

Interview with Benjamin Stanczyk

January 23, 2003

MK: This is Marian Krzyzowski and I'm at the home of Judge Benjamin Stanczyk. Judge Stanczyk is living in Detroit on the east side and today is January 23rd 2003. And we're here to talk about Judge Stanczyk's memories of the Chene Street neighborhood, and before we do that, though, I'd like to begin first by asking you Judge Stanczyk a little bit about your family. Your parents, their names, where they were from, and how they ended up getting to the neighborhood that you know we're talking about today, so maybe if you could just begin with names of your mother and father, where they were from.

BS: My father was Bruno Stanczyk, central Poland, Zychlin is the town.

MK: How is that spelled?

BS: Z-Y-C-H-L-I-N. There's a big sugar factory in Zychlin, still there.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: He was a machinist in Poland. Here he became a tool and die maker, of course. My mother was Josephine Tarczynski. She came from a town Skierniewice which is in the same area, it's between Warsaw and Lodz. My father came to America in 1910 and my mother came in '14 to join him. My sister was born in Poland in 1908.

MK: So they were married in Poland?

BS: Yes.

MK: And they came where in the United States.

BS: Well, my mother's brother came to Detroit in 1905, and my father came here, according to the Ellis Island records, he came to his brother-in-law, he had \$17 and a half in U.S. money and some Russian money in his possession.

MK: And he came to Detroit then.

BS: Yes.

MK: Do you know where they were living at that time?

BS: Alexandrine Street.

MK: Do you know the address on Alexandrine street?

BS: Uh, the old address was like 715 I think. It was in the vicinity of Orleans and Russell.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: And my mother came, as I say, in 1914. She arrived in Detroit I think on the 30th of June.

MK: With your sister?

BS: With my sister.

MK: And your sister's name was?

BS: Harriet.

MK: Harriet.

BS: Jadwiga.

MK: Jadwiga, okay.

BS: Yes.

MK: So they arrived and joined your father on Alexandrine Street.

BS: No, by that time my father was living on Milwaukee, just west of Chene.

MK: What was the address on Milwaukee?

BS: I don't remember. The addresses changed after the--

MK: Right, the number--

BS: --that 1918 numbering system.

MK: Do you know which house it was off of Chene?

BS: No, it was--the bank on the corner, a florist next to the alley, and it was the house next to the florist.

MK: So it is on the south side of Milwaukee?

BS: It was on the south side of Milwaukee just west of Chene.

MK: And was it a one-family residence?

BS: Oh no no, it was a multi-residence I know it was.

MK: Do you know which, were they the upstairs or downstairs?

BS: I don't know that.

MK: Okay.

BS: I was born there.

MK: What year were you born?

BS: 1915, April 4th, it was Easter Sunday.

MK: Wow, you were born in that house.

BS: Yes.

MK: And uh--

BS: Part of it was, was a multi-family, I would think 3 or 4 families would, downstairs part of the house was a real estate office, my mother's brother got into real estate by that time.

MK: What was his name?

BS: Tarczynski, Stanley Tarczynski.

MK: Stanley Tarczynski, okay. And when you, when you were born, what was your father doing? Do you know what he was doing?

BS: Yes, he was working at the Packard Factory. Packard was making trucks at that time, heavy-duty trucks, and in addition he was moonlighting by working as the, whatever he was doing, bingo parlors, poker rooms.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: And soon thereafter got into the pool room business.

MK: When was that, when did he get into the pool room business?

BS: I can't remember when he started. However, I do know that the Revenue Act of 1917 required the proprietor of a bingo parlor to be a U.S. citizen, which he had not become a citizen, so he lost his interest in his business. But by 1920 he was a citizen and got back into the pool room business.

MK: So he was in it, kind of got out it, and then got back into it.

BS: Yes.

MK: I see. And where was the pool room that he was running?

BS: That was on Chene and Ferry. The name was Aurora Hall. A-U-R-O-R-A. That'd be on the northwest corner, the first, the first business he had there was on the downstairs level and the owner of the building, Walter Szynekarek, rebuilt the building and he got located upstairs.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: He got out of there in I think in about '25 or '26.

MK: And was that a brick building at that time? Do you know?

BS: Yes,

MK: It was.

BS: Big, heavy, still there.

MK: Yeah, it used to be Sandomierski Grocery after a while, I remember that.

BS: Yes, I believe so.

MK: Okay, so he was downstairs first, moved upstairs, and then he moved out in '25.

BS: Yeah, he sold out, either '25 or '26.

MK: And where did he move to?

BS: He got out.

MK: Oh he got out, he got out of the business totally.

BS: Yeah, the pool room business was going down, the automobile became an everyday thing and young men didn't spend their time in bingo parlors by that time.

MK: And this whole time you were all living on Milwaukee still?

BS: No, we moved from Milwaukee to Dubois Street. I don't remember what year it was, of course, couldn't remember.

MK: Where on Dubois, where was it on Dubois?

BS: Between Frederick and Farnsworth on the west side of the street. The building is still there.

MK: On the west side of the street.

BS: In the middle of the block.

MK: In the middle of the block, and the building ,the house is still there.

BS: I'm not sure if it's still today.

MK: Yeah, yeah, and did he buy that or was that a rental also?

BS: No, no, my uncle Tarczynski bought that building.

MK: Oh, okay.

BS: It was a rather big building. There was a store downstairs which they used as an insurance and real estate office. There was an apartment behind it and the upstairs had two apartments which my family occupied all of it. And the interesting thing there was a huge garage which apparently had been built originally as a stable. And above the garage was an apartment which was occupied by by an interesting gentleman, Mr. Sajda. No, I beg your pardon. Gebert, Mr. Gebert. G-E-B-E-R-T.

MK: Oh, Boleslaw Gebert?

BS: Mr. Gebert was an intellectual of sorts, a liberal. And I was fascinated by his typewriter. Apparently he had several of them and he always smoked a pipe and when I'd come home my mother would say, oh you must have been at Mr. Gebert's because I can smell your clothes with the tobacco. Mr. Gebert parted this world recently. In his last gainful employment he was Poland's ambassador to Turkey.

MK: What years are we talking about, how old were you when you were living over on Dubois?

BS: We moved out of there in May of 1920. I was five years old when we moved out of there.

MK: When you moved out of the Dubois house.

BS: Yes, on to Chene Street.

MK: Okay, so between, so prior to 1920 how long did you live in that Tarczynski house.

BS: I don't know.

MK: Mm-hm. And Mr. Gebert stayed there after you moved out, or not?

BS: I can't answer that.

MK: Okay. So, it's 1920 then. So he was there in 1920.

BS: I'm not sure. I know he was there while we lived there. Now I can't tell you the dates.

MK: And then when you were five, you moved to where.

BS: We moved to 5820 Chene. [The residence became 5818, which was the upstairs apartment for the building. See the 1926-27 Polk Directory – MK]

MK: Hmm.

BS: That's between Hendrie and Medbury.

MK: Right. And what was that building?

BS: Well it was a six room bungalow or cottage-type building and that, Tarczynski owned that building. Four or five years later he moved the building back and put up a modern store type building in the front.

MK: Mm-hm. And you were living in that, in the building when he moved it or not?

BS: Yes.

MK: So how long did you live in that 5820 house?

BS: Well moved out of there in January of 1927. My father went into the grocery store business, built a big modern building on Traverse and Erwin. 8600 Traverse. The building is still there. It's near Harper and Van-Dyke.

MK: I know, I know that. I lived a block, I lived on Knodell between Murat and Erwin. I lived, I used to buy baseball cards at that store.

BS: Well my father didn't, discovered running a grocery store was not for him. Hours were bad.

MK: How long did he own that store?

BS: Just a couple of months.

MK: Oh, okay, so he got out of there.

BS: He got out of there in a hurry. Cutting meat was not his field so he got into gasoline stations. 1927. Built a station on Van Dyke and Hilldale in '27 and then leased that out and went into a garage business on Conant and Garvin. He was a partner with Ed Kraski. K-R-A-S-K-I. Ed was a self-made engineer.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: I don't think he had any education and when he escaped the Russian draft he came to the United States as a young man. But he was a great mechanic. Went to school all over, Davidson Trade School, Cass Tech, took all kinds of classes. My father stayed there for I think three years in the garage business. Did very well incidentally. And sold out.

MK: And where were you living at that point?

BS: We lived on Curt Street near Harper-Van Dyke.

MK: Right, what was the address on Curt, do you remember?

BS: I think it was 80, 8032.

MK: Okay.

BS: It was about the second house east of Van Dyke.

MK: Okay.

BS: My father got out of that business in '29. A banker who he knew, I don't know from where, suggested that we were getting into bad times. So my father sold out and went back to work at the Ford factory. And he worked at the Ford factory off and on.

MK: Which Ford factory was he in?

BS: Well he worked in Highland Park and then went to the Rouge.

MK: Okay.

BS: Then fell on bad times. He worked for Midland Steel, repairing machinery and then he got a job as a janitor in the Wayne County Court House.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: And worked there until he retired.

MK: Let's go back to to 1920. You're 5 years old. I assume a year later you're living on Chene Street, you're going to school. Where did you go to school?

BS: Ferry School.

MK: You went to Ferry.

BS: It was the old Ferry School, and then when they switched to half-days, my parents sent me to Greusel, which was all-day. When the new Ferry School was opened in '24 I think.

MK: Where was the old Ferry School located at?

BS: It was located on Joseph Campau and Ferry.

MK: So.

BS: There's a playground there now.

MK: So it's where the playground is for the school.

BS: And then I went to the Greusel School because it was all-day. When the new school opened, I can't remember the year, '24 maybe, I went back to Ferry for a couple of years.

MK: And then when you moved from, from there, from Chene Street, where did you go to school?

BS: Burroughs.

MK: Burroughs.

BS: For junior high school. And then I went to Catholic Central High School which was, which was then on Harper and Woodward.

MK: Right.

BS: It was brand-new when I went to Catholic Central. The Basilian Fathers had just taken over.

MK: Burrough's was probably pretty brand-new when you went there, too, wasn't it?

BS: Yes.

MK: What year did you leave Burroughs?

BS: Uh, '29. I think the school opened in '26, '25 or '26.

MK: So you were in the first graduating class at Burroughs.

BS: I think so, yeah, first or second.

MK: At Burroughs Junior High School. Okay, very good. Your sister Harriet, how, how much older was she than you?

BS: Pardon. How old--

MK: Your sister, how much older was she than you, yeah, what--

BS: She was six years older .

MK: Okay, so when your family was on Milwaukee and then on Dubois, where did she go to school? Also Ferry?

BS: No, she went to I think Parke School and then Majeske School.

MK: Okay, okay, Parke and Majeske, okay.

BS: And then she went to Northeastern. She went to Ferry I think for a year or two.

MK: Okay.

BS: Northeastern was both a junior high school and a senior high school at that time because of the tremendous crowding.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: She graduated in '25 I think.

MK: From Northeastern?

BS: Yes and went to what was then City College for a year and then went out to University of Michigan and graduated from Michigan in '30.

MK: She, she did, and you when you graduated from Catholic Central, what year did you graduate in?

BS: '32.

MK: '32. Where did you go?

BS: I went to City College, which is now Wayne State. Graduated in '36 then went out to Ann Arbor to law school at U of M.

MK: And when did you get your law degree?

BS: '39.

MK: I see, and then after that, what did you do?

BS: Well I practiced law. I was with a firm in the Penobscot Building. Schudlich, Ude and Jefferson. And I had evening office hours on Chene Street.

MK: Can you spell that?

BS: Schudlich, S-C-H-U-D-L-I-C-H, Ude, U-D-E, and Jefferson, J-E-F-F-E-R-S-O-N.

MK: Okay. And so then you said there was an office on Chene Street?

BS: Yeah, Tarczynski had a building on Chene Street so I had desk space there.

MK: In the 5820 building?

BS: Yeah, evening office hours.

MK: And, when, what years were you there on Chene Street in the evening?

BS: From '39 until I went into service in summer of '42.

MK: Okay. And then you were in service for how long?

BS: 43 months.

MK: Okay. And when you got out, where did you go?

BS: Well I came back to Detroit, worked for a firm in the Barlum Tower, Dann, Atlas, and Tilchen, a workmen's compensation firm, they specialized in workers' compensation. I stayed there for a year and then went out on my own and in January of 1949 I was appointed as a lawyer for Wayne County. Was there for the next 9 years I guess.

MK: Mm-hm. Okay, let's go back now to your earliest memories of the Chene Street neighborhood. To begin with, as a child, what do you remember as a child of that neighborhood, of the street, and the businesses, or people on the street, what was it like?

BS: Well it was changing from a residential to business. If you look at some of these buildings that are still there today, the front part is a brick part which was built sometime in the 1920s or a little bit before, and the back part is an old wooden building which was

built maybe in the 1890s that is still there. There were two theaters on Chene Street, right in our neighborhood. The Fredro and the Rozmaitości.

MK: Did you go to those theaters as a child?

BS: Oh yes. Yes.

MK: Can you describe the Rozmaitości and the Fredro, what they were like, what do you remember them as being when you were a child?

BS: Well they were, they had, we had troops of actors moving around the country putting on Polish plays. The Rosenbaum family had a jewelry store on Chene and Frederick and Mr. Rosenbaum parked his car in our garage on Dubois, which was around the corner from, his first car. And Mrs. Rosenbaum would take me to the theater. She wanted to learn Polish. So when I was 3 years old I used to go to the show with her (laughs).

MK: Was this Rozmaitości or Fredro?

BS: Both. Either one or the other.

MK: Why did she want to learn Polish?

BS: Well, they were running a jewelry store in a Polish neighborhood. She wanted to learn to speak Polish.

MK: Is this Sam Rosenbaum or Max Rosenbaum.

BS: Max, yeah.

MK: Max okay.

BS: That's before he moved to Hamtramck. He was on Chene Street. We had a street car line I remember on Chene Street that went south and the north line was on Grandy, the next street east. It was a bustling street on Saturday afternoons. It was wall-to-wall pedestrians on Chene Street. People were going shopping, stores were busy, they were bustling. New buildings were going up like mushrooms after a rain storm.

MK: Mm-hm. Now, let's see, let's see. You were still there in '25-'26, which would have made you what, about 10 years old or something like that? 10-11 years old.

BS: Yeah.

MK: As a child did you go into any of the stores, candy stores, any, any, do you remember any of those kinds of businesses.

BS: Oh sure.

MK: Which ones do you remember?

BS: Well, right across the street from us was, Wisniewski had a tobacco store and some candy he sold, packaged candy and so forth. I went there. There was a drug store down on Medbury Street down by Schram family.

MK: Do you remember the Schram family at all?

BS: Mrs. Schram was a school teacher; she passed away recently.

MK: What was her first name, do you remember?

BS: I can't remember. Schram had a drug store, a soda fountain of course. I remember going in there. Next to them, before the Schram drugstore was the Okray had a grocery store.

MK: How was that spelled?

BS: O-K-R-A-Y.

MK: Okay.

BS: Had a grocery store and south of them was the Kozakiewicz family. Mr. Kozakiewicz was an interior painter, decorator wallpaperer. Mrs. Kozakiewicz was a seamstress and they had this store building, of course my family were friends. When the Kozakiewicz's moved to Detroit from Brooklyn I think it was in the 1916, or '17 or '18, they visited my family on Dubois Street. They had a daughter who was about my sister's age. She later became a professional violinist, played with the Windsor Symphony.

MK: What was her name, first name, do you remember?

BS: Uh, Jenny.

MK: Jenny, and did she retain Kozakiewicz, or did she get married?

BS: I think she, they shortened it to Kossar.

MK: Okay.

BS: K-O-S-S-A-R.

MK: Okay, okay, let's get some tea.

(break)

MK: Who was Cass Jankowski?

BS: He was a lawyer on Chene Street, Chene and Hancock. He was a state senator.

MK: When was he, when was he on the street? What years are we talking about?

BS: I don't know when he came. I would think like 1915, 1917. He was killed in an automobile accident in January of 1931. He and congressman McCloud were driving to Washington and he was killed in the auto accident.

MK: He was, you said a state representative also?

BS: State senator.

MK: State senator, I see. And uh, what was his connection to Father Gzella?

BS: I don't know--

MK: I see.

BS: Specifically what it was, the fact is that the story is that he had much to do with establishing the chair at U of M and prevailed on people with money to give it to U of M.

MK: Did you know Cass? Did you meet him ever?

BS: Just knew that there was such a person.

MK: Well, you mentioned Max Rosenbaum. Did your family know him, did you know Max Rosenbaum?

BS: No. (← doesn't make sense)

MK: How, well can you tell me a little bit about him.

BS: Well he was a kind of a tall slender man, hyper, successful business man. Mrs. Rosenbaum was kind of a plump lady as I recall. When Max had his first car, I think it was an Oakland. He took us for a ride, and she said, "Don't do that, you're going to kill the children, you don't know how to drive!"

MK: Was he, was he a Polish Jew?

BS: No.

MK: Did he speak, did Max Rosenbaum speak Polish?

BS: I think he did, but she didn't. She didn't speak Polish.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: Well maybe she did, but she wanted to polish up her Polish. So she would come to my mother, to write letters for her in Polish and to help her read the Polish newspaper. And she'd go to the theater to learn Polish. Now of course we have radio and we have tapes.

MK: Right, did, do you know of any relatives or any descendents of the Rosenbaums?

BS: No.

MK: I'd like to be able to track somebody down if I could. I don't know how to find them. So, back on the street, can you describe the 5820 address, what did it look like? If I were to walk out in front of it, the building at the time, what would I see?

BS: Well, when we moved there, it was a frame building with a wooden porch. As I say, four years later Tarczynski had the building moved back about, I don't know, 30 feet maybe 25 feet, and put up a building in front, which was a brick building, typical glass window displays and so forth.

MK: Was it a two-story brick building?

BS: No, it's a one story.

MK: And what was in it?

BS: Well he started out in insurance and real estate and then, I think in '28 he went into electrical appliances. Called himself Central Appliance Company.

MK: I see. Do you remember a Jewish family on the street named Raimi?

BS: I just remembered that there was such a family, seems like they were in dry goods, near Forest Avenue.

MK: Right, right.

BS: Yeah.

MK: Okay. And when you were back on the street, in the late '30s, working out of there as an attorney, who, who were your clients, who were you, who were you providing services to?

BS: Neighborhood people.

MK: What kind of services were you providing?

BS: Lots of drunk driving cases.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: I should log them, some drunk driving cases. Adoptions, divorces, commercial collections.

MK: Did you do your business in Polish or in English.

BS: Pardon?

MK: Did you do your business in Polish or in English.

BS: Both.

MK: Mm-hm. And can you describe your office at the time, what did it look like, where in the building it was?

BS: Well the building was in the middle of the block. I had a dwarf partition in the corner, probably 8 feet by 11 feet. A desk. Tarczynski had a girl working in the office who did my typing, whatever I needed.

MK: Mm-hm. And you had two jobs, you were working downtown, you were working, you had two jobs at that point.

BS: Yes.

MK: And, um, did you have any kind of a shingle up front at 5820 that you were there.

BS: Yeah, name plate on the door, on the window. There were a lot of lawyers on Chene Street then.

MK: Do you remember any of them, can you tell me some more of them.

BS: Sure, sure. Stanley Dombrowski was on Milwaukee. Good social friends, his wife and my sister were schoolmates. Jenny was younger than my sister, but she took her to Greusel school. There was, Lubinski, Cass Lubinski.

MK: Where was he at?

BS: I can't remember. There were the Lutomski brothers. Frank was the oldest, then Joe and Tony. They were up near Milwaukee. There was Stanley Dixon and Frank Selwa,

they were on Forest and Chene. And Wojcinski and Koscinski were on Forest and Chene. They were there before Selwa. Mr. Koscinski later became a federal judge.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: Art Willard, well, he was gone by then, moved to Hamtramck, was across the street from us.

MK: How do you spell his name?

BS: W-I-L, W-I-L-L-A-R-D.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: Art Willard was a great criminal lawyer.

MK: And he was on Chene?

