says it was probably located up-River on the opposite end of the Island from the Scott Fountain. He thinks that since Belle Isle was initially privately owned, that when the City acquired it they wanted to turn it into a park. He imagines that is part of the reason it was taken out.]

ITEM #19

EM If somebody asked you to tell them about Detroit, what what kind of stuff would you tell them? What what would you remember or think uhm might be interesting to somebody?

WH I, gee I don't know, you know, (EM Uh huh) as I say, my most of my life I really lived in ah ah so isolated from (EM Uh huh) most of what goes on in Detroit. You know the inner city though (EM Uh huh) the inner city when I was a kid was anything south of Six Mile (EM Uh huh) and east of Livernois. Ah so that my experiences eh were a very limited one ah only the kind of impressionistic thing you know eh, well for example I'd never been to Hamtramck until I was about nineteen or twenty years old, and ah (EM Uh huh) and Hamtramck

was is a kind of mythological place in itself if you're isolated (EM Uh huh) from it, you know.

EM Did people tell stories about Ham...Hamtramck (WH Oh yeah) or say stuff about it?

WH Yeah.

EM Like what?

WH Oh you know that it was a very tough place and was corrupt, which it was, I mean, common know... (EM [laughs] It was?) Oh yeah, heavens yes. Yeah, the number of public officials that went to jail from Hamtramck is legionary, you know. In fact I know two or three ah. [EM laughs] Ah and you know, everything was to somebody who did not live in Hamtramck was all exaggerated (EM Uh huh) all out of proportion, you know, because, you know, it was, my first trip into Hamtramck with a couple of friends of mine in a car was almost a terrifying experience, you know, because ah the thing had become so built up, (EM Uh huh) the legend had become so great that ah I was almost afraid to drive down the street, and of course it's ah, you know, it's just a place like any other place, ah but it had a considerable reputation in the thirties and right up until the Second World War, part of which, I'm sure was earned.

[WH explains that the Bowery Cafe was owned by Frankie Barbaro [sp?] where wild things were brought in all the time, such as the beef trust, a chorus line of women weighing about three hundred pounds. There were a number of gambling establishments and blind pigs there. Much of his information comes from a 14th District Congressman who grew up there and is a friend of WH. WH says, "All, all the police officials are working for the bars, and they used, they still do, no they don't, overtly at least, but eh not too distant future, most of the police who had extra jobs had jobs as bartenders, you know."]

EM How did he happen to tell you all about it?

WH Oh I don't know, it just, you know, we used to be very friendly, I use', still friendly, I don't see him very often ah, and (EM Hmm) you know, you live there, it's just a nice place to live you know, you can you go out on Saturday and do your shopping and it's you still have a bit of that old time business where you go to the baker and the butcher and the sausage place (EM Uh huh) and it's nice. And it smells great on Saturday on a warm day, you know (EM Yeah) Hamtramck.

ITEM #20

[WH says that people didn't say anything about the inner city when he was a child; there was "no contact." He says his memory about living there is "naturally kind of garbled." WH says he had an uncle who ran a blind pig. He stayed with him on occasion. The blind pig was near the Paradise Cafe where old time jazz bands used to play. Outside of this he says he doesn't know anything about Detroit, "except in a fragmentary way, you know, I don't know enough about it to put it together in a logical sequence."]

## ITEM #21

EM Did you ever [clears throat] can you remember ever having to show anyone around Detroit, like your wife, for instance, when she came here?

WH Oh yeah.

EM What kind of stuff did you show them? Or tell them about?

WH I don't remember. We just drove around, you know, and then she'd ask me a question, I'd answer, (EM Uh huh) but I don't remember the kind of questions she'd ask ah. Oh I I, you know, recall driving her around in some of the ah the more miserable parts of the City so that she (EM Uh huh) I don't know for what reason, I suppose it was kind of a lesson of some kind but ah [EM laughs] and ah [clock chimes] oh you know the natural kind of thing you do. You drive out Jefferson Avenue, you know, Lake Shore Drive, and you point out these homes, and these great, huge, monstrous things that were way back in the trees sort of (EM Uh huh) Chicago and Boule...Chicago Boulevard and Boston Boulevard, and these I have recollections of [EM clears throat] ah from childhood, of driving down there with somebody I knew who who owned a car (EM Uh huh) at the Christmas season, because that used to be the place in the City where they had these extravagant (EM Ah) displays, you know, and the big homes with (EM Uh huh) where the where then the very wealthy people lived, on Chicago (EM Yeah) and Boston, but you know that was going into a different world all together, it was just no contact whatsoever.