BS: Yeah, he worked directly across the street from us. Came to Detroit in the spring of 1919. Story I got was that he was discharged from the Navy and was going back to Idaho, but the way the trains were laid out at that time, he had a long layover in Detroit. Overnight from New York to Detroit through Canada and then another train late in the day. So he got on a Baker Streetcar, out of the New York Central Station, walked a block or two west or south I guess, got off a Baker Streetcar, got off at Perrien Park. Walked around the park and walked into Cass Jankowski's office and introduced himself as a lawyer in Idaho. And Jankowski prevailed on him to stay, and he did. And he married a girl whose family was on Chene Street. The Siwka family. S-I-W-K-A. He married Hedy Siwka. We got to know him quite well. He had a daughter by a previous marriage, who was about the same age as my sister, and, he would take my sister to the store to buy clothes for his daughter, because they were about the same age, the same size. And then Art moved to Hamtramck and was probably one of the best criminal lawyers in the state at that time.

MK: And do you remember when he passed away?

BS: I can't remember. He moved from Detroit to Tampa, Florida in the early 1950s, I don't know precisely what year. His daughter stayed, was here, she later came to Michigan, went to school and became a Justice of the Peace in I think Hazel Park. Married a Mount Clemens banker.

MK: Do you remember their name after she married?

BS: No. I don't remember. She was a lawyer, a Justice of the Peace.

MK: Any other attorneys you can remember from the street?

BS: Barney Chamski was over on McDougall Street across from St. Hyacinth's Church.

MK: How's that spelled?

BS: C-H-A-M-S-K-I.

MK: And the first name?

BS: Barney.

MK: Barney, okay. What do you know about, about Barney Chamski?.

BS: Well, Barney was a connoisseur of fine wines. I think--that was probably his biggest spending forte, buying fine wines. Not whisky you understand, it was fine wines.

MK: Anybody else that comes to mind?

BS: Well George Sadowski was on Chene Street. I said Cass Jankowski was killed in an auto accident. George Sadowski organized the Detroit Democratic Club several years before that and was, he was elected to fill that vacancy in 1931 as a Democrat. Polish community had been pretty much Republican most of that time. And that was kind of a breakthrough for the Democratic Party in Michigan. At the same time a Democrat was elected Congressman from the, I think Saginaw area.

MK: So George Sadowski was elected to Congress at that point?

BS: He was elected to Congress in '32.

MK: '32.

BS: By a Democratic landslide.

MK: Mm-hm. Did you know George Sadowski?

BS: Oh yes.

MK: Can you tell me a little bit about him? What kind of, personality wise, but also political views and who he was?

BS: Well he was, he was a short stocky man, when he sat behind the desk he looked like a giant. He was smart. I wouldn't say he was a great intellectual, but he was smart. And he could see the handwriting on the wall, he was Democrat. The Republican candidate for Senate was Jacob Sumeracki who later was a county official for many years. George was shrewd. He organized a golf course, Sunny Brook. I think it was on 15 Mile Road between Van Dyke and Mound Road. And that was where he made some money. Then

he organized another golf club or I think several of them in the Rochester-Romeo area. His widow passed away recently. She was living up in Charlevoix area.

MK: What were his politics like?

BS: Hm?

MK: What were his politics like?

BS: Well he was a liberal. He was condemned by some people as being a Communist, which was a lie, he was no Communist. He was a dyed-in-the wool capitalist.

MK: Mm-hm. And how long, I mean, I assume he must have been pretty popular in the Polish community?

BS: He was?

MK: Was he popular in the Polish community?

BS: Yes, well he was defeated in the 1938 primary by Dr. Tenerowicz, in the Democratic Primary. Dr. Tenerowicz had been mayor of Hamtramck, went to jail, came out.

MK: Okay.

BS: Sadowski was, later had an office on Milwaukee and Chene. Stan Dombrowski was there. Stanley was a, studious scholarly kind of lawyer. Big handsome guy. No children. Married Jenny Pietrzak, whose father was a sausage maker on Chene Street. Brother was a doctor, never practiced. Finished an internship and died. Lived in Grosse Pointe on Rivard Street. Stanley did very well in law business and in real estate. He died about 1976, '75, about '76 I think, '77. No children, had a considerable estate which he left to niece whose husband had been murdered. She had kids in college and he did very well by giving his estate to his niece. Nice gentlemen, the Lutomskis. Frank was a World War I hero, he was the oldest, he was lawyer. Uh, he was, around Trombly and Chene, and Joe was the next lawyer. Joe died about five or six years ago. And, he was a criminal lawyer. Anthony was a tax lawyer. Good lawyers, all of them.

MK: So there were three lawyers in the family.

BS: Yeah.

MK: Where did they go to law school, do you know?

BS: Uh, I think Joe went to Detroit College of Law, I'm not sure about the others. Then then there was, there were two other brothers, one was, they were both schoolteachers in Hamtramck. I think one was principal of the school. And then they had a sister who was a neighbor of ours when we lived Badger Street.

MK: Mm-hm. What about Dombrowski, where did he go to law school, do you know?

BS: In Detroit, I'm not sure.

MK: Mm-hm. What about Chester Kozdroj?

BS: He was on Chene Street I, well he taught at Orchard. He didn't get into practice of law until late.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: He got out of school and, I can't remember precisely, in the '30s. He taught at Orchard Lake, then he went to law school. Then he got involved in community activities. Did very well.

MK: Do you remember him at all?

BS: Oh sure, I remember him well.

MK: Can you describe him, what he was like?

BS: Oh he was a big handsome guy, big smile. His uniform was a blue suit, white shirt, plain red necktie, blond hair, big bushy hair, always had a big smile, always had big . Jovial kind of guy that lived on East Outer Drive and Chalmers I think. Liked to have nice parties. Did very well as a lawyer.

MK: What kind of practice did he have?

BS: His practice lasted many, last few years, he represented the Polish government in estates ,etcetera, where there were relatives in Poland of people who died in the State of Michigan. He did very well. Moved to Arizona I can't remember what year.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: Moved out of Detroit.

MK: You mentioned earlier some other relatives that had businesses on Chene Street that were related, you know your uncle and aunt. Can you tell me a little more about any other family members.

BS: Oh yeah, I had a cousin who was a pharmacist, uh, family moved to Detroit from Toledo I think in 1919. Walter had started his career as a professional athlete and apparently was fairly good, not great. He tried out with the Toledo Mud Hens, which was a Detroit Tigers farm club, and his mother decided, uh-uh. In those days the players used to travel by bus, they traveled at night, played day games, came home, never had

any sleep. But \$400, and his mother said, nothing doing it. And my parents prevailed on him to go to Cass Tech and then, I forget where, Ferris maybe, became a pharmacist and he worked for Sleder, I beg your partner, Przybylski on Chene Street.

MK: What years did he, was he at Przybylski's?

BS: Oh, I think he was there from about 1921 to about '27. And then he worked for Pietrowski in Hamtramck as a pharmacist.

MK: And his last name was Stanczyk also?

BS: No his name Szolowski. His mother and my mother were sisters.

MK: Szolowski?

BS: S-Z-O-L-O-W-S-K-I. The father had a brother, he and his brother-in-law were instrumental in getting a creamery going, Liberty Dairy on Grandy and Piquette.

MK: So he was a Stanczyk?

BS: Yeah, he was a Stanczyk. He died in 1925.

MK: And his first name was?

BS: Boleslaw. Bill.

MK: Boleslaw.

BS: Yeah. He had three children. One of his sons was a very prosperous builder, he built garages, Stanley garages, Stanley doors, Stanley windows, his son sells building materials in Chicago now.

MK: So they were the founders of, of Liberty--

BS: Liberty Dairy, yeah, and the other was Karl Nowak. They were married to sisters. Bill Stanczyk and Karl Nowak were married to sisters.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: They organized the creamery, and now let's see. [The creamery was founded in 1922 – MK] He and my father, incidentally, built houses. They, he built two houses during the summer. The pool room business was down during the summer, so he'd build a couple houses every summer.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: For several years, five or six years maybe.

MK: In the neighborhood?

BS: Uh.

MK: Or Harper-Van Dyke.

BS: Uh, yeah.

MK: Harper-Van Dyke area.

BS: Yeah, they'd go out there.

MK: Okay. Any other family relatives on the street?

BS: Well my mother's sister worked for Lendzon when she came to America in 1920.

MK: And her first name was?

BS: Uh, Sophie.

MK: Sophie.

BS: Tarczynski. And then Lendzon got rid of the hardware business he had, and went into ladies clothing. He opened a store in Hamtramck. And, so, she was a manager of whatever department, I don't know.

MK: In Hamtramck.

BS: Well first on, on Chene Street, and then later in Hamtramck.

MK: Mm-hm, okay. Earlier before you started recording, we talked a little bit about Dom Ludowy, and I wanted to ask you a little bit about the background. I know quite a bit about Dom Polski, you know, we've, I remember it as a child. I remember Dom Ludowy being in the neighborhood, I don't remember much about it. I wonder if you'd give me a history of the Dom Ludowy. What it was, how it got started, and where it's located, and what happened.

BS: Well, it's located at Joseph Campau and Harper. I can't tell you how or when it got started. It had been a Lutheran church building, and it seems that the people who went into Dom Ludowy were the liberals, they were the progressives. The Dom Polski people were pretty much under the control of the Catholic clergy, and the Polish National Alliance, and the people who formed Dom Ludowy, they were the liberals. They didn't want to be dominated by the Catholic Church. Some of them belonged to the Polish National Church, some had no religious affiliation for whatever reason. And it was the

liberals. And they had a newspaper, *Głos Ludowy*, I guess at one time was a liberal paper and then it later became an ultra-left-wing paper, separated from Dom Ludowy. It was the headquarters of the liberal groups.

MK: So, Dom Ludowy was on Joseph Campau and Harper. Where exactly was it on Joseph Campau and Harper, which side of the street was it on?

BS: It was the north side of Harper and the west side of Joseph Campau.

MK: And what did the building look like?

BS: It was an old church. In fact, I bet I could find you a picture of it downstairs. It was a Lutheran church building. On the east end, and then there was kind of a breeze way and a social hall on the west side. It was kind of a U-shaped thing, which had been a printing shop at one time. That's where the paper was, and then when Stanley Nowak took it over they moved onto Chene Street. And then they bought an adjacent small house, about five or six room, a house facing Joseph Campau Avenue, which served as a club house where the members could come in play cards and have a drink and so forth.

MK: Was there ever a restaurant or bar in there?

BS: Well they had a club bar.

MK: Okay.

BS: They had a club liquor license, not a class C. And they had kitchen facilities when there were parties, dances, and so forth. They had kitchen facilities but they did not operate a restaurant.

MK: Mm-hm. And do you remember people who were involved in that, in that Dom Ludowy either organizing it or being active in, in--

BS: Well my father-in-law, Anthony Kra, uh, Wojsowski was one of the people who was active in it.

MK: Can you tell me a little bit about him, your father-in-law?

BS: Well, he was an educated man in Poland. Went to *gymnazjum*, he was a bookkeeper, not a CPA. Did very well in the insurance business. Came to the United States, settled in the Philadelphia area. He and his brother had a soft drink bottling plant in Reading, Pennsylvania. And after World War I, he returned to Poland with a Polish organization and Polish businessmen who had some money to help the new Polish get established, after all there had been no Poland for 120 years. So they were sending people with some kind of an education to set up the new government, and he, he was one of those who was selected. I think my wife's first day of school was in Pruszkow, a suburb of Warsaw. I think they were there for a couple of years. And then he came back, Wojsowski was the

financial officer of the Polish consulate in New York. He controlled the money, he wrote the checks, I think I have a ledger book here in his own handwriting. But he wrote the checks for two, for a couple of years when they lived in New York. They came to Detroit, I think, about 1924. He was, he was a liberal, in the true sense of the word, a violent anti-communist. During World War II I think he was employed by the CIA and the FBI to form the Polish Labor Council, which was a liberal anti-communist group. He was president for a long time.

MK: And when did he, how do you how, how did he become involved in Dom Ludowy?

BS: I can't answer that.

MK: Yeah.

BS: He was a liberal and that's, that's where the liberals drifted.

MK: Right. Who else was involved in Dom Ludowy?

BS: Well the Krawulski family.

MK: How is that spelled?

BS: K-R-A-W-U-L-S-K-I. There was Anthony. The son was--his name escapes me--I think there were two brothers and a sister who were active in Dom Ludowy. Anthony was the, kind of a deep-thinking man, didn't talk very much. Another man was Kulaski. He had two sons, one was a lawyer and one was a doctor.

MK: Kulaski?

BS: K-U-L-A-S-K-I. Victor was a lawyer and I forget the, the other one's name. The other one was a great surgeon. Kulaski was a tool designer, body designer, whatever it was, he was in the auto industry, but he was not a factory worker. He was white collar.

MK: The people you were describing as being involved in this sound to me like they're all pretty educated, more intellectual than the neighborhood as a whole.

BS: It would seem so. Yes.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: I was president of Council 167 in the Polish National Alliance and we met at Dom Ludowy for many years.

MK: When, when were you president of the PNA 167?

BS: Oh from about 19--47 to about 1952.

MK: And you met at the Dom Ludowy?

BS: Yeah.

MK: How often would you have meetings there?

BS: We had monthly meetings. The Council, I think we had 9 or 10 lodges. One of our lodges was called the Alumni Association, these were people who had gone to school at Cambridge Springs, which was a college established by the Polish National Alliance in 1911 I think, and went out of business in, oh maybe the middle '70s. Couldn't compete as a big university so it got amalgamated into the Pennsylvania college system. One of the reasons that everybody wanted it was they had a great library, apparently. Over the years many people had left their libraries to Alliance College. They had many European books, in many languages, not only Polish, which were one of kind, out-of-print, whatever they were. The library was in great demand. [KM NOTE: THE ALLIANCE COLLEGE LIBRARY BURNED IN THE 1920S OR 1930S AND MUCH OF THE ORIGINAL COLLECTION WAS LOST; WHEN THE COLLEGE FINALLY CLOSED, THE LIBRARY'S BOOKS WERE DONATED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURG, WHERE THEY ARE IN THE ALUMNI COLLEGE SPECIAL COLLECTION.]

MK: When you met at Dom Ludowy, where would you actually meet, what was your room like, where, where, how many people came to the PNA meetings?

BS: We met in what had been the printing shop, the west side of the building, and there was a room maybe 20-feet-wide by 50-feet-long. And it had undertaker folding chairs, tables, etc., etc.

MK: And how many people would show up for a PNA meeting there?

BS: Oh, I think, in, say 1948, '49, '50, in those years, we might have delegates from all the constituent lodges, I think, there were, as I said, 10 or 11, maybe 12. So we'd have 30 people at a meeting, 35. Locked in discussion, which was hot, times were hot. The Cold War was on, there were people of all colors of political persuasion. So we had pretty hectic meetings. We had some movies that had been produced in Britain and they were distributed by the British consulate, which was of course anti-communist. We did very well showing them, because it's kind of a pipeline. No one else could get those, we could. So, we would have showings, at a high school in Hamtramck where we'd pay for the rent and charge very little for admission of course. But we'd get three or four hundred people come in to see those movies. War time and post-war time movies. Specially-made for an audience like ours.

MK: One of the people that I sort of associate with Dom Ludowy, and correct me if I'm wrong, was Mr. Zukowski, Martin Zukowski.

BS: Martin, yes.

MK: From, from Księgarnia Ludowa.

BS: Yeah, from the bookstore.

MK: Can you tell me a little bit about him, and what you know about his kind of views, and to what extent was he involved in Dom Ludowy and to what extent he was involved in sort of politics on the street.

BS: Well my father-in-law was his bookkeeper. I think that was the way he got in. He had the bookstore and he had, he sold books that no one else sold. He got them from Europe, etc., etc. going back into the 1920s. And he was a liberal. I went to school with his, one of his daughters, at Wayne.

MK: Which one, do you remember. Was it Martha?

BS: No, Jerry, Julia. Martha married Eddie Cichon.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: Who was a bookkeeper, bookbinder for Wayne County. She was a suicide unfortunately.

MK: Right.

BS: And Eddie Cichon is still alive, he lives in Warren. Nice gentleman. And then John took over the, John was the youngest, John took over the operation of the bookstore, until he folded up recently.

MK: So what about Mr. Martin Zukowski. What can you say about him?

BS: I really don't know, didn't know much about him. I knew the kids. As I say, Julia was about my age. I think she married Piszczalski [Pishalski. They changed their last name from Piszczalski – MK] who was an automotive supplier. He had a factory out here somewhere in Fraser, or Roseville, I'm not sure.

MK: Her son's in Ann Arbor. [Not true, I got Julia and Anna mixed up. Martin Piszczalski is Anna's son. Anna was older than Julia and graduated from Northeastern about 1930. Julia and Anna married brothers but Julia's husband changed the spelling of their last name. – MK]

BS: Pardon me?

MK: Her son is in Ann Arbor.

BS: John.

MK: No, Martin.

BS: Oh Martin. That's John's son, that would be Martin's grandson.

MK: Yeah, Martin's grandson, but Julia's son.

BS: Yes, oh yes.

MK: Martin Piszczalski.

BS: Yes.

MK: I, I've talked, I've interviewed him.

BS: Yes.

MK: So he was associated with Dom Ludowy, Mr. Zukowski?

BS: Oh yes, yes, oh sure. He was rather soft-spoken, but a very liberal man, I don't think he had a great education, but he was self-educated like a lot of people and knew what he was talking about. No bullshit.

MK: You, you've sort of identified at least two groups here, you know, sort of the more conservative group, kind of I guess centered around the clergy or the churches, and then the sort of more intellectual group, liberal to, to sort of leaning left in some areas. In terms of the second, this this this liberal group, there's a Dom Ludowy. You mentioned in passing *Glos Ludowy* and Mr., Mr. Stanley Nowak. Can you say anything about them, you know, they were on the street probably about the time you were on the street, and they weren't that far from you, I think actually physically, probably pretty close. Can you tell me about them, and what they were like?

BS: Well Stanley was a kind of a misguided person. Stanley was born in Poland, came to the United States when he was a kid, 2, 3, 4 years old. And he was a devout Communist, there's no question about it. The government tried to deport him, and there was no basis for deportation. Because whatever he learned, he learned in the United States. If he learned any bad habits, he got them here. So the deportation failed. Stanley was a, a deep-thinker. He was concerned about the people in ways. Very sincere. A very nice person, basically. And I say this because he was in the state legislature in the 1940s and I had a matter that could not be resolved in the courts. So I went to the legislature. And in 1946, the Wayne County delegation was mostly Republican. He was one of the few Democrats. I talked to him, told him what my problem was, and he introduced me to two committee chairmen. And in a matter of a couple of months we got, it fell to the legislature which was designed to assist my client, and, we got all through, and his next election I wanted to give him a campaign contribution. He wouldn't accept it, he said,

“No I didn’t do anything for you, why should you give me any money? You are a lawyer, you’ve got a chance to make a living, and I helped you. Forget it, no money, no campaign contributions.” Basically, a nice, decent person.

MK: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. You said he was misguided. In what way was in misguided?

BS: Well, I think he put a harsh light on anything that he didn’t like, anything that didn’t fit the, difficult to compromise. If, if you owned a factory you were an S.O.B. (laughs). All utilities, and communication, transportation should be government owned. There was no compromising on this.

MK: And, was, you know, the offices for his, the newspaper he worked with, *Glos Ludowy*, and the I think there was a bookstore associated with it or some sort of, some sort of other businesses. Where were they actually on the street? Do you remember where they were?

BS: Yeah, they were in the same block as Tarczynski. They were like 5850, or 5858, but they bought the building from Kozakiewicz. Kozakiewicz had two buildings on Chene Street, and they bought one of those buildings and then Kozakiewicz moved across the street into a building he bought from Miller the undertaker.

MK: And what did this building that they’d buy look like? What was it like? Multi-story?

BS: There were two buildings that were almost identical. Brick-front buildings. Store downstairs, apartment behind, apartments upstairs. John Poleski had an office in that building as a matter of fact in the early 1920s. He later became a, a member of the state legislature. Very high-class lawyer.

MK: Mm-hm. And their business there in that building was, they had had the editorial offices for the newspaper, right?

BS: Yes.

MK: Where was that in the building, do you know?

BS: I don’t remember. I wouldn’t know.

MK: And what other businesses were there? Was there a bookstore?

BS: No, I don’t think there was a bookstore.

MK: Okay.

BS: There was a, a fur store, Lendzion had a fur store in one of those buildings. Not related to the Lendzon who had the drug and the dime store.

MK: I always wondered if it was the same family.

BS: No. no, no, no.

MK: So there was actually--

BS: Lendzion moved to Ann Arbor later.

MK: I see.

BS: Uh, uh, I'm not sure.

MK: The furrier moved to Ann Arbor.

BS: He moved his business, the fur business to Ann Arbor. I, I don't know the name he operated under. I think Bertha was his wife.

MK: Mm-hm. So this guy, it seems ironic to me, here's like this socialist, you know, communist press with a fur dealer next door.

BS: It was next door.

MK: Kind of, kind of amusing.

BS: And Chester Kozdroj was across the street from him.

MK: So, did Stanley Nowak come to the building a lot?

BS: I don't know.

MK: Okay, so you don't remember seeing him there particularly.

BS: No, no, no.

MK: What was the view of the other people on the street about having this kind of political presence on Chene Street.

BS: I don't know think anyone got overly excited about it. The Polish community ran the whole stratum of extreme liberal to extreme conservative. There was some division about what should happen to Poland after the war where there were people that said Roosevelt had sold out Poland at the Yalta Conference. There were others, like myself, who were more practical, the only way you could've expelled Russia was to declare war. Nobody wanted to go to war, we were tired of war, nobody wanted to serve, everybody wanted their boys to come home, so there was a split as to what should happen to Poland. There were those who believed that the London government should be restored. There

were those who said the elected government should be in, there was a big split. So, Stanley Nowak was not a big factor.

MK: Mm-hm. What about the other newspaper in the neighborhood. The *Dziennik Polski* which was on Forest for all those years. What was that--

BS: No, they were on Canfield.

MK: On Canfield, that's right, on Canfield.

BS: *Rekord* was on Forest Avenue.

MK: Mm-hm. They were on Canfield although I think later on didn't they move onto Forest?

BS: No.

MK: No, they never moved onto Forest? So, what was the, what was the *Dziennik Polski* like?

BS: Well, Mr. Januszewski ran the *Dziennik* until his death in, I think, 1953, and very reactionary. Very reactionary on all things. I was president of the Polish Central Citizens Committee for about six or seven years and we had to talk continuously. He was very reactionary. He was ultra-Republican. Hated Roosevelt, hated Truman with a passion.

MK: So what happened when someone like George Sadowski was running for Congress, would the, would the *Dziennik Polski* not endorse him?

BS: Uhh, I think they were sort of ambivalent. They couldn't, they didn't want to attack him on a frontal way, but after the war, they, they were not very enthusiastic about him.

MK: And he died in 1953?

BS: George?

MK: Januszewski.

BS: Januszewski, yes, I think in '53.

MK: And then, then, then did the paper change at all in its kind of outlook or not?

BS: Well, John Najduk, who had been a writer for the *Detroit News*, took over as managing editor, and of course the community was changing, Najduk had some problems which were not related to the paper, essentially. And really did not have a consistent editorial policy.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: Stanley Krajewski was their principle writer. A man by the name of Neuberg, *Ananas* he called himself, was other writer. The nicest person on the staff was the photographer and the sportswriter, Adam Sarnacki. He was true journalist. He didn't color his stories, the coloring went on the editorial page, not on the front page, as far as he was concerned. And, he did, he was probably kind of an anchor that kept the paper going until it went from a daily to a weekly.

MK: He's still alive. I, I talked to him on the phone. I've got a tentative appointment.

BS: Oh, I'm sure he's out here somewhere.

MK: Yeah, in this area, yeah.

BS: Yeah, he's at the Eastland Shopping Center every morning at 8 o'clock for his morning walk.

MK: Okay, I'll keep that in mind. Where were you in terms of the political scene? I mean, how did you see yourself over that period of time, you know let's say from '30s on through the '50s. Where were you on that spectrum?

BS: Well I was on the liberal side. My father was a liberal. He and his family had been in the revolution in '05 in Warsaw and that's one of the reasons my uncle, my mother's brother, came to the country when he did. And my father got out of the country at the time he did and his brother, his brother-in-law, they had problems. So we were brought up in kind of a liberal household.

MK: So not a religious household?

BS: Not ultra-religious, no.

MK: Were they, were your parents practicing Catholics?

BS: Oh yes, they sent me to Catholic Central High School.

MK: Right, that's why I'm wondering you know, whether there was tension around that, I mean, the way you describe the Catholic clergy at the time it seemed, were there any liberal Catholic clergy in the Polish community at the time?

BS: Well I think Fr. Gzella, as I recall was, what I knew about him by hearsay, was a liberal. Some people criticized that he did things that he should not do. I remember one of our friends was married, and they were married at the side altar. And I was just a little kid I couldn't figure out why. Well, apparently it developed, there might be an impediment to the marriage, but he went through with the service. He was that kind of a

person. Sometimes somebody died and after the funeral he would, stories would come out that he should not have been buried from a Catholic Church for whatever reason, but he buried them. He was, he would say to the family, and again, I was just a little kid, because he died when I was about 8 or 9 years old, "You don't publicize where the funeral's going to be," and he'd have a Catholic service.

MK: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. There used to be, were you considered as adult, did, were you considering yourself Catholic?

BS: Oh yes. Now that, of course, the, of course I think the great pastor in our community was Fr. Borkowicz. Fr. Vincent was a real pastor in the real sense of the word.

MK: How do you mean that?

BS: Well, he, he took care of his flock. He, he went out of his way to do things. The World Medical Relief, for example, needed volunteers and he recruited them. This was not a 100% parochial kind of thing, this was a world thing to do. And he recruited people from his congregation to go out to World Medical Relief in groups on Saturdays, evenings, off-days, etc., to package things. They got medicine in bulk, they had to package containers to ship to Poland, all over the world as a matter of fact. And he was involved in this. He welcomed parishioners who had strayed. I know we had an organization known as the Polish Bank in Detroit they were--

MK: Tell me about, I know, I've heard a lot about the Polish Bank, and the mutuals. Tell me about the mutuals and the Polish Bank.

BS: Well, the Polish Bankers had a great reputation for honesty and integrity. They never welched. You asked the, the, the Black mutuals operators, they'd say the Polish Bankers never welched, they paid, always paid. Some of the others had a reputation that if a number was going to hit big, somebody would call the police department and say, so-and-so, there's a shooting going on in the mutuals house. The police would raid it, and of course what they'd find, betting slips, adding machines, they wouldn't have to pay. (laughs).

MK: So, so, the Polish Bank was, was dependable, people could trust it to pay off.

BS: That's right. Stanley Brynski, Joe Brynski were brothers, and Sobczaks, they operated the Polish Bank.

MK: Sobczaks, I didn't know Sobczak, what Sobczak was, I knew I knew that Stan, Stanley and Joe Brynski were involved.

BS: Yeah, Sobczak had a local dealership. Uh, Colonial Dodge, I think was in Roseville. He and his brother.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: They had, they were partners in the Polish Bank.

MK: What was his first name?

BS: Oh God I don't remember.

MK: I remember seeing a St. Stanislaus yearbook actually, from the '40s, the late '40s that had an ad from the Polish Bank, saying, "Congratulations seniors, Polish Bank."

BS: That's right.

MK: I mean, it was pretty you know, pretty out in the open.

BS: Well that's it. There's no secrets about it. Uh, they were tried in the Records Court in the City of Detroit for conspiracy to operate the gambling laws.

MK: What years was that?

BS: What years?

MK: Yeah.

BS: Oh, 19--40s, I can't remember. '47, '47, '48, '49, one of those years. And the jury convicted them. Now this is information which I'm going to give you which has not been published anywhere.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: And I say this because of my position on the courts. And Stanley Brynski and one of the Sobczaks took an appeal. Joe Brynski, who was the older, didn't have any money, he figured he was going to do his time in jail and he was going to get out. That was it. So they paid the court reporter extra money to get the transcript expedited, out in a hurry. Then all of a sudden there's a stop, there's a case from the state of Wisconsin involving a similar issue, guilt by association. And the United States Supreme Court decided to grant an appeal. Now, lawyers who are cognizant of the operations of the United States Supreme Court know that in a situation like this where there's a, really a political question, if an appeal is granted, it's going to be favorable. It isn't a dispute between the Michigan Court and the California Court or the Sixth Circuit and the Ninth Circuit or anything of that sort. This is a political question. And then all of a sudden, they don't want the transcript, they don't want the appeal. The transcript had been delivered by Lamont Chestnut, the court reporter, to Joe Lutomski, who had an office in the Guardian Building. Well low and behold, one weekend, Joe's office is burglarized. Somebody threw a brick through the door, came in, and they stole the typewriter, some petty cash, some postage stamps, and the Brynski transcript. (laugh)

MK: (laugh)

BS: It's gone. They have to get another transcript. The reporter, Lamont Chestnut, got the money, he got a premium to expedite it. Instead of a \$1 a page he's getting \$2.50 a page. So he worked days and nights and weekends. And he goes out to California with his wife, his un--, his wife's uncle is being promoted to Brigadier General. So they're going out for the ceremony. And he bought a new car, a Studebaker, it was during the Korean War, cars were hard to get. He's a one-legged man, he lost a leg when he was a kid, 9 years old. Uh, he weighs 275 pounds with one leg, he's a big man. They, out in California, he's a great outdoorsman even though he's one-legged. He falls while fishing and he breaks his remaining leg, breaks the femur. Now, he's in a body cast. Piersante, who's the cop, he wants to pursue the case. He knows what's happening. The prosecutors have told him about the Wisconsin case. So he wants this case to get into Michigan courts to get a conviction before the Supreme Court makes an adverse decision. They can't move Lamont, he can't come back. He weighs 275 pounds. He would have to hire, or charter an airplane to bring him back. It's going to cost him \$10,000 to fly him back from California. Now Piersante's persistent. He's going to get this son of bitch back, he's going to get that transcript. And he finagles around and he gets to Homer Ferguson, leave, for a soldier in California Ft. Ord, where Lamont is in the hospital, to drive him back to Michigan. He can travel, his wife can't drive, he can't drive obviously. And, the car has the passenger seat which reclines so he can come back. They're in New Mexico driving, the sergeant has an accident. He's horribly injured, I mean horribly. Now they're in New Mexico. They're stuck, he hasn't got a car, he hasn't got a driver. It was a comedy of errors, which was unfortunate. Lamont's wife got hurt, it's a wonder they didn't get killed. The sergeant as I recall, was badly injured. I don't know the details of the accident. So finally, he gets back to Detroit after many months, he's well enough now. And he's able to get a car, cars were hard to get during the Korean War, there's an argument with the insurance company, who, should the soldier had been driving the car, the insurance company doesn't want to pay. Finally he gets back to Detroit and by the time the transcript is delivered, Michigan Supreme Court follows the Federal Court rule that there can't be any guilt by association. And those cases are reported in the Michigan Supreme Court reports. People vs. Brynski, People vs. Sobczak. Now I know this because after Jeff Skillman died, Lamont Chestnut worked for me as a court reporter. So I got the story from him. (laugh)

MK: So what ultimately what happened to Joe Brynski?

BS: Well, he came back to Detroit.

MK: But Joe went to jail because he didn't appeal?

BS: Joe did not appeal but he was released.

MK: He was released, too.

BS: Yeah.

MK: So all of them were released.

BS: Yeah. Stanley had a bar on Chene Street on a, a next to where my father's pool room was. Deluxe Café. And I think he called *Na Zdrowie Panie* or some such name.

MK: Mm-hm, right.

BS: Uh, Joe Brynski, the older, became the manager of the Polish Century Club on East Outer Drive when the club opened in 1965. Before that he was the manager of the club on the Boulevard. He was a super chef, in the real sense of the word. Mrs., Grandma Brynski had a rooming house on I think on Grandy and Theodore and when the kids were old enough to reach the table with a cup of coffee they started work. and during the war, Joe Brynski was a mess officer in the Navy. You know, he could get breakfast off for five thousand people, it was nothing. Ham and eggs at home for six, hey that's a problem, how do you do it?

MK: So, where did the Brynskis live, on Theodore? Did you say, or--

BS: That was Grandma Brynski.

MK: Oh Grandma Brynski.

BS: Yeah, they lived on, I think on Grandy and Theodore, I'm not sure.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: And their sister lived on uh----- in the '50s.

MK: Are any of their children alive, do you know any, do you know.

BS: Yeah, let's see Stanley Brynski married Dr. Zawacki's sister. They're both dead. And they had, they had a child I think Christine. She's about the same age as my son. Joe had a son who was mentally retarded. He's still around, his widow's still around. I don't know where they live.

MK: Joe Brynski's widow is still alive?

BS: I think so, yeah. _____ Brynski.

MK: You think people at the Polish Century Club would know?

BS: Pardon me.

MK: Would the people at the Polish Century Club know how to get a hold of them?

BS: Yeah, I'm trying to think...who'd know... Nancy Milewski would know because when the Brynskis were running the Falcon Show Bar on Outer Drive and Van Dyke

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: She was bookkeeper for them. She lives in Warren.

MK: She lives in Warren? Okay.

BS: Yeah.

MK: Milewski.

BS: M-I-L-E-W-S-K-I.

MK: Okay, okay. Besides the Polish Bank and that activity, I assume that generally during the Prohibition period there was a lot of moon shining going on, both in homes as well as businesses. Do you remember any of that? Did you hear any stories about who, who were the big moon shiners on the street, and who...?

BS: Well they were not only moon shiners but there were distributors...

MK: Okay.

BS: ...of imported whisky, good whisky. Walter Szynekarek considered himself kind of kingpin.

MK: Where did he live?

BS: He lived on Joseph Campau and Frederick. Do you know where the Ivanhoe Restaurant is?

MK: I absolutely do, sure.

BS: Well, it's right across the street, just east.

MK: Just east, because, the Bo, Bogacki Bakery was across the street.

BS: No, that was north.

MK: Okay. And he lived east.

BS: East.

MK: Okay, right across, you mean right across Joseph Campau Avenue.

BS: Yeah.

MK: Yep.

BS: The front of the house is built of field stones.

MK: Right.

BS: Walter Szynekarek owned the building which my father had a pool room.

MK: This is S-I-E-K-A-R-E-K? Siekarek or Sienkarek?

BS: S-Z.

MK: Oh, S-Z...E-N.

BS: Y, Y-N.

MK: S-Z-Y-N

BS: K-A-R-E-K. Walter Szynekarek.

MK: Okay, Szynekarek.

BS: Then he got out of Chene Street. He moved down to Monroe, he bought a farm, and he made a, a, he tried to make a healthy sort of, frankly, organized corporation for him to take over for him. And he had a skating, a roller skating rink in Monroe. That was his last business.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: He had a farm out Grand River Avenue around Brighton, between Novi and Brighton. He had one daughter Genevieve, she lived on that farm. He and his wife separated, I think she died early. And Walter Szynekarek died about 1948 down in Monroe.

MK: But he was a big, big...

BS: Well he was a kind of a distributor. I, I don't think he ever had the still.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: He distributed whisky and he had a brewery, the building is still there, I think it's on Mitchell between Gratiot and Mack. And then, after prohibition he got the Bass City Brewing Company, he tried to organize a brewery in Mount Clemens, not very successful.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: Now he was kind of a distributor. Then there was Adam Blake, his was Chruszczynski. His parents lived next door to us on Chene Street.

MK: G-L-Y or G-L-I?

BS: Z-Y, it's a long name but I'd have think to spell it. He built a building on Chene and Palmer on the Northwest corner. It was a big building.

MK: The northwest of Chene and Palmer would be the Palmer Bakery building.

BS: That's right. It's the building that runs from the sidewalk to the alley.

MK: Yes, the Nowak Hall was up above it.

BS: That's right. He built that building in the early 1920s, I'm not sure what year, and if you look carefully at the garage which is on the alley side there's a big double garage and the original doors were very high so trucks could back in and out. He had a still in the basement. And what I'm about to tell you is in the Federal Court Records. He had a still built in the basement and the access to that still was through a dressing room in the store. He had a men's haberdashery. Feds came in with a search warrant, they couldn't find the still. And they came in with another search warrant, they couldn't find the still. Then they got an architect to make all kinds measurements and they discovered that the only way to get into the still was through the dressing room. (laugh) And he, I don't think he was ever convicted of anything. Adam was a very smooth kind of a person. He lived upstairs. Never had any children. His brother Frank was a big time gambler who was killed in an auto accident right down here at Cadieux and Mack. Apparently he had hit the tables when it was a gambling casino out on Jefferson Avenue Blossom Heath. And he was coming home and he thought somebody was following him, he had a lot of money I don't know how much. And he was killed. And his wife had died just before that and so, their son Bobby was brought up by the grandparents who lived next door to us on Chene Street. And then Adam went down, he became a, he worked for the Polish Bank, he was kind of a route salesman. And then there was Miller, I don't remember his first name.

MK: Now Gluszczyński is G-L.

BS: No it was Chruszczynsk. I'll figure it out for you.

MK: Okay, okay.

BS: Uh.

MK: You said there was Mildred's, I'm sorry I interrupted you, too.

BS: Well, Blake was, as I say he was well-regarded, he was a nice guy, kind of a politician. Raised money for Green to become governor. And he was close to John Smith and some of the other councilmen. He was a smooth kind of a guy. A fat, roly-poly guy, smoked a cigar. I don't think he was ever arrested for anything. I know Szynek was never arrested. Szynek was arrested during the wet days for selling whisky on Sunday. But these guys, they were pretty high class, they knew how to separate themselves and they, they were clean. They never hurt anybody, no guns, never shot anybody, you know, they operated a legitimate business, they had a brewery or they had a still or whatever.

MK: Mm-hm. What about other other people on the street were involved either in that kind of activity, was there any prostitution on the street?

BS: No, well, for a short time when Boles [Charles E "Chester" Boles, elected in 1930 – MK] was elected Mayor the police had layoffs, they didn't have cops, and there were some brothels. Mostly there were some old ladies who had some rooming houses on Hendrie or on Medbury or on Palmer, one of those streets and two or three sisters or whatever were prostitutes. It was never a big organized kind of a thing.

MK: What about going north, a little further north, like, we're we're we're north of the boulevard. I remember reading about Paddy McGraw's.

BS: Now that's Hamtramck.

MK: Okay, so that area, in fact somebody was telling me that that area between, the borderline between Hamtramck and Detroit for a long time was just wide open, that there was.

BS: Detroit city east of the railroad, west of Joseph Campau Avenue, that was a red light district.

MK: What was it again? From where to where?

BS: North of the Detroit city limits, wherever that street was.

MK: Okay. Denton?

BS: Denton.

MK: Okay.

BS: I'm not sure. No, it wasn't Denton.

MK: It wasn't Denton?

BS: No. To the railroad, and west of Joseph Campau. That was a red light district.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: It could be Denton I don't remember the street. That was a red light district. Dr. Tenerowicz went to jail for permitting bawdy houses to operate. Now that's Hamtramck.

MK: Mm-hm. There was, there was a, somebody you may, you may know, may not, somebody told me, in fact two people told me about this bar which, it struck me as being, unbelievable. There was a bar on Conant, called Edna's Cozy Corner in the late '40s, '50s, that was a lesbian bar. Do you know anything about that?

BS: No.

MK: Uh, and that it eventually was closed down by the police because there were, there were too many murders in the place there.

BS: I don't remember that.

MK: You don't remember that?

BS: That was probably, that was probably right.

MK: Uh, it's just, it's just bizarre to think about a lesbian bar in that neighborhood, you know, it's like... Anyway, I was, was two people two people that didn't know each other told me about it. What about, bars in the neighborhoods. I mean, you know, were there any that were considered particularly bad places, were that were considered very high class. I mean, what was, what was the social life like on the street there.

BS: There was a bar on Chene Street on the west side between Ferry and Palmer. Martin's Café. And Martin had a restaurant, on the fancy side, bar, pretty high class. No, no hookers around.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: There was no gambling. And there was the Elk Restaurant, which was near Palmer on the west side of the street. I forget the man who ran it. And Mrs. Zebrowska started it and then she sold it.

MK: What's her name?

BS: Zebrowska. Z-E-B-R-O-W-S-K-A

MK: Is that the one that was called *Pod Jeleniem* originally.

BS: *Pod Jeleniem*.

MK: *Pod Jeleniem*.

BS: Yeah.

MK: And, and is that the bar that was then called the New Elk Bar after, or not?