[EM asks if WH has taken his children around. WH says he has one child and she has been around the City and can recognize where she is. WH says: "But I don't I don't think I've ever uhm really narrated anything about the City, [unintelligible] I point out this and that and sort of that kind of thing, 'cause ah well she's only ten now, and we haven't done it for a couple of years." WH says that generally she asks, and it is on these kinds of occasions he talks about the City. WH constructs an example of driving by Tiger Stadium, explaining to her that it was Briggs Stadium, before that Navin Field, and initially Bennett Park. WH gives some background on Briggs Stadium. He explains: "It used to be the big thing, you know, a home run in in ah from the Stadium it would go into Cherry Street, but there is no more Cherry Street because the Stadium expanded [EM laughs]... and that used to be a kind of a thing, into Cherry Street meant that you hit the ball a long way, you know."]

## ITEM #22

[WH says that he doesn't know how Detroit's military streets got their names, "except that they're all together that's all I know -- Artillery, Infantry, Cavalry." WH volunteers that he even lived on one of them, Artillery. He says, "But I have no idea when they got their names, probably after the Civil War...or during the Civil War."]

## ITEM #23

[WH gives background information for Collector's Forms. He says that

he never knew his father's father, who was dead before WH was born. He does not know when his ancestors came to the United States from England; he thinks it was about one hundred and twenty-five or one hundred and forty years ago. He states: "As a matter of fact, I just found out from my own sister, about a y...this two weeks ago that the man I thought was my great-grandfather was not, on my mother's side. (EM Oh really?) Yeah, [EM laughs] ah a very strange kind of thing you know because she knows more about this than I do, but my, the man I thought was my great-grandfather had married my great-grandmother, but he was her second husband. Her first husband was my great-grandfather."]

EM Did anybody in your family ever talk about uhm you know like great-great grandfathers and grandmothers and

WH No, unfortunately, except for my father, most of my family, my mother died when she was thirty-two, I was twelve. (EM Uh huh) And so the things I picked up were from like visiting in Cheboygan where my great aunt still has a big farm, in Cheboygan County, and her memory is kind of failing so (EM Uh huh) and this is the kind of thing doesn't interest you until you get to be middle-aged (EM Uh huh) you don't care if you're a kid -- then then it's too late, you know (EM Yeah) because ah and so my aunt and she's got everybody confused, which confuses me, and she

[WH explains that last summer he learned of an aunt he never knew existed, saying "a very strange kind of a family." WH says that there were six or seven children in his mother's family. two of which "were adopted out of the family" when his mother's mother died. He didn't know about either of them until he was ten years old.]

[Collector's Form data.]

[Interview terminated.]





TAPE INDEX - WCH-1 [Side 2] - Detroit Local Place Legends

WSUFA accession number

Recorded: 24 May 1968  
7½ ips, mono

Elizabeth A. Meese interviewing William C. Hilton at 403 State Hall,  
Wayne State University, Detroit 2, Michigan

Situation: The interview took place in the informant's office. No other persons were present. The informant's swivel chair squeaked throughout the interview. Collector has a cold.

TAPE I, SIDE 2

[Initial feedback, mike placement changed; introductory procedure, dating and testing]

ITEM

- #1 EM describes the nature of her study and asks if WH learned much information about Detroit from his family
  - WH says he heard very little, but knows other things
  - not a close family
  - his family of procreation is closer
- #2 WH compares time spent with families of orientation and procreation
- #3 WH describes his peer group
  - activities engaged in
  - how the rest of the family spent their leisure time
  - role relationship in peer group
  - verbal abilities of the group
  - WH comments on their awareness of Detroit information
  - WH describes his boyhood world
  - popular group topics of conversation
  - points of entrance
- #4 WH describes conditions that were conducive to the formation of this peer group
- #5 WH evaluates his knowledge of Detroit
- #6 WH comments on his own transmission of Detroit material
- #7 WH tells about other people who know about Detroit
- #8 WH says he feels EM wants more information than he is able to give
  - WH relates weakness of EM's endeavor
- #9 WH mentions what he would show new residents
  - markets
  - salt mines
  - the waterworks

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TAPE I, SIDE 2 (cont.)