BS: Yeah.

MK: So *Pod Jeleniem* was the New Elk Bar before.

BS: That's right.

MK: And her name was, do you know her first name?

BS: Janina.

MK: Janina.

BS: Yeah.

MK: I heard somebody tell me that it was a place where a lot of the kind of literati and artists, artists would hang out. Because it was near the *Rozmaitosci*.

BS: That's right, two doors away from it.

MK: Did you ever meet her, do you remember her at all?

BS: Oh I knew her well, she had.

MK: Tell, tell me about her.

BS: She had two children. Jenny was the older, she married Dr. Waszkiewicz. Henry was the younger, Henry had a beer distribution business. And the poor guy died of a horrible death. He decided to paint his boat. It was raining so he closed the garage door and he was killed by the fumes from the paint and the things that he was using to-- Henry was younger than me by about two years, a year maybe. And Jenny was older. They came to Detroit from Cleveland. She was married to a man by the name of Foltarz who was a tailor, and then she married Zebrowski, and during the Depression he and my father worked at some factory I don't remember.

MK: Foltarz, do you know how that was spelled? How is Foltarz spelled?

BS: W-uh-F-O-L-T-A-R-Z.

MK: Okay, Foltarz.

BS: Henry had a beer distribution business, and he was just a year--They lived behind us when we lived on Badger Street, they lived on Marian directly behind us. And Mrs. Zebrowska used to come and see my mother. She was a good cook.

MK: What years were those?

BS: Oh, '32, '3, '4.

MK: Okay, yeah, and I went to A. L. Holmes Elementary.

BS: Pardon?

MK: I went to A. L. Holmes Elementary.

BS: Yes, it's up on Georgia.

MK: Well it's just right, and on Marian, Marian ended up on Crane there.

BS: Yeah, east of Erwin.

MK: Yeah, yeah.

BS: So Mrs. Zebrowski was a, was a kind of a nice-looking, roly-poly woman, blond hair, bright-blue eyes, nice complexion, loved to sing, working in a restaurant she was working all hours of the day and night. She'd sit down and fall asleep after having had one drink, maybe a cup a tea. Very good-natured, very good-hearted. Mr. Zebrowski as I say was a skilled tradesman. A little on the **despotic [dyslectic?]** side, and they had restaurants all over, of course, during the Depression, the, you couldn't make a living anyway they had a restaurant on Chene and Forest at one time, and they had a restaurant...

MK: Do you know the name of that one?

BS: I don't remember if it had any particular name. And they had a restaurant on, in Hamtramck. There was a restaurant on Forest and Dubois during the first war, uhh...**Julius** Jazwiecki.

MK: How is that spelled?

BS: J-A-Z-W-I-E-C-K-I. Close friend of my family. Was the pastry chef and then somebody else was the chef. It was called *Trzech Slodkich*, The Three Sweets. It was a restaurant, a coffee shop with pastries. And **Julius [Joe?]** Jazwiecki left Detroit after like 1920, '21 maybe, '22. Went to Milwaukee. His brother had a bakery in Milwaukee. And he, he came back to Detroit about three or four years later, things didn't work out, and he opened Van Dyke Pastry Shop on Harper-Van Dyke. He was there for about 8 or

10 years. Then he went back on Chene Street, Chene and Palmer. Called himself Van Dyke Pastry Shop and was there for about 10 years before he retired.

MK: Yeah, yeah.

BS: He was a great chef, a great, baker, pastry chef, not, not a cooking chef.

MK: Right.

BS: Super, absolutely super. His wedding cakes went all over the southeastern Michigan. As I say he got out in about 1944 or '5. Retired.

MK: One of the things, one of the people you mentioned earlier on was Max Rosenbaum. I've got a couple of students that are working on this project that are Jewish, and they're particularly interested in the Jewish merchants on the street. And they were trying to identify, you know, identify who they were and try to track down, do some, do some interviews. I asked you about Raimi because I interviewed Ralph Raimi who is the son of Jacob Raimi who ran a dry goods store on on the street. But I'm curious, to what extent were people sort of, in their consciousness that there were non-Christian, uhh, there were Polish-Jews, there were Jews on the street.

BS: (←muffled) There was the Riesman family, they had dry goods on Chene Street. Riceman, Ressman.

MK: How's that spelled?

BS: I think it's R-I-E-S-M-A-N.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: Originally I think it had two "n's". One of the sons became a lawyer, very high-class lawyer. He was with, he worked for Pietrowski & Lemke, they were partners.

MK: Do you remember the son's name, the first name? Do you remember his name?

BS: No, he died about, well he's been dead 25 years. I can't remember his name but, very high-class lawyer. Very very fine lawyer. Uhhh...there was Littky, they had a shoe store on Chene Street that was Jewish.

MK: Right.

BS: There was a Jewish shoe store in Pietrzak's building. I forget what their name was. There were there were Jewish merchants.

MK: What was Pietrzak's building, which building was it?

BS: They were in the middle of the block between, Hendrie and Palmer on the west side of the street. Leslie Socha later had a travel agency there.

MK: Tell me about Leslie Socha, what do you remember about Mr. Socha?

BS: Well, he was a shrewd businessman. Uh, he came to Detroit after World War II as a refugee from from **Poland**. And worked someplace, I don't know where, opened this little travel business on Chene Street and in 1953, a very beautiful piece of real estate was put on the market. It was in the Petoskey area, two brothers had built this beautiful summer home for themselves. They were from Indiana. They were in the steel business. A home which was, a very elaborate home for Grosse Pointe people, half a million dollars. It was a duplex, but it was a big beautiful mansion house about eight rooms on each side. And, they were, as a hobby they were developing breeds of fancy chickens, for the restaurant trade. They had like 3000 acres of land, more or less, maybe 2000 acres. It was a huge piece of land. And they needed cash. One of them died and they needed the cash to settle the estate. And I tried to sell the, some of the Polish organizations on buying it, as a summer camp and nobody was interested. Jake Lewandowski was big in the Polish National Alliance and he kind of pooh-poohed it. And somebody else went up there and they got caught in a snow blizzard and to hell with it. So Socha bought it. I don't know how he raised the money but they they needed like \$30,000 cash for 3000 acres of land. And a house which was worth like a half a million dollars. And some other buildings. They had the chicken coops and these laboratory buildings where they were trying to develop this fancy breed of chickens which would be all white meat and so forth. And he and his wife ran a summer resort. Very high-class summer resort. They imported a Polish chef, Mrs. Socha supervised the kitchen. Mr. Socha sent brochures out to Chicago and South Bend and Cleveland and so forth. And, in absolutely no time they had a flourishing business. They opened sometime in May and closed late in the season. I guess there for deer hunting and so forth. Now, I don't know how long they were there, but as I recall probably 15 years. I could be wrong, maybe more or less. Very, very successful.

MK: It's pretty interesting to me because I was up there.

BS: Were you?

MK: Yeah, uh.

BS: What'd they call it, Pleasant View?

MK: Pleasant View Farm. It was just north of Harbor Springs on Pleasant View Road. And you're right it was an absolutely gorgeous place.

BS: Yeah.

MK: Uh, the mansion, the buildings, the out buildings, the trails, there were three lakes there, it was unbelievable.

BS: That's right. I probably have 4-- or 500 hundred feet of movies I took.

MK: No kidding.

BS: I showed it to various clubs around Detroit, and, just couldn't make it.

MK: Yeah. And there were a lot of people who came up there. I remember a lot of the, the sort of the elite of the Polish-American community. Jan Marian Kreutz would come up there and radio personalities and so on.

BS: That's right.

MK: And we, we, my parents went up there about two or three years in a row.

BS: Yeah.

MK: It was like, my mother loved it because she had no cooking.

BS: That's exactly right. They had good food.

MK: Good food.

BS: Yeah, yeah.

MK: Good food. So, but he, he had his business on Chene Street, do you know how long he was on the street?

BS: No I don't.

MK: Do you know what ever happened to him?

BS: No.

MK: Okay.

BS: I had some, interesting professional man, Doctor Williamson was on Chene and Kirby. Uh, apparently was a very high-class doctor, very well-regarded. He was a Scotsman and was well-respected by everybody in the community, you know I don't know how long he was there. We had Doctor Ossowski, Bill was a dentist for years. He came from, the Ossowski family came from New York state, upper New York state. And, his son was a dentist.

MK: Was he the one that was involved in in the American Slav Congress?

BS: Yes, that's right. Yes.

MK: Okay.

BS: He was a tall, handsome guy. His brother was a, was an MD had an office on Forest and Russell I think, in a big house. And then he built a big house on Mound Road and 11 Mile Road, thereabouts and there was a dispute about whether it should be made into a Polish Museum. And, Bill moved from Chene Street over to Van Dyke and 8 Mile Road in the 1950s sometime. I think they're all dead now. His son was a dentist. They were very well-respected. You know, there was Dr. Knobloch who was like the coroner of Wayne County in 1932. He married in the, the daughter of the Ustarbowski family. They had a shoe store on Chene, between Harper and Piquette.

MK: I, I interviewed Virginia Ustarbowski.

BS: Did you.

MK: The, the daughter that didn't marry.

BS: Yes.

MK: And she worked for Doctor Knobloch.

BS: Yes, he was county coroner.

MK: Yeah, in fact--

BS: For about 20 years.

MK: I photographed, she had these ledgers, hand-written ledgers that that list every single delivery birth that he did.

BS: Yeah.

MK: From 1929 until 1969. There 5000 births all in hand-written you know the gender of the child, the the date, the address where the child was delivered, and the weight.

BS: Right.

MK: You know, but he he he, it, the coroners office was a political office, wasn't it?

BS: It was elected.

MK: It was an elected office.

BS: Yes, and then it was changed in the 1950s from an elected office to a medical examiner.

MK: Mm-hm. And do you remember Dr. Knobloch personally? Do you remember what he.

BS: Yeah.

MK: What was he like?

BS: Oh he was a jovial guy, big smile, short stature. Very pleasant, had to work as a lawyer for the county from '49 'til '57, so I was technically his attorney.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: One of his attorneys.

MK: Speaking of what you did, so you were a lawyer for the county in '57, what did you do after '57?

BS: I became a judge.

MK: How how did that come about?

BS: Uh, Governor Williams appointed me judge.

MK: To what court?

BS: Common Pleas Court in the City of Detroit.

MK: Mm-hm. And how long were you in the Common Pleas Court?

BS: 18 years. I retired when my youngest child graduated from the University of Michigan.

MK: And you met your wife, how did you meet your wife?

BS: Well, we were schoolmates at Wayne. And of course our parents were friends. From the Dom Ludowy situation.

MK: Mm-hm. And so you met at at, so socially you met through your parents?

BS: Yeah, it it was not close contact, but we were there. We went to a school called, Mrs. Dodatko, her name wasn't Dodatko then, she taught Polish after school. So we went to school.

MK: Where?

BS: On Hancock and Joseph Campau. There was a little church there, and in the church hall, she taught. And we went to a public school so our parents wanted us to learn good Polish grammar, etc., etc., etc., so we went to school there.

MK: And she went there?

BS: Yeah.

MK: And, uh, when were when were you married?

BS: In '47.

MK: And where where did you get married?

BS: Uh...

MK: Where?

BS: In Detroit at St. Augustine Church.

MK: Which is, where's St. Augustine?

BS: On uh, Davison and Conant.

MK: Okay. And then, where did you reside? Where did the two of you reside after you got married?

BS: Well, we lived on Doyle Street, which is near Van Dyke and Harper, uh, Van Dyke and McNichols. And I bought this home we're in now in 1949.

MK: Hm. And your wife, what did she, what was she, what did she do professionally or?

BS: Well she taught at Wayne, taught International Relations.

MK: okay.

BS: And she was there until the day after Pearl Harbor. A lady was home, she had very friendly relations was working for, for I think IBM or one of those companies, had been trying to get her to go to General Motors. General Motors was looking for help in their legal department so, the day of Pearl Harbor, she called her, she said, I'm coming to work tomorrow morning. And she stayed there until June of 1947.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: She was in the legal department, her title was librarian, legal librarian.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: She was one of the few people who actually drafted General Motors' portions of the contract for the atomic bomb, portions of which were made in the Himelhoch Building on Woodward Avenue.

MK: Hmm. Didn't know that.

BS: That's right. She had access to the files and the safes where the contracts for whatever General Motors did for the atomic bomb were kept.

MK: What was her, can you tell me for the record, what was her name?

BS: Stephanie Wojsowski.

MK: Okay, Stephanie. Okay. And what did, at the time you met her, where was, where was she living? I mean, when when

BS: They were living on East Grand Boulevard and Harper. Behind the library. [2063 East Grand Boulevard – MK]

MK: Okay.

BS: When the expressway was built they were on East Grand Boulevard and Moran.

MK: So that's right by the Lutnia House.

BS: Two doors away.

MK: Okay. On the same side of the street as the Lutnia House?

BS: Yes.

MK: Before, before the Lutnia House.

BS: Yeah, they were west of the Lutnia House.

MK: West of Lutnia.

BS: Yeah, yeah, they east side of Moran was the printing shop.

MK: Mm-hm, yeah, I went to Polish school at the Lutnia there.

BS: Did you?

MK: Yeah.

BS: Yeah.

MK: That's where I went to Polish school, at least for a while.

BS: Right.

MK: And then we, and then I went to Polish school on Olympia Street.

BS: Oh yes.

MK: Right, first house off of Van Dyke. Mrs. Moscicka.

BS: Oh yes.

MK: And, and, Mrs. Moscicka and Odrzywolska. And then I went to Polish school at Burroughs.

BS: Right.

MK: There was an after, after-school um Polish school at Burroughs. I went both Fridays and Saturdays.

BS: Yeah.

MK: For a long time. And you have children?

BS: Yes, I have a son, Benjamin, he's in the title insurance business. He has the distinction of being the youngest, elected public official in the history of the city of Detroit. He was elected to the charter revision commission when he was 22 years of age.

MK: Wow.

BS: In 1970. He graduated from the University of Michigan, phi beta kappa and all that sort of thing.

MK: What year did he graduate?

BS: Uhh, '69.

MK: Must have been '69.

BS: Then he went to University of Chicago, graduate school in urban economics, came home one day and told me he's going to stay out of school for a while. So I said, hell, if you're going to stick around, go down to the city clerk. file a hundred bucks maybe you

can get elected to the charter commission. And he did. Now he's in the title insurance business in Detroit.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: And I have a daughter who's now living in Montreal. She was at the University of Michigan and then she went to school in France for a year with the Peace Corps. Got married. Married a Canadian boy in Rwanda, Central Africa. Taught high school for a year in Chandler, Quebec, went back to Algeria for two years. Now she's living in Montreal has an MBA from McGill.

MK: Yeah? That's very impressive.

BS: And she now works for Mercer and Company, the biggest actuarial firm in the world, because she's bilingual, she's in great demand in in Montreal. No contract can leave the office without her approval. It has to be both English and French.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: She has a boy Charles who's now working in Senegal in West Africa. He's working for the International Monetary Fund.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: Graduated from Princeton last June.

MK: Mm-hm. Do you miss him, or miss her?

BS: Well, sure. Of course. She lives in Montreal.

MK: That's a long way.

BS: Well, it's an hour and a half by airplane. Ten hours by car.

MK: I have, my oldest son is in New York City.

BS: Pardon me?

MK: My oldest son is in New York City, so, you know, I miss him already, you know it's only been a few years.

BS: Right. Well Charlie is bilingual of course, having gone to school in Montreal. And, he went to prep school in Toronto at Upper Canada College so he's working for the International Monetary Fund.

MK: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

BS: They're expanding the credit union movement in Africa. And the people who plan long-range policies anticipate that Senegal is going to be a big petroleum shipping point. Apparently there are huge deposits of petroleum in the Atlantic, we knew they were there for a long time, it's only recently that the geologists estimate that there are just huge quantities, it's astronomical numbers.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: So they want to expand the credit union movement, they're thinking that they want to build a refinery the bank will give you ten million if you want to open a shoe repair shop nobody is going to give you 3000.

MK: Right, right.

BS: And so, he's now in in the business of uh, teaching people how to run a credit union and so forth. I, I don't what exactly what he's doing.

MK: Yeah, mm-hm. Thinking back along Chene Street, when you look back on it, in your mind, could you, you have a big picture, you you know, you've been involved in the community, at the neighborhood level and also in city-wide, state-wide and so on. What in your mind, if any, does that neighborhood have in terms of significance. What was its importance? Was there, was there a significance to that community, and what is your thoughts about what happened to it?

BS: Well, it seems that, the, it was densely populated of course these homes were two and three families homes, apartments in the basement and the attic and so forth. Because it was walking distance to the auto factories, Packard, Hupmobile, Brigg's factory west of the railroad, the Dodge Main factory.

MK: Where was the Brigg's factory?

BS: It was west of the railroad.

MK: The Saint, west of St. Aubin?

BS: West, yeah, west of Dequindre.

MK: West of Dequindre, okay.

BS: Uh, and there was a Fisher factory, there was a L. A. Young, on Russell north of the Boulevard. Now this is this is walking distance. And so the skilled tradesman, the tool and die makers were there, the pattern makers were there. These people were not production workers, they were they were above, they made a little more money. They needed some education, they had to know how to read blue prints and so forth. My father never learned to read English. I had to write checks for him when I was 12 years old and

he was in business. But he knew how to read blue prints and he knew how to make tools and dies for the auto industry. And, there were the small business people up and down the street who came from Poland and Ukraine and Byelorussia and so forth, they it was the small business people. They had shoe stores, shoe repair, dry goods store, tailor shop, candy store, cigar store, millenary shop, etc., etc.. They, they were there and they had a little gumption. The two newspapers were there. The two theaters were on Chene Street. They they had some drive. They were liberals. Dom Ludowy was the, was their home, not Dom Polski. It, it was a good community. I did a story for the Polish paper about a dozen years ago on Chene Street.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: There was drive. As I say, on Saturday afternoons in the 1920s it was wall-to-wall pedestrians on the street. People were shopping, Ferry Market was on Chene and Ferry and all kind of retail stores, book stores, Zukowski, had dress shops, millenary shops, dry goods stores, women's soap, barber shops, everything was there. It it was a good community.

MK: You mentioned the Chene Ferry Street, I we haven't talked about that. What do you remember about the Chene Ferry Market?

BS: Well, it opened right after WWI, I can't remember the years. 1919 or 1920, just an open field. The city condemned some houses and I think about 1922 they built some sheds and they built some restrooms and so forth. Before the sheds were built some of the farmers used to come in my father's poolroom in order to use the restroom. (laugh) So he got acquainted with some of them. It was a good market.

MK: When did the permanent buildings go up, do you remember?

BS: I think about 1922, I could be wrong.

MK: And they're the ones that are there now still, those brick, I mean those cement sheds.

BS: Yeah, yeah.

MK: Um, somebody told, described the market to me, more than one person had, has, there were a lot of Polish farmers at the market.

BS: That's right.

MK: But there were also a lot of Jewish vendors.

BS: That's right.

MK: And do you remember that division at all? Were they on one side, or the other?

What what what was that, what was that mixture like?

BS: I don't know. I can't answer that.

MK: Do you remember any of the people that were in the market, do you know any of the business people?

BS: Oh sure. Uh, Borowski, they owned a truck farm on Harper, near what is now Metropolitan Parkway, I don't know how big it was. Twenty acres maybe. He had hot-house tomatoes all winter, delivered them to the Statler Hotel and the Detroit Athletic Club. And, did lettuce in the wintertime and, all this sort of thing.

MK: And he was the market, the Chene-Ferry Market?

BS: Oh yes.

MK: Do you know--

BS: Went to the University of Michigan and was a big time athlete.

MK: What were the names?

BS: Borowski

MK: Borowski.

BS: Yeah, B-O-R-O-W-S-K-I.

MK: And first name?

BS: Anthony was the athlete and he wanted to be a doctor but he couldn't make med school. But he became a DPH doctor, public health, worked for the Couzens Foundation up in Alpena Michigan. [James Couzens of GM fame – MK]

MK: Hmm.

BS: Uh, I don't know when the Borowski family, Tony died recently, I would say last ten years. But he was a DPH.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: Uh, he was one of the people, very very fine family, as I say, my father had the poolroom and some of the Polish farmers would come in and use his toilet.

MK: Any other farmers you remember?

BS: Now just a minute, so about once a month he'd bring my father a basket of, in the winter time, some tomatoes, maybe lettuce, maybe some hot-house strawberries, and that sort of thing. That was a regular, about once a month that Mr. Borowski, let's see. What the hell was the other name. Can't think of the other name, truck farmer also from a little farther up I think on North Avenue. Used to come in to the farm with fruit. Apricots, cherries, peaches.

MK: What about the Jewish vendors, do you remember any of those?

BS: I can't remember their names. There was, I remember you know going to market with my mother, when we lived on Chene Street, when we lived on Harper-Van Dyke she liked to go down to market on Saturdays. Get a live chickens, fresh eggs that she knew were two days old and fruits and vegetables I'd go down the streetcar with her.

MK: There was uh uh uhh a Jewish woman named Ester Silverman who ran a huge poultry, the live poultry stall. Do you remember her at all?

BS: No.

MK: No.

BS: No I don't know.

MK: Okay. I'm trying I'm trying to get as many names down as I can and identify as many of these people as I can.

BS: I can't answer that, I don't know.

MK: Okay, so what happened to Chene Street?

BS: Well, it, the spread to the suburbs came. Warren became the enchanted land. Chene Street people moved, first they moved to along Van Dyke Avenue, Harper-Van Dyke and up Van Dyke to Outer Drive, and then into Warren and Sterling Heights, and so forth. It fell apart. Fr. Borkowicz ran a good church, was a good pastor, went out of his way to do things for people. Had a school, I think they had about 1000 students at one time. I was there to present awards right up until, oh, the middle '60s. Of course after the riots it just fell apart.

MK: Mm-hm, mm-hm. You stayed in Detroit.

BS: Pardon?

MK: You stayed in Detroit.

BS: Yes.

MK: What, what can you say about that?

BS: Well, I'm too old to move now. I'm not anxious to move. My wife was ill for several years. She didn't want to move out of here. And, uh, we're still here.

MK: Was, was the decision to stay, not not most recently, but you know let's say, the decision in the '70s, was the decision to stay in this neighborhood in the city of Detroit, was that part of a feeling of being part of the city and not wanting to move out of the city? Or was it just a, a question of convenience and you know.

BS: Well, no, I was born in Detroit, I went to school in Detroit, lived here, made contributions to the city, I wrote the income tax law for the city of Detroit in 1960. My son was on the charter commission and made a contribution. My sister worked as a substitute teacher for a couple of years and then worked for the welfare department as a social worker until she got married. We just liked to stay here. Lady across the street started off as a schoolteacher and later moved up until she was in charge of teaching for the handicap with two graduate degrees and she's still here. She's been here for as long as I have, or longer perhaps.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: So we like it. It's convenient.

MK: Any, any other thoughts about, about Chene Street, any other information that comes to mind that you might want to share with us?

BS: I really can't think of anything that is super but, the presence of the two theaters I think was a very important contribution because

MK: How's that?

BS: Well, they, we had these troops of Polish actors. They started out in Boston and ended up in Omaha, Nebraska. And then we had the residents who were here. Uh, they put on the Polish plays. And the Polish radio got started on Chene Street.

MK: Where?

BS: In my uncle's building. Zajac and uh, uh, Frank Archer, what the hell is Archer's name, started and uh, they had office space.

MK: Which building was that?

BS: Tarczynski's building on Chene Street.

MK: 5820?

BS: Yeah

MK: What year was that?

BS: '27 I guess, '28.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: There were WNBC, which was in the Curtis building, and WEXL in Royal Oak. And of course they branched out, went further out, uh, the space they had wasn't adequate, they needed more room. I don't know where they went from there. But it was there. Obecný was the pianist of some note, conducted Detroit Symphony, musicologist, he lived across the street from us on Chene Street. He was at an apartment in Svoboda's building. Svoboda was a jeweler on Chene Street, they were Czechs.

MK: Mm-hm, mm-hm. And he lived in the Svoboda building?

BS: Yeah, for a number years. And then he married, uh, Julia and he moved over on, I think on Mitchell and Joseph Campau, and then he moved into North Detroit later.

MK: Last, last name was Obecný, what was his first name?

BS: O-B-E-C-N-Y.

MK: Mm-hm, and do you remember his first name?

BS: Casmir.

MK: Casmir.

BS: Yes, uh, his wife was singer and actress, uh, these people were...they were cultured, they were intelligent people, and they were educated. They came from Poland with an education. Now, you must remember that uh the Czar's times uh, there just weren't any schools in Poland. Nobody could, nobody went to school, there weren't any schools. And, uh, people who were, uh teenagers during WWI, they had no opportunities to get an education. There just weren't any schools...during the war.

MK: Do you remember Stanislaw Wachtel?

BS: Pardon me?

MK: Do you remember Wachtel?

BS: Oh yeah.

MK: Stanislaw Wachtel?

BS: Yes, sure.

MK: What do you remember about him?

BS: His daughter is an MD.

MK: Right, she called me by the way, about a week ago.

BS: I really, I remember the name, I remember the...

MK: Because they lived, you know, the reason I'm bringing it up, too, is because they lived next to the Butzel Branch Library.

BS: Yes.

MK: They lived, you know half a block down from that area.

BS: That's right.

MK: And he was also an actor early on.

BS: That's right.

MK: So appeared at the Rozmaitosci.....

BS: That's right, exactly right.

MK: You know that's why I brought it up.

BS: And uh, George Sadowski's, uh, wife's family lived across the street on the Boulevard on the east side of the Boulevard from Butzel Library. Uhh, the name was, uh, Lepek, L-E-P-E-K. And, uh, her brother, Mrs. Sadowski's brother Conrad married uh, one of the Schmidt girls, Schmidt Brewery Company.

MK: Mm-hm, mm-hm. So,

BS: Leskiewicz was an actor

MK: Who?

BS: Leskiewicz.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: And Antek Cwaniak, his name wasm his family lived on Kirby, just east of Chene Street, the first or the second house. [It was the second house, 2627 Kirby - MK] Can't remember his name. He was an actor. [Golanski was the actor who played Antek Cwaniak on the Polish radio. He was a friend of Adeline Banach of the Bristol Bar – MK] Janinski. Wadowska was Janinski's a sister. Uh, and then there was Alex Kochanowski, he was sort of an actor. He had, uh, uh, the Belltone [sounds like he is saying Bon Temps – MK] Club on Chene Street uh near Farnsworth, upstairs. It was kind of an after-hours drinking place.

MK: Wha, above which building was it, do you remember, which which store?

BS: I don't remember, on the west side of Chene, one of those buildings, uh...

MK: Between Kirb, between

BS: Between Frederick and Farnsworth,

MK: Between Frederick and Farnsworth, okay so it's further down. That's where they uh, where there used to be Jaruga, that music shop was down there, Raimi's Curtains was down there.

BS: Yeah.

MK: The original Ksiegarnia Ludowa was down there.

BS: That's right.

MK: In that block.

BS: That's right. Sure, went to school with uh, Julia, Ferry School. Uh there was an interesting business establishment around, uh, Chene and Frederick, uh, was a gasoline station. Uh, and there was a garage on the backside of it where Pete Mazur would build armored cars. Pete Mazur was a mechanic, machinist. During WWI he was in the service and he would repair tanks. First tanks were made on uhh, Russell and Ferry. American Car and Foundry, A.C.F. Built tanks, first tanks...uhh, there were probably some built in Europe, but those were the first American tanks. Uh, so Pete knew how to work with uh, heavy metal. Came back from the service and went to Chicago, built armored cars for the Capone mob. Came to Detroit and built armored cars for the Purple Gang and for other, uh, groups. Uh, the owner of the station was uh, Pete Chudzyk. And then John Reggie worked for him, Mazur built armored cars there. Next door was Stanley Jaworski who sold phonographs and uh, appliances. And then Stanley branched out, he organized, uh, Pontiac salesroom in Hamtramck. Uh, Jaworski and Kornacki. And then Woody worked for them as a salesman. And he, Woody took over. And Stanley had the Grand Paint salesroom on your corner, Van Dyke and Olympia. He got his start on Chene Street. Of course Walter Halicki was on Chene and either Piquette or

one of those streets. He was a notary public. He sold travel and made a lot of money and very successful, very well-regarded.

MK: I interviewed both sisters, Emily is 91 and

BS: The daughters.

MK: Yeah the daughters. Emily is 91 and Evelyn is 89. They're both..I was amazed that they were...

BS: They were contemporaries of my sister.

MK: Mm-hm, I did an interview with them a couple weeks ago. Uh, did you ever come across a guy named Kotek? Kotek?

BS: I know the name but I

MK: There was uh, I talked to Nick Frontczak, you know Frontczak, you know

BS: Yeah.

MK: I talked to Nick Frontczak, Nick Frontczak told me that there was a guy named Dutchy Kotek who was involved in criminal activity on the Street and ended up going to Las Vegas. He's in Vegas now, um.

BS: No, I don't know.

MK: No? Okay. Uh, but uh, yeah, I, I'm trying to pick up any stories, any anecdotes that are kind of not not your standard you know.

BS: Well there was an interesting family, uh, lived on Chene Street, in the Chene Street area then moved up to Hamtramck. Uhh...Peter Kaminski, his father came to the United States, as a young man in the 18 whatever it was. And, uh, uh, worked in factories on the east coast, and he had problems, so he joined the United States Army. And, went out to Kansas or Oklahoma and married an Indian lady, uh, who was a princess. And, according to a treaty, her children could go to college. So, uh, Peter went to uh, an A&M college, uh, was very successful, uh, during WWI he was in the service. I don't know what he did, but, uh, extremely well educated. As I said went to an A&M college and then went to one of the eastern schools after he came out of the service. I'm not sure whether it was MIT, or Harvard, Cambridge, and worked for Gar Wood. Gar Wood was building dump trucks, and uh, picked up some patents for dump trucks. Previous to that time the dump truck mechanism had a vertical lift. Well it's all right if you have a small truck. But when you got in the big big trucks, this vertical lift was tremendously high.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: And he got the patents for the lifts to be horizontal underneath the truck body, with somebody had made single pump, didn't work well. And he hit on the idea of having a double lift, and Gar Wood made a fortune on that.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: And then when Gar Wood built a car, he the Willys St. Clair, Mr. Kaminski was one of the engineers, although his name was Stone not Kaminski.

MK: Was uh, where was Gar Wood at?

BS: He had a factory in Marysville.

MK: Marysville.

BS: He had factories in Detroit where he built dump trucks.

MK: Where, where in Detroit? Do you know where, where the car was

BS: I don't remember the, he had a house on the river. Uh, of course he was famous for his speedboats.

MK: Right.

BS: Well, Mr. Kaminski was one of his top engineers, and uh, Mrs. Kaminski's brother worked for my father, in the poolroom as a porter, he was a WWI veteran came back from he, uh, was badly hurt in the war. Uh, and when he died, Mrs. Kaminski asked me to do the eulogy at his funeral. And they had a brother, Bill, who was a racketeer, no ifs, ands, or buts, he was a society bootlegger. He delivered whiskey to the needs of the doctors.

MK: Bill Kaminski?

BS: Yeah.

MK: Bill Kaminski.

BS: Yeah, he was known as Billy the Crook. Tall, slender, uh, handsome man, and, crook all the way. Married a lady in the 1930s whose husband had been a big time contractor. He was accustomed to living pretty high, fancy cars, and good restaurants and that sort of thing. So, he collected the rents, well, then he decided to hell with collecting the rents, he got 50 bucks at the time. He sold some of her houses, he went to jail for it. And, changed his name was Janiszewski to Janis and if you find the records I think about 1937 or 38 he went to jail for forging deeds. But they were a brilliant family, they were smart people. As I say, he was too smart, he went to jail.

MK: Mm-hm, where did they live?

BS: I can't remember where they lived, somewhere in the Chene Street area. And then later they moved to Hamtramck, always stayed in the Polish neighborhood, never abandoned it.

MK: Mm-hm, mm-hm. Now what was the connection to the Indian?

BS: What?

MK: What was the Indian connection?

BS: Well his mother was an Indian princess.

MK: Do you know what tribe she was from?

BS: I don't, somewhere in Oklahoma or Kansas.

MK: Okay.

BS: And because she was a princess, under the treaty, he'd go to college.

MK: Right.

BS: And he did. Went to one of the western colleges, it was Oklahoma or Kansas.

MK: Right.

BS: And then came out of the service and went to an Eastern school.

MK: Right, that, that's an interesting story.

BS: And uh, when Gar Wood tried to build airplanes when uh Stimpson was building airplanes in Wayne. But then he gave that up as a bad deal. Gar Wood wanted to build factories in Germany or Austria, and that didn't work out. But he did make money building dump trucks.

MK: Mm-hm. Any other families in the neighborhood that sort of, come to mind that uh, made good or made bad.

BS: Well, let's see, Mr. Chorbaszewski, uh, was uh, an engineer he died. Went to Russia in the 1920's, uh, for a short time, came back. Uh, he died early, he had a son who was a great surgeon, orthopedic surgeon. Hoski.

MK: Hoski. Hoski?

BS: Yeah.

MK: And how is Mr. Chorbaszewski spelled?

BS: Hmm?

MK: How is

BS: Chorbaszewski, with a C-H-O-R.

MK: Okay.

BS: And, uh, his son Joe is a great orthopedic surgeon. His widow was a marriage license clerk for many years in Wayne County.

MK: Where did they live in the neighborhood, do you know? Was Mr. Chorbaszewski in the

BS: Uh, he lived on, across from the trade school on Joseph Campau. And he had a, an artist, uh, Onyszkiewicz. He lived on a, Mitchell around Kirby, uh, O-N-Y, so forth, uhh, he was a great artist, he did church murals and the Fisher Building lobby and the Fisher Theater. Uh, the Guardian Building, the general contractor was actually DeLorenzo but he got a bunch of Polish fellows working for him. Onyszkiewicz was sort of the lead.

MK: Onyszkiewicz?

BS: O-N

MK: O-N, R-Y

BS: O-N-Y-S-Z

MK: Oh, O-N, oh, Onyszkiewicz.

BS: Onyszkiewicz was a big leader in the Polish government today.

MK: Yeah, yeah, Janusz Onyszkiewicz.

BS: That's the same family.

MK: Is it?

BS: Yeah.

MK: No kidding.

BS: Yeah, yeah.

MK: Well I know, I mean I met Janusz Onyszkiewicz.

BS: Alright.

MK: Right, he became minister in the post-communist government.

BS: And, uh, he had a son who's an artist in New York, uh, he was doing portraits in New York for uh, big society people. Mrs. Edsel Ford the first. And then he had a daughter, Janina, and she's an artist.

MK: Tell me, do you know what the connection was between Janusz Onyszkiewicz in Poland and this Onyszkiewicz lived on

BS: No.

MK: No? Huh, that's amazing.

BS: There was the the Zarembski, uh, they had uh, dry goods store on Chene, uh, between Palmer and Hendrie. Uh, they had a daughter who married Szymanski. Szymanski was an artist. He worked with that same group. Uh, as I say, they did big theaters, big churches.

MK: What was Szymanski first name?

BS: Jerry. He was a musician. He was a band leader but he was, no, I beg your pardon, he was not.

END of Tape 2 side A

BEGINNING of Tape 2 side B

MK: What about Chylinski?

BS: That was his name. C-H-Y-L-I-N-S-K-I. Uh, he was one of those great artists.

MK: Mm-hm. Did he live in the neighborhood?

BS: Yeah.

MK: You don't remember where he lived.

BS: I don't remember where he lived.

MK: Uh, you mentioned early Mr. Gebert, uh, who lived in the in the, above the uh, above the garage in your old house in 1920. Did you ever run into Mr. Gebert after that?

BS: No, his son of course was, uh, a writer for the *Detroit News*. Armand Gebert. He's retired now and married Eleanor Breitmeyer, uh, the uh, society editor for the *News*.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: I don't know what happened to Gebert after he left here.

MK: Well, he he, I know he went back to Poland. I know his son in Poland.

BS: Yeah.

MK: Konstanty Gebert, we've met many times.

BS: Well he came, he was in the United States several times, [i.e., Boleslaw Gebert – MK] uh, but he had diplomatic immunity. Because he was one of the Polish delegations of the UN.

MK: Mm-hm, mm-hm. Do you, did you run into him at all in Detroit after that in 1920, after that time when he was in your---

BS: No.

MK: You never, you never came across him.

BS: He married, uh, uh, Dr. Henik's sister. Henik was a doctor. He had an office I think in Hamtramck. He organized what later became North Detroit General Hospital.

MK: And, uh, was Mr. Gebert at all associated with Stanley Nowak?

BS: There was an association although, I don't know what happened.

MK: Right.

BS: I don't know how close they were, what they did or did not do.

MK: Mm-hm, mm-hm. Do you remember the Yeman's Hall, the Worker's Hall on Yemen's there?

BS: Yes, sure.

MK: Was that uh, associated with Communists, was it associated with Socialists? Was it, who, who, who who

BS: I don't know. It was a workman's circle I think they called it.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: One time. Then there was another hall on, uh, Carpenter just east of Joseph Campau. It was a Ukrainian club.

MK: What about on Chene Street besides Dom Ludowy, of course, you know Dom Polski. Were there other halls that were typical meeting places for the, for both social, maybe political, cultural activities.

BS: There were, but I can't remember.

MK: Okay.

BS: There was a restaurant on, uh, Chene between Hancock and Forest on the east side of the street, uh, my father's aunt, uh, was married to the man who had the restaurant. Irla. I-R-L-A. Great chef, but he was a gambler. Couldn't hold a job any place. And cooked in the best places. When the Prince of Wales came to Detroit in 1925 he was working at one of the clubs downtown, I believe it was the University Club or the Detroit Club, uh, he was sent over to the Edsel Ford home on Jefferson Avenue to cook for the Prince of Wales. Uh, But he was a gambler, couldn't hold a job. He'd steal. Steal a box of oranges or a box of steaks or something so he had money to go to the racetrack.

MK: Did you know or hear anything about some of these street gangs in the neighborhood, like the Kirby Street Gang or other gangs.

BS: Yeah, there was a gang, that was on Chene between Milwaukee and the Boulevard there were a couple of bars there I can't remember the name of them. They were notorious. Wisper...my cousin, Jeannette Walczyk bought Wisper and Schwartz. They were just above Witkowski on Chene Street and, uh, they, they didn't break in, they came into her place got her drunk and cleaned out her inventory. I forget the name, it was a gang, it was horrible.

MK: What about crime on the street, was there crime?

BS: Oh yeah.

MK: Uh, what kind of crime was

BS: Every kind. I don't think it was any different than any other part of the city. Uh, I don't have any numbers of course, but I don't think, it was not a notoriously high crime area, I'll put it that way.

MK: Was there any presence of organized crime on the street? Beyond, just, beyond the Polish Bank and that kind of stuff. Was there, was there any like serious organized crime.

BS: Yeah, uh, let's see. There was uh, Big Stack Podulski.

MK: What was that?

BS: Podulski.

MK: Podulski? What did say was the first name?

BS: They called him Big Stack, Stanley Podulski.

MK: Big Stack?

BS: Yeah, and uh, Jaworski, the Jaworski Gang, uh, they got started, as I heard the story in a peculiar way. Uh, these guys were roustabouts who loaded railroad cars when the whisky was coming in from Canada. Uh, the Grand Trunk Railroad had **team** tracks on Dequindre and Warren Avenue. And that's where railroad cars were unloaded. And these guys, they were big kids. Twenty-years-old, husky kids, they unloaded the railroad cars. And, of course when they were loading whisky one of their friends would drive by with a pickup truck and he'd throw a few cases on there. And then after a while they decided, to hell with it, that's hard work, you know, just muscle in on these guys. You don't pay us protection money we're going to blow up the whole railroad car. And, uh, they became bank robbers. Uh, Jaworski was electrocuted in Pennsylvania for blowing up a Brinks truck. He was a cripple. And--

MK: What was his first name, do you know?

BS: I think it was Stanley.

MK: Okay.