ITEM

#9 (cont.) --what he would show new residents

--Ford Motor Company

--Fisher Building

--Union Guardian Building

#10 WH comments on the relationship between family, peer group, and what he knows about the City

[End of Tape I, Side 2]

Collector's number WCH-1; WSUFA accession number

Recorded: 27 May 1968

Elizabeth A. Meese interviewing  
Wayne State University, Detroit 2, Michigan

Subject: Detroit Local Place Legends

Transcribed by Elizabeth A. Meese

TAPE I, SIDE 2

ITEM #1

[EM asks WH if he learned much about Detroit from his family. WH says that he learned very little, because they came to Detroit together. So his father didn't really know anything about Detroit. WH explains that he knows about his mother's origin because he has been to Cheboygan many times; he only knows where his father was born and where he lived. WH says that he did not have a close family; he is "fairly close" to his sister, and more distant from his brother "because he's so much younger." Of his family of procreation, WH says "Oh, why, yeah, we're this is a pretty close family."]

ITEM #2

EM Do you spend much time together?

WH Yeah, a lot of time

EM Now, did you, when you were a child, with your biological family?

WH Not much, you know (EM Hmm) you know, ah I lived in a neighborhood where the thing to do to get up in the morning at eight o'clock and then you went outside and you didn't come back until it was dark.

[WH says that his daughter spends time going places with them.]

ITEM #3

[WH says that he was a member of "a massive kind of peer group." There were about seventy-five or eighty boys within about a year of his age, living in his neighborhood, within about a ten or twelve block area. The group remained fairly constant from the time WH was seven until he was nineteen. The group fragmented into smaller groups in about the first or second year of high school, although interchange between the groups was still maintained. Ten or twelve members of one group served time in Jackson Prison. WH says that in terms of activities, they lived in "an enormous outdoor kind of world." They climbed trees, ran around in the woods, and made things. After about age eleven, the group changed to "internally organized" seasonal sports.]

EM What did your what did your uhm mother and father, and brother and sister do with their spare time?

WH [sighs] I don't ah you know I don't know as they really ever did anything to speak of I mean no...nothing noticeable (EM Uh huh) nothing that intruded on my own conscience (EM Uh huh) consciousness, I should say.

[When WH was seven, his sister was one, and his brother had not yet been born; WH explains that "the age difference precluded any kind of communication "until after they became adult. WH says that the awareness of role relationships within the peer group "was necessary to some kind of social survival."]

WH If you didn't know where the power lay (EM Uh huh) ah you know, pretty soon it made itself evident in a kind of an ostracism (EM Uh huh) ah yeah, there were you know, there were four or five of a kind of elite (EM Uh) [clears throat] generally based upon ah ability to play baseball and hockey and that sort of thing, (EM Ah) more than anything else, ah there certainly was no intellectual elite, I don't think [laughs]

[WH said that he fit in "about a third of the way from the top" because he could play baseball, though he was too small for football. He said that status was a seasonal thing; in baseball season he "was farther up the hierarchy" than in football season. He was not what could be called the leadership of the group. WH says that the society of boys was quite verbal, as was he. He doesn't think that any of the group knew more about Detroit than he did, "which wasn't really very much." He said that they all knew that LaSalle, then corrects himself, Cadillac, founded the City, although he supposes that they picked this up in school. He also remembers the Pontiac Rebellion, although cannot recall any details except that it was mentioned year after year in school.]

[WH says that they lived in a very isolated kind of world, "isolated from the City and isolated from all these academic concerns, using academic in a fairly narrow sense." He feels that this is the natural result of such an intensely, physically active situation. WH comments, "If you couldn't survive on this physical level, you just did not survive in this community at all." The ones without physical prowess "became the loners or the external people ah, and nobody ever communicated with them." WH says that they talked about sports, "whatever happened to be ah most immediate, of course." They talked about "things that kids talk about. Mostly teachers you hated." They talked about World War I, especially regarding teachers who had been in the War. WH observes, "And ah and in these conversations all these things get exaggerated, whatever you happened to be talking about." WH recalls a party given by an outsider; parties were unheard of and no one knew what to do. This caused the boy to be ostracized by the group. He had the physical ability, was allowed to play, but no one ever talked to him. Later, the access to an automobile became an additional point of entrance to the group.]