BS: Could be wrong. And they robbed the bank on, uh, Chene and uh, Piquette [It was a Central Savings Bank on the corner of Chene and Harper not Piquette in 1925 – MK] in 1925. June I remember, very distinctly. Uh, Kaliszewski was a policeman who walked the beat. And, on this, and they had it timed when he would be walking the beat. On this particular day, his timing was off. His brother had a florist shop on Chene and Medbury, next to the drug store. And they, Kaliszewski's had a baby and he stopped in to see the baby. This is 1925, and that threw his schedule off by 15 minutes. They had it figured it out that that point he should be at the Boulevard. And, as they came out of the bank, the car stalled and they killed him, because he came on the scene, he didn't know what was happening. But he sees two men with a gun so he pulls his gun. And before he had a chance to do anything, they killed him. He's, I remember the police car taking him, Ford car in the back seat. They took him to Receiving Hospital. But, the poor guy was dead.

And they got caught. They went to jail and then, one of them, they came out a few years later and they robbed the *Detroit News* payroll. And they went, that was a no-no. [laughs] Now, the story is that one of the guys that was convicted was not in the deal, but when you're dealing with the *Detroit News* as a complaining witness, it doesn't go. And, turns out, he got pardoned on parole, I think paroled, when Romney was governor. Romney gave a lot of pardons and a lot of paroles. And there was a holdup of a night club on Wyoming Avenue, there was a shooting, and a man's walking down the street with a lot of money in his pocket and a bullet hole in his back. He said "I don't know what happened, somebody shot me!" [laugh] He was just out of Jackson prison, or out of Marquette prison. But they got their start--

MK: Which of them ended up getting electrocuted.

BS: That was Jaworski.

MK: Oh, and you're talking now about--

BS: One of the Podulski's.

MK: Poldulski's. So, the bank robbery on Piquette [Chene and Harper - MK] was Poldulski's.

BS: I'm not sure if it was Jaworski's or Poldulski's. [It was the Podulski's, on June 13, 1925 - MK]

MK: Okay.

BS: They were related. One of them was related to the wife of a furniture-store man on Chene Street. They got their start, as hijackers, they were hijacking whisky.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: During Prohibition. They, they were big time.

MK: Bad guys.

BS: Yeah, they were big time, they had machine guns and they went after the Brinks trucks and that sort of things. Oh yeah. And there was a notorious pimp, a Stanley Zaremba.

MK: Where was he?

BS: Uh, he got his start, uh, his family lived on uh, McDougall Street I think. He got his start selling cars, uh, and uh, in the red light district in Hamtramck and then he hooked up with a woman who was a notorious madame. Uh,

MK: What was her name, do you remember?

BS: Katherine the Great. (laugh) That'd be her name in the underworld. Katherine Walsh, Ward, some such name. Her father was a hotel man in Pennsylvania and they used to come to Detroit to buy whisky. And, uh, they got hooked up and they had brothels all over. They lived on, uh, Frontenac just, uh, north of the Boulevard, where the Boulevard makes the turn. And then he had a real estate office on, uh, Miller and Van Dyke. Uh, he was a notorious pimp and she was a madame. Uh, story was that he was the finger man in the shooting of Senator Hittle during WWII. [This is not the right name. It was Senator Warren G. Hooper. Harry Hittle was a Senator from the 14th district and according to records he died in 1957 in his office. – MK] Senator Hittle [Hooper– MK] was killed in a, an ambush.

MK: Where?

BS: Between Lansing and Jackson. The story was that Stanley, this is an underworld story, what the truth is I don't know, Stanley had brought a gorgeous prostitute up, she was sitting in the gallery in the Senate, and pointed out that this girl was available that night. And going to a motel and there was an accident, they got out of the car and then all of a sudden Hittle [Hooper – MK] was shot. And, that was it, the story is that Hittle [Hooper – MK] was going to testify against some very prominent bankers concerning a bill in the legislature, bribes had been passed, and they had him wiped out.

MK: And this guy lived where now? The finger man?

BS: Zaremba?

MK: Yeah. On McDougall?

BS: Yeah, on McDougall near St. Hyacinth's I can't remember where.

MK: And what year was this, or what years were these.

BS: Well, the shooting...he was killed during the war I think '44 thereabouts. [He was killed on January 11, 1945 on M-99 near Springport, Michigan – MK] Stanley died in about 19...uh 65. He was a little guy. It was a big family. Uh, one was a professor somewhere. One was a, uh, market master for the City of Detroit. Uh, one of them married, uh, Zajac's daughter [Lorraine Zajac – MK] and uh moved to Muskegon, big family. And Stanley was with the black...and he was a pimp

MK: And he, he died of natural causes?

BS: Yeah, yeah. He was, he was a notorious pimp. There there there were several gangs that got their start in the Chene Street days. As I say, Podolski, Jaworski, I can't remember all the names. They were big time.

MK: What about that area in Hamtramck, south Hamtramck near all the plants, you know, Paddy McGraws and those places. Were they, were they Polish run? Were they, who was involved in the Polish community in those places, if anybody?

BS: Well, you know, there were a half a dozen Polish pimps, madams, ran those big brothels. I'd say big, Paddy McGraw had a hotel on Clay Street and it was a big operation. He's one that came into Detroit in the days of WWI when Ford was paying \$5 and Detroit was growing fast. And it seems that a lot of them came in from Missouri, they were good-looking, nice looking German women. And they settled in the Detroit area because there was money, and Hamtramck was still a village, the Dodge Main factory was there, there were other factories, kind of a backwoods area with small houses and that became the red light district.

MK: Mm-hm, and Tenerowicz was--

BS: Tenerowicz was mayor and the story, again, he had a woman working for him, she was related to Gebert and Dr. Henik. DeSatels, Tilly DeSatels.

MK: How is that spelled?

BS: D-E-capital S-A-T-E-L-S. DeSatels. She was very professional.

Phone rings and break

MK: DeSatels.

BS: Tilly DeSatels. Uh, good-looking woman, Ukrainian. Tall, brunette, she worked in his office and apparently they were playing around. Uh, I think Dr. Tenerowicz's wife died, he was big time war hero for WWI. Handsome guy. And apparently the pimps used to bring money into the office and give it to Tilly. And, she'd make a note of it. So then he dumped Tilly and he married a woman by the name, I forget her name...Margaret somebody or other. Beautiful blond woman. She'd been in a Miss America contest or Miss Michigan, German woman. And Tilly spilled the beans and testified and Dr. Ten went to jail. Came out and got elected to Congress.

MK: Hm. Was, part of that neighborhood though was Detroit, so, there must have also been some corruption on the Detroit side.

BS: No, no, no. The cops kept it clean. The police inspector there for a long time, was Davies, and then he opened a police station on Davidson. And, uh, I think Burczyk was a lieutenant or inspector. And they kept things under control, I'm trying to think of the cop that became an inspector-sergeant--

MK: Polish guy?

BS: Yeah, what the hell was his name? Can't remember his name, now. He was an inspector he was in charge of the traffic court detail in Detroit. Herman Zaleski, and, Herman was a sergeant and that was his, he had the market as his detail, but he had the north end of Chene Street. That was his detail.

MK: But, the police station was on Canfield as I remember.

BS: Yeah.

MK: So he was out of that precinct?

BS: Yeah, yeah, number 7.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: Davies lived next door to us above the drug store. He was very high-class, kind of tall, slender Scotchman. He opened the number 11 on Davidson as a policeman.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: And a fellow by the name of Burczyk I think was the inspector or lieutenant and he kept things in order.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: The pool rooms, uh, they did not serve moonshine, they were not blind pigs. You know, they kept things in order.

MK: But the Hamtramck side was wide-open.

BS: Yeah, Hamtramck was wide-open. Jezewski went to jail. He was the first mayor who went to jail for violation of the Olmstead Act. He allowed blind pigs and stills to operate. And--

MK: How's his name spelled?

BS: Jezewski.

MK: Oh, Jezewski, okay.

BS: That's right. His daughter married a cousin of mine, Dr. Kossayda. That's right. Jezewski was a pharmacist came to Detroit from Buffalo.

MK: There's a Jezewski pharmacy in Hamtramck

BS: That's right, that's it.

MK: So that's his family's business.

BS: That was his business.

MK: That was his business.

BS: Yeah, P.C. That was Jezewski. Had a great sense of humor. Spent thousands of dollars for a practical joke. Really great guy. His, his son just died recently. His daughter died a few years ago. She was married to my cousin Dr. Kossayda. They were high school sweethearts.

MK: Kossayda? How's that spelled.

BS: K-O-S-S-A-Y-D-A.

MK: Okay.

BS: Both dead now. But he went to jail, he came out, and he got reelected mayor. And then Tenerowicz came out of jail and he got elected to congress. The people in Hamtramck looked after their own.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: Another interesting family is the Wilkowski family.

MK: Right, tell me about the Wilkowski's.

BS: Yes, Tony and I were schoolmates in law school. I probated his estate when he died about a dozen years ago. He had two sons living in Indiana.

MK: Do you have an address for his sons? Or a way of contacting them?

BS: I suppose, no, I don't know.

MK: I, I wouldn't mind getting in contact with them.

BS: I don't know where.

MK: Do you know where in Indiana? What, what town?

BS: The only place you could find it conveniently is to check the probate court records in Detroit, uh, and you'll get the address of his two sons.

MK: What year was probate?

BS: Oh, 19, approximately a dozen years ago. That'd be '88, I don't know, somewhere around there.

MK: Okay, so tell me about Anthony Wilkowski.

BS: Well the father came to Detroit to escape the German draft in the 1880s. Died in 1933. I ran into a relative in Poland who was quite a character. He had this big hardware store on Chene and Hancock. He had a daughter who married John Gamalski, who had a hardware store on Charles and Mt. Elliot. Builders' supply and Gamalski had four or five sons. Very very nice family. A.J. was a brilliant guy, but he was not smart. He was clever but not smart. And he went to jail for staging a recount in 19--, after the 1932 elections.

MK: So, tell me about his political, what, what did he get elected to?

BS: He was state senator. From the Chene Street district.

MK: On a democrat ticket.

BS: On a democratic ticket, yeah. And there was a recount in Wayne County for I think prosecuting attorney and Secretary of State, and Bruno Nowicki, you know Bruno?

MK: I know of him.

BS: Yeah, Bruno went to jail, after the recount. Bruno was the actual fingers that

MK: What was the recount about? What were they trying to do?

BS: I think it was for the office of Secretary of State after the 1932 election. I can't remember the details, now. They had space in the Barlum tower and they were counting the ballots and there were stories that they had marked the ballots and they did all kinds of things wrong. A.J. went to jail. And Bruno Nowicki went to jail, I forget how, I think there were about 7 people that went to jail. Unfortunately they didn't have a, a brother who was governor or a favorable Supreme Court [laugh]. They did it the hard way. And, so he went to jail and came back and, got reelected and the Senate wouldn't seat him. They tied it in with Diggs. Diggs was the undertaker.

MK: Right, Charles Diggs.

BS: And the Senate by a resolution kept both of them out. So A.J. got elected to the constitutional convention as a delegate. And, he got a bunch of guys like Don Binkowski and Frank Balcer, Martin Baginski. They weren't friends, but politics makes strange bedfellows. And, uh, and the last days of the convention he got some things in that he couldn't be kept from the Senate. And they tied it in with a one-man, one-vote thing, one-man one-job. Public officials could not hold two jobs. And, and he was vindicated.

He was basically a nice person. A.J. was really a nice guy. And his brother got elected to the Senate. His brother was crazy. He took a bribe and went to jail.

MK: What was his brother's name?

BS: I think it was Leo.

MK: Mm.

BS: Stupid. And they had a brother, Paul, uh, who was a very sharp guy, very clean. He and the Ossowski's formed a a Moon oil company. Moon and Star Petroleum. They had a yard on Six Mile and Davidson. Dr. Osowski, the M.D., and Dr. Osowski, the dentist, put the money in. And Paul was the driving force in the 1920s. And they made money and were successful. Moon Oil and Star Oil, I thought, I, I don't know. Which was which, one sold gasoline the other sold lubricating products. Uh, and, Paul got into big time real estate. I think they're all dead now. A.J. ran the hardware store, uh, his wife divorced him, so he married one of the Chrzanowski girls. His son went to law school with me, and the son stayed in the military for a year. He didn't want to come back to Detroit. His son left a pretty substantial estate, like \$2 million. But he had no tangible property, all he had was money. Lived in Westland in a furnished apartment and leased a car. He married a colonel's daughter, he was a doctor, they were from Tennessee as I recall, and she was a snake worshipper. So, when he left the service, came into Detroit, now this was '58, '59, one of those years, and he comes to see me, you know, we're schoolmates. And he stopped the service, he was a major, he'd been in the service since 1940. And, you know, we're friends. He's living in Detroit somewhere, I don't remember where. And he had these two kids, they were little kids, I don't know how old they were, maybe 4 and 6. So I said, "Hey, you and your wife join us for dinner at the yacht club next week, uh, my lion's club you know installation." "Oh, sure, fine, oh, great." So he and his wife arrive, she's a good-looking woman. And my wife was there, and we had the usual kind of group that comes to a Lion's Club, you know, lawyers, some judges, doctors, businessmen, all nice people. We're at a downtown club, and my wife has whisky and a cigarette and she says in a loud voice, "Tony, don't ever bring me around these kind of people again. I don't like the idea of sitting at a table with a woman drinking booze and smoking cigarettes and blowing smoke in my face." [laughs] She just arrived in town, she's got to make friends, with his schoolmates. [laughs]. You know the kind of impression that made. [laughs]

MK: So what happened?

BS: Well they were divorced later, and Tony he died about a dozen years ago, maybe 15 years I can't remember exactly. And, so I probated his estate here. [laughs]

MK: So he had, those kids were his kids by her.

BS: Oh yes, yeah, oh yeah, sure, beautiful woman. But she was a snake worshipper. Her father's an M.D., he's in the service. I presume she was in the service in Germany. I

think they were married in Germany, I'm not sure. She saw women drinking whisky, she saw women smoking cigarettes. Right?

MK: Right.

BS: So she got off to a hell of a good start. And my wife said, don't ever bring that kind of a woman around. [Laughs]

MK: Bizarre.

BS: Yeah.

MK: You mentioned Charles Diggs and I'm curious as far as the African American community, the Black community in the area. Were there any Black residents in that area? In the '20s, the '30s, '40s that you remember? When you were there?

BS: They were west of the tracks. And south of Canfield.

MK: OK, there were none living on Chene in this neighborhood.

BS: There was one white kid in Ferry School. I was in the--

MK: You mean one Black kid.

BS: Yea, C. B. White. I went to Greusel School, I don't think I saw any Black kids. Burroughs School I don't think I saw any Black kids.

MK: I had a whole series of people who don't know each other tell me about a Black iceman, Mr. Green. He used to deliver ice in that neighborhood.

BS: My father had a Black porter in the poolroom.

MK: Do you remember his name?

BS: Eddie something, I don't remember. He was a tall skinny guy. He had a relative who was a bell captain in one of the hotels downtown. So Eddie got a job in the hotel, I don't know whether he was porter in the barber shop maybe, or bootblack or something of that sort. So the businessmen gave him a party. They met in some store and they had coffee and cake. And everybody put in a buck or two so when Eddie moved downtown he had some clothes. They bought him a suitcase and suit, shirts, shoes and that sort of thing. Eddie used to take me to the barber shop to get a haircut. My mother would give him some money he'd take me to the shoe store to buy shoes.

MK: Where did you go to the haircut, which barber did you go to?

BS: Szczepanowski. He was next door to Niebrzydowski [Niebrzydowski was across the street I believe – MK] on Chene and Farnsworth.

MK: What do you remember about Mr. Szczepanowski?

BS: He had four boys. Phil was the oldest. he was kind of a show off kid, got killed--he put his face through a windshield of a car and then he got killed in an auto accident. Roman and I were schoolmates. We were exactly the same age. And Arthur was the youngest. He called himself Arthur Ace, changes his name. Made a lot of money.

MK: To what? Changed his name to what?

BS: Ace. A-C-E. They called him the ace when he was a kid. Roman, Arthur, Lennie was the youngest. Lennie left a nice family of girls. He died at an early age. Szczepanowski had this little barbershop on Chene near Farnsworth. They lived on Miles, near Harper Van Dyke. They had a fire in the house. So the kids slept in our house for two months. While the house was being rebuilt.

MK: What was Mr. Szczepanowski's first name? Do you remember?

BS: Albert, Wojciech.

MK: Wojciech, OK. Where did you get your shoes?

BS: I don't remember. Lintke, Lintke on Chene Street?

MK: Littky?

BS: L-I-N-T-K-T-E. [There was a Littky dry goods store on Chene – MK]

MK: I don't remember.

BS: I think so. And then Cichy had an ice cream parlor. He developed the Frostbite. He invented the Frostbite. His daughter was a school teacher or his daughter-in-law. Right here at Finney High School.

MK: Where was Cichy's store at?

BS: On , between Kirby and Frederick.

MK: On the west side of the street?

BS: East side. Next to the drugstore.

MK: Next to Przybylski's?

BS: next to Przybylski's.

MK: What years was this?

BS: In the 20's. He sold Frostbites in the theaters. Rozmaitosci and Fredro. That was his invention the Frostbite.

MK: Do you remember his first name?

BS: No. No I don't.

MK: Because I remember I've seen photographs of that building next to Przybylski's and used to be, when I saw it, it probably was early 40's late 30's was Chene Millinery was there.

BS: That was Mrs. Dobiesz, Stella Dobiesz. [Stella Dobiesz was across the street at 5347 Chene, until People's Book Store moved in during the mid 1930s. She then moved down one block to the north and across the street near Hoffman's. The millinery shop I am talking about was Elsie Herzog and then Irene Kubek and then it became the Maternicki toy and stamp store— MK]

MK: And then it became a stamp store, Maternicki.

BS: That could be.

MK: It became a stamp store after...in the 40's late 40's.

BS: Yea. Mrs. Dobiesz later moved on Chene near Ferry. Mr. Dobiesz was a Bohemian. Spoke several languages, Polish, Bohemian, Czech, German. He was a skilled tradesman. He and my father worked in the same factory during the winters when ..

MK: What was his first name?

BS: Adam.

MK: Adam Dobiesz. And what about her? What do you remember about Mrs. Dobiesz?

BS: They came from Boston. They came to Detroit right after World War I, I think. He was a tall slender man. As a matter of fact when I graduated from high school, he gave me his tuxedo. And she was my uncle's girlfriend at one time. Adam Dobiesz died in 1955 in Wayne County Hospital. He had been sick with rheumatoid arthritis. Just crippled him. His hands were like this. Couldn't walk.

MK: How about her? What happened to her?

BS: She died in about 1976 or 7. A bandit held her and she kind of resisted. There was a stairway to the basement. He threw her down the steps and she had a broken hip and some head injuries and she died a couple of years later.

MK: Where was she living at that point?

BS: Above the store.

MK: On Chene Street?

BS: Yea and her sister is married to John Golinski. He was a skilled tradesman. There were two apartments up there. One lived in one the other lived in the other.

MK: Can you tell me about Ms. Dobiesz, what she looked like, what kind of personality she had?

BS: Oh, she was all charm. She was a little woman. I would say maybe 5'2," slender built. All charm. Made nice hats. She knew how to put a hat on a lady. Made a lot of money, tremendous amount of money. Across from Zukowski there and then made enough money so she bought the building next to, what the hell was on the corner? There was a photographer.

MK: Hoffman.

BS: Hoffman. Lytinski before that. I forget. But she was there on Chene Street. That's where she died. They had no children. And I guess she had some nieces. One of them went to college with me. Her father was either a tailor or shoemaker. Milwaukee between Chene and Jos Campau.

MK: Her father?

BS: Her brother.

MK: Oh, her brother. What was her brother's name? What was her maiden name.

BS: I can't remember. Then she had some relatives come here from Poland in about 1960, Dabrowski. Mr. Dabrowski was an agronomist. He knew how to breed or crossbreed apple pollinate, apple trees and that sort of thing. They had a relative on a farm near Grand Rapids. And they went out there and things didn't work out so I got him a job in a factory in Detroit. He died, I don't know how many years ago. She died about four five years ago.

MK: Ms. Dobiesz, what did she look like? How would you describe her?

BS: As I said she was a small woman. Wore glasses. Attractive, nice looking woman. And all charm, all personality. Knew how to greet the ladies. Knew how to put a hat

on..."just a minute, just a minute, just wait. I'm going to do this, I'm going to do this. I'm going to put this on." All of a sudden, forty dollar hat.

MK: Did she speak Polish to her--

BS: Oh no, no, she spoke Polish, she spoke English with a Polish accent.

BS: There was another character on Chene Street, John Werner, he was a tailor. I don't know if you've ever have heard of him.

MK: Is he related to the Werner family that owned the sweet shop?

BS: No no no.

MK: I haven't heard about John Werner.

BS: John Werner came to Detroit from the east somewhere, Passaic New Jersey maybe. He learned the tailoring art in the east. He was a fine tailor. He lost a leg as a kid in an auto accident, so he had an artificial limb. And when he came to Detroit I think he lived in a back room in our house for two weeks maybe until he got started. And he left Detroit in the 1960s. Went to Reno, Nevada...left Chene Street in the '30s. And he was in the Empire Building on Washington Boulevard. He did alterations for some of the stores on Washington Boulevard and tailoring.

MK: What was characteristic about him?

BS: Well he was kind of a philosopher. He'd look at a lady walking down the street or restaurant or something and he'd say "That woman's got those horrible thin lips. that peak nose. She's a bitch. She's a horrible person." [Laughs] And if there'd be a young woman walking down with nice shapely legs, "dangerous instrument. She could break a man's back." [Laughs]. And he was a kind of philosopher type.

MK: Was he Polish?

BS: Oh yea. Sure very Polish. Had curly hair, smoked a cigar. And the bootleggers got their clothes from him. He did alterations on Washington Boulevard for several years.

MK: Where was he working on Chene Street?

BS: Ahh, just south of Hendrie. [5750 Chene according to 1926-7 Polk Directory – MK]

MK: What side of the street?

BS: On the east side of the street, about the second building. And as I say, he moved to Reno, Nevada. All the dandies came to his store. He tailored. Charged a lot of money. No horseshit about it. You know, he didn't screw around with factory workers. the

bootleggers, the racketeers, the pimps bought their clothes from him. And then he moved to Reno. He liked that kind of an operation. He liked the lively thing. Detroit got kind of stuck in the mud. One thing about Mrs. Dobiesz, she made a fortune. She had a little gift shop in the Tuller Hotel during World War II. And the ladies of the evening would come in to buy a cashmere sweater for somebody, a gentleman would buy it for her. She'd sell that same sweater over ten times in a night. [Laughs] A man would pay \$40 dollars for it. The girl came back an hour later and got \$20 and it was sold an hour later. [Laughs] She was open evenings 'til midnight. She sold nylon stockings which were a precious commodity just like gold. There might have been a ceiling price of a dollar and a half. She got \$15 for them. And she sold cashmere sweaters and that kind of stuff. Made a fortune.

MK: This is out of the Tuller?

BS: The Tuller Hotel. It was down in the half basement. There were four or five stores there. Facing Washington Boulevard and Park Avenue. She had one of those little stores. Mrs. Gulen, Gulian, I think they were Armenians. Had a jewelry store. And I think she had a counter in that jewelry store. And that was where the ladies of the evening came in with a gentleman and got a ring or wristwatch.

MK: So she was doing both stores at the same time?

BS: No, Mrs. Gulian had the jewelry store. Dobiesz had the gloves.

MK: But she was still on Chene Street? So she was running back and forth between two stores?

BS: She never drove a car. Took a taxi. That's right, streetcar and taxi. Took a streetcar downtown and came home in a taxi at night. Did very well, very enterprising, very shrewd.

MK: That's very interesting.

BS: Pardon?

MK: That's a great story.

BS: Oh, yea. As I say, the ladies of the evening came by and cashmere sweater fifty bucks. An hour later came back got \$20 bill for it. [Laughs] Sure. She had to support her husband. He hadn't worked since 1925. He died 30 years later. He was in and out of hospitals.

MK: Uhum. The connection with me was my mother when she came to the United States in '51. We were Displaced Persons. We didn't know any of the customs here. We moved to Lyman Street. Then she went to St. Stan's for the first time to Mass. And she never wore a hat in church. There was nothing, in Poland there weren't any customs

about women having to cover their head. She came in church and she was just hounded out of the church.

BS: Yea.

MK: They absolutely--and how disgraceful that she didn't wear a hat.

BS: That's right.

MK: So the next day she went down Monday to Ms. Dobiesz's store and bought a hat.

BS: That would be right. My mother was an excellent cook. Knew how to bake. And ladies like Mrs. Dobiesz would come to her to learn to cook and bake. "How do you make this? How do you make *nalesniki*, how do you make *paszteciki*, how do you make *pierogi*" and that sort of thing? "How do you make *paczki*?"

MK: Did your mom work outside of the home at any point?

BS: No, well while my father was in the garage business she was the bookkeeper. And the reason my father needed a bookkeeper. Most of the big business he did was servicing cars for bootleggers. And selling of gasoline for cars and so forth. And it strictly had to be a cash business. In fact most of them would pay in advance. Guy had two or three cars and different people driving them, so she had a ledger book for him. And he'd put in a hundred bucks, no address, just telephone number, maybe two telephone numbers. And the people who were authorized to charge. They had to sign their name in the book. And they came in bought gasoline or have a tire serviced or whatever, whatever car service. They'd sign and when they got down to ten dollars or so, she'd call them on the phone. "Your account is down. Come in with another hundred bucks."

MK: This was the gas station that was where, on--?

BS: On Conant Avenue. The business was a big business. I think my father had about a dozen people working for him.

MK: Conant and what, again?

BS: Garvin. [Jayne Playfield is on that corner – MK] Where the Cleveland School is, Kopecky Mattress factory.

MK: No, I'm thinking--

BS: It's just north of the Hamtramck city limits.

MK: Is it north of Carpenter?

BS: It's about three streets north.

MK: OK.

BS: Cleveland School is on Charles.

MK: OK. I know where that is. I know where Charles is.

BS: So it's a block south. Kopecky Mattress factory is in there now. My father had a garage there for about three years. It was a big business. Tremendous business. One of the big items from a profit standpoint was making beer trucks out of Cadillac limousines. And the reason they wanted the Cadillacs, the back door was wider. You could put a barrel of beer in conveniently. The Packard or Lincoln did not have as wide a door. It was big business, servicing bootleggers' cars. [Laughs] They would buy cars from undertakers, the Cadillac limousines. The car was three years old had to be replaced at 20,000 miles. Where did it go? To Mt. Olivet cemetery. It didn't go anywhere. On Sunday, maybe the undertaker would drive a priest out to a summer cottage. So these cars would come in, 20,000 miles. And my job was to take out the wooden floor boards and take out the seats. The mechanic would have a team of maybe four men, who worked in the factory. They'd come in after work, go home at 3:30, eat some dinner. Four thirty they were in the garage and worked til ten o'clock, maybe eleven o'clock and they worked as a team. They got paid so much for the job. Weld in a steel floor into the car. Put in a seat for the driver. They'd be seats out of the Packard Victoria. It was a big seat. And they'd build a steel cage around so if the load shifted, it wouldn't crush the driver. Now this had to be steel. It couldn't be anything, couldn't be wood. Now you're laughing at this. Put in booster springs and so when the car was loaded with beer car rode level. Tune up the engine. New belts. New wires. New everything. Rebuild the carburetor, chafe the valves. So the car had pep. And fix it all up. It would be a thousand dollar job to rebuild a Cadillac. Make it into a beer truck. Then they would use upholstery material to , so that if you looked into the car from a distance, it looked like there were seats in it. But there weren't any. [Laughs] There was just the seat for the driver. And they would tint the windows. That was a big business. And they bought gas and oil and tires for the cars. So that was my mother's job. She had to do the payroll.

MK: Wow, That's pretty interesting.

BS: If you go that neighborhood, north of Hamtramck, between Carpenter and Six Mile Road.

MK: I go there a lot because I go to Buddy's. I go to Buddy's a lot so I drive that stretch all the time.

BS: On some of those side streets, go into an alley and you'll see a little house, five room cottage type house and a fancy garage. Cement block garage, big garage. Twenty four feet long. Big high doors, wide. And they made beer in that garage. You think I'm kidding? It was a fermenting vat in the floor of the garage. The pumps and they had

water in the garage. And that's where they made the beer. And that had to be big enough so they could take the beer out in a tank truck to a bottling plant.

MK: Wow.

BS: Sure, a cement vat built under the floor.

MK: I'll do that. The next time I drive up there I'll drive down through

BS: Some of those houses have one. Or some of those big, well you won't see them anymore, because prohibition's been repealed for almost seventy years. But in the thirties you would see a big two family house and then part of the roof was new. The reason was that they had a still run from the basement all the way to the attic. To make moonshine.

MK: Somebody told me that there was this Jewish fish market on the corner of Grandy and Chene. Where Grandy came into Chene.

BS: That's right.

MK: And that during prohibition, that's where people bought sugar, hundred pound bags. That those guys would sell sugar.

BS: Everybody sold sugar. Everybody sold sugar. It was not a secret. Everybody sold sugar. And the stills and the breweries would try to locate near a bakery. So they could have the smell to camouflage or some other kind of a business where there would be a smell. But the building is still there. It's either on Jos Campau or on Mitchell, between Gratiot and Mack. That was a big brewery. It had a some kind of a machine shop label on it. And they brewed the beer there. Now the other money my father made was installing tanks in moving vans. They had to be specially made. You couldn't put a **state** gasoline tank because it didn't have any baffles. If the load got shifting the truck would turn over. So these were specially built tanks. They had maybe four or five compartments in--200 gallons in each one, 300 gallons. And they were put into a moving van. And then you had to have a big opening to get in to clean the tank because you would leave the yeast behind and you could contaminate the next load. So they were expensive deals. The beer was brewed as a I say in this brewery or wherever and then was then taken in this tank truck with 1000 or 1500 gallons to a bottling plant. The beer was bottled or put into barrels. All was not done under the same roof. But the sugar, everybody had sugar. It was no secret that you went to this store or that store to buy sugar. You bought sugar everywhere. There was no control over it. But the big thing about moonshining, the auto industry switched from lacquer which was alcohol solvent to Duco, in about 1923. Right, you spray Duco. But apparently a lot of people in the front office didn't know about that because they were importing beverage quality alcohol right up into 1930. And everybody knew about it. There was the Anderson Body factory I think it was on Ferry or on Kirby near Mt. Elliot where they built custom bodies for Packard. And, the Packard factory. And the tank cars would come in with alcohol from

Philadelphia, **Public Alcohol** American Distillers. Four or five tank cars. And there'd be a line of trucks on the street with barrels. Ha ha ha. Beverage quality alcohol, hey the best stuff! And it wasn't until '28 that the Feds required that there'd be a contaminator put in which wasn't poisonous but would make you pretty sick. It had a blue color to it. And I don't know what the chemistry was but the bootleggers figured out pretty soon how to take that stuff out. It didn't take them long. But all the kids knew about it. Hell, we were going to Greusel School and you'd see all these trucks lined up. Everybody knew about it. There was no big secret because you had Hupmobile and you had Briggs and Fisher Body and Murray Body and Packard and all these factories and a whole train load of alcohol would come in. Every two or three weeks, you know, every factory got three or four car loads. Everybody knew about except the Feds. Somebody in the front office knew about it. This was not a great secret. This stuff is bulky.

MK: Well you know the technology's changed so its clear somebody had to make the order knowing that the technology was different.

BS: Sure, sure. Ten years before repeal the industry quit using alcohol. The base solvents. But it was there.

MK: You mentioned the bakeries because they were trying to cover up the smell but you know you mentioned way before in our conversation, Niebrzydowski and his bakery. You didn't say much about it. I wonder if you could tell me about the Niebrzydowski's and their bakery and kind of what you remember of that?

BS: Well they were next to Szczepanowski's barber shop. Mr. Niebrzydowski was a big handsome guy. I mean big, six two, maybe mustache, blonde hair and Mrs. Niebrzydowski's brother was a baker. They made some money and then they moved north on Chene Street where they built this modern building which later became a dime store. Just north of Kirby on the west side of the street. They had two daughters and a son. Elenore was about a year older than me and Irene was a year or maybe two years younger and then Chester was about five years younger. Now Chester died early, Eleanor went on a trip to Poland and never came back. Apparently she got married in Poland. And Irene married Nowakowski. Nowakowski had been manager of Dom Polski. He's dead. She's living in Warren somewhere. All very nice people. High class.

MK: You said they first bought a building that was a dime store?

BS: No later it was the dime store. He built a brand new building.

MK: So was that the Woolworth store?

BS: That's right, it was the Woolworth store later. And Ochylski had the butcher shop next door I think or two doors down. They were on the west side of Chene. Between Kirby and Ferry.

MK: So Niebrzydowski actually had that building built?

BS: Yep.

MK: But then Modern Bakery..

BS: That was Modern Bakery.

MK: That was Modern Bakery?

BS: Uh huh. Oh yea.

MK: So he was in that Woolworth building?

BS: After he died or retired, Woolworth bought the building. I remember that distinctly because I had a lawsuit against Woolworth. A lady fell on the sidewalk in front of it.

MK: What year was that?

BS: I can't remember the year.

MK: So the Modern Bakery didn't move over at all after that?

BS: They went out of business. I can't remember what year it was. They moved from the east side of Chene to the west side in the 1930s. I can't remember what year. Both girls were nice looking. Eleanor, the older was a brunette, Irene the younger girl, tall, very tall, very beautiful, today she has gorgeous white hair. I see her at club meetings.

MK: So she still in Warren you say.

BS: Yea, I think she's in Warren.

MK: And it would be Nowakowski, Irene Nowakowski?

BS: Yea, yea.

MK: I'll see if I can track her down.

BS: And a lady who sees her quite often is Nancy Milewski.

MK: Do you now how I can get hold of Nancy Milewski?

BS: She lives in Warren, she's in the phone book. Nancy lived on Farnsworth, I think. Her picture's on the wall there. She was a schoolmate of wife's at Northeastern High School. They belonged to the Polish Aid Society. I'm trying to think who else... You

mentioned Werner's. One Werner family had a confectionary store. The other Werner's who had the newsstand. They were cripples.

MK: Were they Werner's I thought their names was Lewandowski. The cripples.

BS: Lewandowski?, maybe the mother was a Werner.

MK: Tell me about that cripple store.

BS: Well there was the oldest one was all crippled up. They had this newsstand and he was in a wheelchair. And he sold newspapers through a window. They had a sister who was kind of a the manger. But I can't tell you anymore than that.

MK: What kind of stuff did they sell?

BS: Oh they sold newspapers, they sold magazines, and they sold tobacco and candy. They were on the west side of Chene, between Medbury and Harper. And they had a about three windows, and they had a cubicle. They would open the window and you came in and you bought the Polish paper, you bought a Russian paper from them, you got the *Police Gazette*, you got *The Sporting News*, you got the racetrack paper from them.

MK: Somebody told me that they also sold girlie magazines.

BS: Pardon?

MK: They also sold girlie magazines.

BS: Oh yea, oh yea, sure. They sold cigars. They sold cigarettes to kids. [Laughs]. Sure

MK: People called them *kulawy*.

BS: *Kulawy* that's right. And Jaglowicz had the shoe store on the east side of the street. Later he, the family was always involved in amateur sports. The first store, I think, was on Chene, you mentioned where I got shoes, Chene and Theodore, on the west side of the street. Then they moved, I think George, one of the kids, was on Chene between Medbury and Harper, on the east side of the street. I think one of them is out here in St. Clair Shores. He's a real estate man. Third generation.

MK: No kidding. Jaglowicz is still alive?

BS: Yea, I think it's the third or fourth generation.

MK: Jaglowicz and he's a real estate man in St. Clair Shores?

BS: On Harper Avenue.

MK: I'll follow that one up. That store, the Jaglowicz shoe store between Medbury and Harper there, that building is still standing but it's going to be torn down.

BS: It was later an auto parts.

MK: Right Bray Auto Parts. And that building has now just been sold and Bray's closed. And I was just there and I was talking to someone, that building's going to go down. It's the last building...

BS: The corner was a bank, Bank of the Commonwealth. Borkowski was the manager and he lived above it. He owned the building. I think he started off as some kind of a mortgage broker. And then the Commonwealth Bank came in. It was a good corner.

MK: That was the corner that I remember...

BS: It was a red brick building.

MK: Yes, because the Genca Studio was across the street.

BS: Yea, across the street.

MK: Because Marie Genca, I interviewed her. And she told me that when there was a run on the banks, she would look out her window and she remembers that day when they ran on that particular day. And the people in line were crying and getting angry. And people trying to break in.

BS: 1933. There was a Bank on Chene and Ferry, Peninsular Bank. That was held up by the Jaworski gang. Same car, Chrysler Imperial. And the car wouldn't start. It was a hot day and these cars would develop a vapor lock. These high compression engines.

MK: So what happened?

BS: Well, that's when they got caught.

MK: Oh, that's when they got caught.

BS: On Piquette Street, on Harper. Sure, they did all those banks.

MK: Did you see the policeman being taken away?

BS: I saw the car driving down Chene Street the mechanical siren. Policeman sitting in the back seat holding Kaliszewski. Then the daughter, the girl who was born that week had a store on Warren and Chene. She bought, she had a florist shop.

MK: Florist shop, sure the Kaliszewski florist. I didn't realize the connection.

BS: Yea. Her parents had the store next to the drugstore on Chene and Medbury. It was Okray's Building. John Okray was a court clerk in Recorder's Court. And the family had a grocery store. I remember going to the grocery store to buy things for my mother. They tore the old wooden building down and put up this modern building. I think it's still there.

MK: It's great. Speaking of police officers, any other ones that stick in your mind? People on the street, police that were there that you recall besides Mr. Kaliszewski who was killed.

BS: Yea, well, Ziolkowski, just died a few years ago. His son is a Recorder's Court judge, a Circuit Court judge. I remember when he came on Chene Street.

MK: What was his name?

BS: Ziolkowski, Z-I-O-L-K-O-W-S-K-I. Eugene Ziolkowski, he became a policeman in 1930s. He walked the beat on Chene Street. I knew him well. When he was retired he was an inspector at Connors and Gratiot. I went to their fiftieth wedding anniversary about 15 years ago. Henry Majewski walked the beat on Chene Street. He was a cop for fifty some years. He retired to San Diego. Now he retired as commander.

MK: Is he still alive?

BS: Yea, in San Diego.

MK: You don't have nay contact with him?

BS: Oh yea.

MK: You do? Do you have an address for him, a phone number?

BS: Upstairs somewhere.

MK: If I call you sometime to get that address? Because I'd try to track him down.

BS: When he came to Detroit from Cleveland he lived on Walden Street with his aunt and uncle.

MK: There is another family that you probably know, the Szymanski's who owned the bar on Garfield.

BS: That was Judge Frank's parents.

MK: Right. Did you know that family.

BS: Sure.

MK: Can you tell me about them, the bar...

BS: I don't know much about that. I knew Frank. He was a probate judge. Died about 15 years ago. His son David is a judge. His other son is general counsel for the Teamsters Union. Another son runs the Polish paper in Detroit. Daughter is married to, who the hell is Maryann married to? Pontiac dealer in Royal Oak. I see them all the time.

MK: But you don't know much about the bar they had?

BS: No. Frank was a football player for Notre Dame. Big hero. He was the first person to get a car at Briggs Stadium when he played for the Tigers—for the Detroit Lions. He lived on the next street. Big house. He had five boys and one girl, I think.

MK: Anyone else you remember that you want to share with us?

BS: Wojcinski and Koscinski, they were lawyers on Chene Street.

End of Side B Tape 2

Beginning of Side A Tape 3.

MK: You were going to be talking about?

BS: Well, there are two lawsuits that were reported to the Michigan Supreme Court involving the Polish newspaper. One is, the last one involved John Poleski, P-O-L-E-S-K-I. John was candidate for public office, I think, for Common Council in Detroit about 1925. And the Polish paper libeled him horribly.

MK: Which Polish paper?

BS: What is now the *Polish Weekly*.

MK: The *Dziennik Polski*?

BS: The *Dziennik Polski*. The American Publishing Company. Koscinski was his lawyer. They got a substantial judgment for libel and slander.

MK: When was this?

BS: 1925.

MK: What was Koscinski's first name?

BS: Arthur. He was a federal judge. John Poleski was a very fine lawyer. He had an office where he lived. Where **western tabulator** was on, on Chene near Medbury. And he had an office on Chene Street.

MK: In that building?