## ITEM #4

[WH says that he is not aware of the existence of such groups in the City today: there is "no condition like that."]

EM What conditions kind of made it happen?

WH Well, the density, first of all (EM Hmm) of kids of the same age which is a

EM Yeah that's wierd

WH a really coincidental kind of thing (EM Uh huh) ah and the the enormous amount of room that one could get out and roam around in, you know (EM Uh huh) and ah be felt. Ah where there are houses, you know, it's it's there's there's more formality. A house in a neighborhood sets up its own formality.

[WH said that he had never heard of knocking on doors or calling; kids just walked in.]

## ITEM #5

EM Do you think that that you know uhm more about the City than a lot of people do?

WH [sighs] Yeah, but not on almost not at an articulatable level. It's it's an intuitive thing (EM Uh huh) like ah why it I it's , you know, you talk about the soul of the City, and if you live here as long as I have it really has one, in a sense (EM Yeah) I mean you know about it and communicate with it ah in this respect certainly I know, you know, a great deal more than (EM Uh huh) anyone.

EM Uh huh. Have you ever tried to to express what that kind of essence is that you that you feel here?

WH No, you know, because nobody, it's never been an issue before. I never (EM Yeah) I've never thought five minutes about it. It, well, in a way, I have thought about it recently because I've been going to have to move away, ah but it's a, at the moment is only it's a kind of an anxiety producing thing, which does not admit of any (EM Uh huh) ah introspection at all, you know. (EM Yeah) Ah, you know, that part of it is simply the having been here and having remembered all these things which have taken place and (EM Hmm) over a very long period of time. You know, there are very, for one thing, there are there's almost no place I can drive in the City of Detroit without all kinds of associations, you know (EM Uh huh) ah [clears throat] you know, in the natural course of events you meet girls and all and (EM Uh huh) some of them lived over here and some of them lived over here and these associations are called back and friends you knew, (EM Sure) people that have died and all that's nobody's business, you know, (EM Uh huh) and I suppose it's these kind of associations, if you get right down to it, that make the City what it is for anybody who lives here a long time with it.

## ITEM #6

[WH says that he "occasionally" talks about the City. He states that he never does so "spontaneously, it only comes up as a matter, you know, eh..."]

## ITEM #7

[WH says that he does not know anyone personally who knows as much about the City as he does. He says he knows about people like George Stark, who have known, "people whose business it was to know." WH says that "one of the unfortunate things" that has happened to him is that he no longer lives in the world of those people he once knew. WH comments that whole blocks of his life have completely ended: "I have no associations, absolutely none, with anybody that I knew before I was nineteen years old." WH says that such a thing doesn't bother one until he reaches middle age.]

## ITEM #8

[WH says that he feels helpless because he senses that EM is looking for information the he is "really not able to give." EM explains that she doesn't really care about historical fact, but rather is interested in how people feel about the City, what they've heard and feel is valuable enough to communicate to other people.]

WH Yeah well that ah I think one of the weaknesses here is that Detroit is somehow not one of these kinds of cities, like if one grows up in New York (EM Uh huh) there are all kinds of things that you can tell an outsider (EM Uh huh) ah in a great many cases I suspect that that that it is a ah half way phony. These are things they know (EM Uh huh) and are communicating them as though they are real (EM Yeah) personal experiences, but nevertheless they do know them, you know. (EM Uh huh) But Detroit hasn't got that whatever it is that a city like New York or San Francisco has (EM Uh huh) these ah absolutely memorable landmarks and memorable places (EM Yeah) and this kind of things. And yet, you know, I I can go into places in in the City where I have not been for five years and know immediately, you know, simply maybe by smelling or by just by colors within themselves (EM Uh huh) that something has changed you know (EM Ah) ah in all these areas which, you know, that that like Eastern Market and the whole area around (EM Yeah) ah Gratiot and the what used to be, I suppose it still is, Corktown and ah you know, the area around the ball park (EM Uh huh) not the newer areas because they don't have any quality, no character to them, whereas the old areas, some of them do, most people don't see them very often, ah but you just know, you know, you just [pause, never completed]

## ITEM #9

[WH says he would not point these things out as tourist attractions, but might show them to someone who was coming here to stay. He would send them the Eastern and Gratiot Markets; and earlier, would have advised them to visit the salt mines, which are "awe-inspiring." WH says that "even the Waterworks has its virtues:" it is an

"impressive" place. He mentions the Ford Motor Company as a tourist attraction, but "really awe-inspiring," although its associations for him are hideous. WH says that he hasn't taken his wife and daughter to the salt mines or the Waterworks because they have been closed for years.]

[EM mentions that WH is right, that by comparison with the Empire State Building, the Fisher Building is nothing. (It is evident outside of WH's window.) WH says he is glad EM brought it up. WH says that this building cost more per cubic foot than any building that has ever been built. All the tile is imported Italian tile; it contains three or four hundred pounds of gold leaf on the first floor alone. WH says that the old Fisher theater was quite spectacular, although he does not care for the new theater. WH says that there was only a period of about four or five years before the stock market crashed that any buildings were built in this pseudo-Aztec architecture. WH's father worked on the building; he thinks his father told him about the gold in it, although he has heard some things about it later. WH says that it may no longer be the most expensive building, but it certainly was for a long time after it was built. WH comments that the only other building in the City that is comparable is the Union Guardian Building.]

ITEM #10

[WH says that the nature of his family and his peer group have more to do with what he doesn't know about the City than what he does know about it. WH attributes this to his isolation from the City; his only connection was through people in the community, most of whom worked there. Neither Grand River nor Outer Drive was paved as far out as WH's community. EM observes that WH seems to have had a separate life from his father and mother. WH responds, "Yeah. Very much, yeah." WH says he thinks it might have begun at about the age of eight or nine. He was never uncomfortable in the family. In the summer, he used to get on the train by himself and go to his grandfather's farm in Cheboygan. WH says, "It was the nature of the rest of the community too."]

[End of Tape I, Side 2]

APPENDIX VII

BACKGROUND OF COLLECTOR

1 COTTON FIBER CONTENT

BERKSHIRE  
USA

BOND

CORPUSCULE

ENTORS





## Information about Collector

Name Elizabeth Ann Meese

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of collection Detroit Local Place LegendsDate of collection January - May 1968Why did you choose this particular project for your collection? I amespecially interested in the nature and function of folklore among membersof the 'majority culture'. The Collector is a member of this group.Date of birth 23 October 1943Place of birth Norfolk, VirginiaPlaces lived in (give dates) Norfolk, Virginia 1943-1944; Evansville, Indiana1944; Peru, Indiana 1944-1945; Detroit, Michigan 1945-1953; Troy, Mich. 1953-1965;Birmingham, Michigan 1965-Occupations (give dates) Employed summers from 1962-1964 and 1966-1967 byCamp Holiday; part-time field worker, Episcopal Church 1965-1967; graduateassistant, Wayne State University 1966-1968; Assistant archivist, WSU FolkloreArchive 1968-Education (give dates, and indicate major subjects) B.A. in English, Universityof Michigan 1961-1965; M.A. in English, Wayne State University, 1965-1967;presently enrolled in PhD program in English at Wayne State UniversityReligious background and present belief Roman Catholic; Episcopalian; presentlyagnostic.

## History of your family:

|                 | <u>Name</u>                    | <u>Ethnic or national background</u> |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Father          | <u>William Giles Meese</u>     | <u>German, French Canadian</u>       |
| Mother          | <u>Mary Edith (Monk) Meese</u> | <u>Scotch, Irish, Dutch, English</u> |
| Father's father | <u>William Gottlieb Meese</u>  | <u>German</u>                        |
| Father's mother | <u>Emma (LaPierre) Meese</u>   | <u>French Canadian</u>               |
| Mother's father | <u>Commodore Monk</u>          | <u>Scotch-Irish, Dutch</u>           |
| Mother's mother | <u>Esther (Lester) Monk</u>    | <u>English</u>                       |

Name of spouse NoneReligious, ethnic or national background of spouse None

(use other side of form for additional information)