BS: I'm not sure. I'm not sure. I can't answer that. He was a veteran of World War I. He was a schoolmate of **Francis** (Prentice?) Brown of Albion College and a close friend of Frank Murphy. They were schoolmates. After service in World War II [World War I – MK] he stayed in France for a year in Lyon, France for graduate studies. I don't know what he studied. He was a very, very talented man. His family came from Toledo. His father was a tailor, who had learned tailoring in London. And as I say, he went to Albion College, went to the University of Michigan Law School. Francis Brown they were roommates and Frank Murphy were schoolmates. And had a successful practice. Apparently John was a member of the Masonic Lodge. Which is no crime. And the Polish paper libeled him horribly. He sued and got a judgment against the paper. And this followed a lawsuit which came on earlier with the first Polish lawyer in Detroit. His daughter was married to Pasternacki. And his son--

MK: There was a doctor named Pasternacki.

BS: Yea, that was Molly's husband. And she had a brother who was lawyer, what the hell was his name? [It was August Cyrowski. See below – MK] He ran for the state senate in 1912 in Detroit and the Polish paper libeled him. Said he's not Polish, he's German. Well, his family came from that part of Poland which had been German. And he was quite an athlete and he played sports with a German club. So they said he was not Polish, he's German and they libeled him something horrible. And he sued and got judgment against the paper. That was the biggest judgment for libel and slander in the history of the State of Michigan in 1915. Ten years later did the same thing.

MK: Was the paper run by the same person at that point? Was it Januszewski?

BS: No, no. Januszewski didn't come into the paper until the '20s. I'm trying to think. A man by the name of Welzant was running the paper.

MK: Was what?

BS: Welzant. W-E-L-Z-A-N-T. I'm trying to think of the name of that lawyer, Jesus. I've got an article about him somewhere in my book. About the Polish lawyers. It shows you the kind of discord there was in the Polish community.

MK: Koscinski. Can we talk a little more about Arthur Koscinski?

BS: Well, he was a very scholarly lawyer. Graduated from the University of Michigan and very good practice. Became, Truman appointed him a federal judge in 1945. He

died in office in 1957, I think. His son was later a judge. His son had some problems. He didn't get a fair shake from high-class counsel that he hired. He paid a lot of money for lawyers and all he got was a receipt. His brother, Leopold was a lawyer. And Leopold was appointed Commissioner of Public Safety for the City of Hamtramck after the first Mayor Jezewski went to jail. And then the Polish National Alliance hired him as its counsel. He went to Chicago. After Prohibition, they discovered they had a lot of mortgages they couldn't collect on. They had loaned money to some inn keepers, which was a legitimate business. Of course now these guys were out of business. They had invested in breweries and so forth. So he became their, not only counsel, he became the fiscal officer who got the Polish National Alliance straightened out in no uncertain terms. They were a very fine family. Arthur lived right across from me on Outer Drive.

MK: He had an office in the Chene Street area?

BS: Yea, Chene and Forest. And later they moved to Barlum Tower. Now the associate of his was Bobby Wojcinski.

MK: How is that spelled?

BS: W-O-J-C-I-N-S-K-I. The Wojcinski's had a bakery on Chene near Milwaukee. You mentioned the fish store. The bakery was either next door to them or across the street from them. Mr. Wojcinski was a baker.

MK: Is it the Star Bakery? [It was actually the American Bakery, which was sold to the Gedalka's. See below – MK]

BS: I don't know. I couldn't answer that. And Bob was a big time hero. I think he was a charter member of the American Legion in France. He was big in the American Legion, very good lawyer. And Henry was the next one. Henry was in the building business. And he had a sister who was married to one of the Rozycki's, one of the contractors.

MK: Did you know the Rozycki's?

BS: Yes.

MK: Can you tell me about the Rozycki business?

BS: They were builders. The Rozycki brothers were high-class builders.

MK: And what were their names?

BS: Pardon?

MK: Do you know their names? Were they Walter and Stanley?

BS: They were the second generation. Stanley just died recently. Stanley was a state senator. He had the printing shop on Chene Street, across from Dom Polski. Before that he was on Dubois Street or St. Aubin, one of those streets near Forest. He was senator, he was a politician. The other one was an architect. Can't tell you more than that. Stanley was a printer. He knew his business.

MK: And the architect, he was pretty active wasn't he?

BS: Yea, He was down on Grosse Isle. Stanley and some other people were competitive businessmen. Frank Martell owned a building on...Do you know who Frank Martell was? He was chairman, president of the Wayne County Detroit AFofL. Before the auto industry got unionized. He was quite an operator. And he had this building on Vernor Highway with a printing shop in it. Now the story is that the lease was paid for in terms of gross receipts of the printing shop. I don't know if this is true or not. But this is the story that we got in political circles. And Frank Martell was able to get county and city printing and that's how he got paid. Rozycki figured out that he could put a bid in at the last minute for county or city printing at just a fraction of cent less than what the Vernor Highway printing shop was. And they took business away from that printer. He made a lot of money on printing ballots, printing stationary, etc, etc, for county.

MK: This is Stanley, the Printer?

BS: Yea. He had the printing shop. He was in his 90s, just died recently. But the Wojcinski's were a very high-class family. Mrs. Wojcinski was a very scholarly lady. She was one of a big movers and shakers in Detroit. When Maria Curie-Sklodowski came to Detroit in the 1920's, she was chairman of the committee. They had tea at J.L. Hudson Company and she was the greeter. Refined lady, educated lady and so forth. She died about 1932. Let's see oldest boy was a lawyer and his son is a lawyer in Port Huron. Now he calls himself Lord, Bob Lord. And they have daughters. One was on the Detroit Board of Education, Rosemary Osborne. The other one, Evelyn, was married to a man who had a tool factory out here somewhere. Very well respected.

MK: Rosemary Osborne. By marriage Osborne?

BS: Yea.

MK: How old would she be? She's not alive now?

BS: Oh, yea. There were two Rosemary Osbornes. There was a Scotch lady who was died at age 90. Rosemary would be now about 70 years old.

MK: I remember meeting as a kid a Rosemary Osborne. But she was an older woman.

BS: Tall, slender, white haired?

MK: Yes.

BS: She's been dead for a long time. This girl, Rosemary Wojcinski married an Osborne man. I think he was an electrical contractor or a plumbing contractor. She was elected to the Detroit Board of Education. People voted for Rosemary Osborne. Which is all right. They were very fine. Now they had the bakery near Milwaukee and Chene. I don't know exactly where. Now there was Owocki, they had a furniture store on the west side of Chene near Milwaukee. Furniture and appliances. My parents bought their first washer, water operated not electrical operated. When I was just a little kid.

MK: Owocki?

BS: Yea. The bakery bought from Gedalka, was a Jew.

MK: Yes, that's the American Bakery. Yea, Wojcinski sold it to Gedalka, I think.

MK: Yea, because Gedalka's had it after.

BS: Yea.

MK: Next to the Home Theater.

BS: Yea. That's right.

MK: I know exactly where that bakery was.

BS: That was the Wojcinski bakery at the turn of the century, a hundred years ago.

MK: OK, now that makes sense.

BS: That make sense?

MK: Now yes, I know exactly where it was. It was right near the Home Theater. It was called the American bakery. Because when I was there in the '50s it was still there, the American Bakery. It was Kiefer Gedalka. [Not true. The Gedalka's sold the bakery in the 1940's – MK] OK, I've got to move on. I really appreciate you taking this time. This has been a lot of fun.

BS: I don't have any receipts but if you want me to, I can find a couple of pictures. St. Stannie's Church and Dom Ludowy.

MK: I would love that. So, the question, can I come by and pick them up again?

BS: Yea, call me ahead of time.

MK: How much time should I give you?

BS: Give me a couple of weeks.

MK: OK. So I'll give you call. I'm going to have a big Valentine Party on the 9th so I have to get that party together.

MK: OK, call after February 10th.

BS: Yea.

MK: Yea, I'd love to have a photo of Dom Ludowy.

BS: I've got a picture of the officers of Dom Ludowy standing on the steps. Just before the building was razed for the expressway. I have that picture and I have a picture of Senator Muskie and Fr. Borkowicz in the foyer of St. Stannie's Church.

MK: That'd be great.

BS: I don't know if anyone else has those pictures?

MK: I don't think so. Didn't Dom Ludowy move though, after that. Where did it move to?

BS: Yea, let's see, it moved to Chene and Frederick. What used to be a billiard parlor, Zywiecki's billiard parlor. Now they had a fire.

MK: What year did they have that fire?

BS: 1960.

MK: What side of the street was it on, was it on the east side of of the street?

BS: East side. On the northeast corner. They had a fire in there. My father-in-law had an office in there and somebody moved a factory with all new furniture and I was able to get the old furniture for Dom Ludowy. A rolltop desk, some bookcases, file cabinets, some beautiful chairs, you know the kind of stuff people into factories in the 1930s. And when they had the fire that all went. That beautiful roll top desk went.

MK: Ok thank you very much.

Break

End of the January 23 2003 interview.

Beginning of the January 30, 2003 telephone interview.

MK: This is Marian Krzyzowski and I'm in Ann Arbor at my office and I'm doing a telephone follow-up interview with Judge Benjamin Stanczyk. Today is January 30, 2003.

BS: The Polish Yacht Club was a club which is pretty much a social club. People who belong to it don't know yachts. The restaurant bar was open by Stanley Gredzinski I think in 1909 on Jos Campau and Frederick. And Mr. Gredzinski was a national officer of the Polish Falcons. I think he was national president at one time. I'm not sure. His, I don't know when he died, his daughter married Stanley Sienkiewicz and they operated the Ivanhoe Restaurant for many years. I don't think they ever knew about the 18th Amendment. Then their daughter married Johnny Sobczak and he ran the place and after his death his daughter now owns the Ivanhoe. This is the fourth generation. They've been in business for about 95 years I think, 94 maybe. Same corner, same kind of a business. Very few institutions like that in the City of Detroit.

MK: Did you go there often?

BS: Oh sure.

MK: Where you a member, were you one of the--

BS: I never belonged to the yacht club. Now there are several reasons, several versions of how the yacht club name came about. During World War II, the Packard factory was working all kinds of hours. People were working all kinds of hours. And theoretically we had a 11 o'clock closing rule, not a law. Lot of the guys from the Packard factory come over for a drink or two before going home. They'd get home three or four o'clock in the morning and the wife would say "where the hell were you?" "I was at the club." "What club?" "The yacht club." "What yacht club?" "The Polish Yacht Club." [Laughs] That's one of the stories. They do all kinds of charitable work. They work with the Shriners on crippled children. They help the Lions Club and all kinds of charity things. Great bunch of guys. And remarkable family, fourth generation now running this business, 95 years.

MK: Which ones did you know? Did you know Mr. Sienkiewicz?

BS: Oh sure, knew him well. His wife Gredzinski's daughter was my babysitter during World War I.

MK: No kidding. Can you tell me a little about them? What they were like?

BS: Well, there's a story that Mrs. Sienkiewicz really never learned to read and write. They had the flu epidemic when she was a kid. And she was out of school for like two years and she never went back. I think she dropped out of school in about the 7th grade. I think she knew how to read and write but not well. I don't think she could write a letter in either English or Polish. She was a short woman, kind of a bossy female and her

husband died, I can't remember what year he died. They had a 50th wedding anniversary in somewhere in the '70s or the '80s.

MK: When you mentioned they didn't know the 18th Amendment, weren't intimidated by it. Did they brew in the...

BS: No, no. The stuff was delivered. They had high-class bootleggers. They had imported bottled beer and good draught beer, alley beer that was good quality, good booze.

MK: What about Mr. Sienkiewicz, what was he like?

BS: Well he was a real estate broker. Then after Mr. Gredzinski died he took over running the bar. I don't remember the years.

MK: Were they personable? Were they really spent a lot of time with the customers?

BS: Oh, yes, yea. In the '50s and the '60s you would go in there for lunch or dinner you'd find councilmen and judges and General Motors engineers, people with small factories on the east side for lunch and inner. Friday nights in the '50s and '60s up to the '70s you couldn't get a table without a reservation.

MK: OK, great. What about the Dom Ludowy and the Polski Uniwersytet Ludowy?

BS: That as my father-in-law's enterprise.

MK: Can you tell me about it?

BS: Well, they, I did a story for the Polish paper about a dozen year ago. Did you ever get it?

MK: I remember seeing it. I haven't seen it recently though. I remember it a long time ago.

BS: Yea, well Wojsowski used to get university people from Detroit, Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Michigan State and so forth. And public officials, not necessarily elected public officials, but wherever they might be. People from the military, etc, etc, and they charged a quarter or I think fifty cents at the most for admission and they served coffee and cookies after the lecture. And he got these people who spoke Polish. Occasionally he got somebody who spoke a little Polish but spoke English on all kinds of subjects, I remember. One man in particular John Klimek, he used to come in from Ann Arbor quite frequently. He taught bacteriology at UM and he would prepare these lectures and they had great attendance. Seventy, eighty people on Sunday afternoon.

MK: And this was at the Dom Ludowy?

BS: At Dom Ludowy, oh yea.

MK: And how did the word get out? Where did people find out about a lecture?

BS: In the two Polish newspapers and the radio. They'd have a regular bulletin and a certain place in the newspaper and there was a certain time on the Polish radio program.

MK: Do you have any any physical artifacts from the, anything related to the announcement or ads or something like that to the *Polski Uniwersytet*?

BS: I wouldn't know of any.

MK: OK. And how was it run, was there an introduction made, what was it like? Was your father-in-law kind of the master of ceremonies?

BS: He was the MC. He would come in and make a few brief announcements. "Today our speaker is so and so. Next Sunday is going to be so and so and May 14 is going to be so and so is coming in from wherever." And he did a reasonably good job. Say 80 people, 100 people sometime. He did well.

MK: Was the purpose of it to raise consciousness or simply to help people to...

BS: A little of both. In the '30s the University of Michigan had a program that went state-wide on all kinds of subjects. In the '30s Ford Motor had a radio broadcast from the Masonic Temple. People came in tuxedos for a radio broadcast. They had the Detroit Symphony on the national network.

MK: Was there much political content in any of the *uniwersytet* lectures?

BS: Not a real sharp political content. I mean people talked about things that were happening. Right now somebody might want to talk about a tax program and they'd talk about the Bush's tax program but not necessarily attack or speak for it. It was that kind of a thing. It was on the liberal side but I think in terms of partisanship it was pretty neutral.

MK: OK, were they typically held on weekends or week nights?

BS: No it was Sunday afternoons.

MK: Always Sunday afternoon?

BS: Yea. Some of the ladies made coffee and tea and they'd bring some home made cake or cookies or some kind of baked goods.

MK: I haven't gone through your papers at the library but I will at the library here but I'm wondering would there be any list there of the speakers from this--

BS: I don't think so.

MK: OK. Ok well thanks.

BS: An institution that was important for several years that was the Polish bakery, the Polish cooperative, on Grandy and Hendrie. Do you know anything about it?

MK: No nothing about it.

BS: Well it was a big bakery after, the building is still there. It was later a potato chip factory. A tremendous building.

MK: The New Era building, the New Era Potato Chips?

BS: On Grandy and Hendrie, yea. It's still there. Yellow brick building. Well that was built like 1922 or thereabouts as a bakery. These fellows were bakers and delivery men. Put the money together and they built this good size bakery. They had branch stores I recall, on Piquette and Elmwood and they had a couple in north Detroit and west side. They had drivers. They delivered to grocery stores and restaurants. It last for maybe 15 years. I'm not sure when it became a potato chip factory, sometime in the '30s. For many years it was successful but then things changed. I think they didn't have--they had good bakers, they didn't have good salesmen. The route men were route men and they didn't follow up to develop new customers.

MK: Any other kind of social help or business social help kind of organizations in the neighborhood that you recall?

BS: No I really don't.

MK: OK. Let's switch gears here a little bit and you mentioned to me about a billiards hall, a pool hall on Chene Street and a woman named Sydney Fox. What's all that about?

BS: She was a madame. She ran a brothel above a pool hall on Chene between Hancock and Forest. [There was a billiards hall at 4752 Chene run by Bronislaw Jaksuk during the late 30's and early 40's. It was next to Northeastern Market owned by Wyckowski – MK.] I think there is still a pool hall there. Last I heard there was a pistol range in the basement of that building. [Yes, the building with the pistol range is still there – MK.]

MK: I see, so it's on the east side of Chene.

BS: Yea.

MK: OK.

BS: And I don't know when she opened up and when she closed but when I was on Chene Street you'd hear about it. Sydney Fox was a tall, good looking woman. I think she was Italian. You'd see her in the restaurants and coffee shops and so forth.

MK: What years were those?

BS: Well I was there from 39 to 42. So she was there at that time. I don't know when she got started or when she closed. Any other known brothels on the street?

BS: Well in 30, when Boles was mayor there were several that I heard about later. They were brothels. It was during the bottom of the depression and those things happen all over.

MK: Did they get raided? I mean is there any record of where they were and who was there?

BS: I wouldn't know.

MK: Yea, OK. You mentioned in our discussion, the Jaworski brothers, the bad guys. I was at Orchard Lake this Monday and I was going through the *Rekord Codzienny* from 1927. They had a 27 volume there with all the papers and I was going through it and I came across a reference to them actually being arrested in Pennsylvania.

BS: That's right. One was electrocuted in Pennsylvania.

MK: And what happened to the other guy?

BS: I don't know. He was electrocuted for blowing up a Brinks truck. He was paralyzed, apparently there was a shoot out and he went to the electric chair.

MK: And do you know of any other sources beyond the newspaper accounts that might be there regarding these two guys? Was there anything published or written about them?

BS: I don't know.

MK: Ok.

BS: You had the Podolski's. They were tough guys. They robbed a bank on Chene and Ferry, the Peninsular Bank. The same car was used couple weeks later in the bank on Chene and Harper, where Kaliszewski was killed.

MK: So it was the Podolski's not the Jaworski's that killed Kaliszewski?

BS: I don't know. I can't answer that.

MK: OK. Was there any connection between the Podolski's and the Jaworski's ?

BS: I can't answer that. I don't know. There was another notorious Chicago man who at one time was in Detroit. Killer Burke, now I don't know whether he was a Detroiter. I think he was originally from St. Joe-Benton Harbor area. Allegedly he was in Detroit, sometime or other.

MK: Was he at all connected to anybody on the east side?

BS: Yea, he worked with somebody but I was a kid. You know I just heard about these things. Killer Burke was killed I think in a shoot out in Chicago. He was an executioner for some of the gangs.

MK: B-U-R-K?

BS: B-U-R-K-E.

MK: B-U-R-K-E.

BS: Killer Burke. I just heard. My father was in the garage business and cops would come in and talk about it.

MK: I came across another Stanczyk, by the way who owned...His name was Anthony Stanczyk.

BS: Shoe store?

MK: He owned a shoe store – The New Poland Shoes on Chene Street. Do you know anything about that?

BS: No, they were not relatives.

MK: They weren't relatives OK.

BS: They were a west side family.

MK: OK.

BS: Big family, lots of kids. But they were not relatives. They were from southern Poland. My father's family came from central Poland.

MK: OK, OK. Any other thoughts or recollections you know of the illicit activities on the street? You talked a little bit about the criminals some of the numbers and the moonshining. Any thing else that comes to mind that might be of interest to us here?

BS: I don't know. Although there is another Polish racketeer, Art Harrison. He was a con man. Then he got taken by some New York con men. He got, they were going to

form a movie corporation to do some movies in Detroit. And apparently he invested in it. And the thing just went [points down – MK.]

MK: How did you know he's Polish?

BS: Well this is what I heard. Conversation, I never knew the man. Apparently he died a horrible death. He was backing his car out of the garage. He stuck his head out the window and the car veered and he snapped his head off.

MK: Oh my gosh. That is pretty bad. What about this Karl Ziemba, that Judge Binkowski mentioned to me in his email? Who was he?

BS: He was a lawyer.

MK: And did he work with you on Chene Street or not?

BS: No, no. He worked for me after the war for about three or four years in the ---- Building. When he graduated from school he worked for Karl, for Harry Lipman, who was a blind lawyer. Harry was going down so he worked with me for about four or five years I guess.

MK: I don't know why he asked me to mention this name to you?

BS: Oh, he lived in the Garfield Chene area. His father was a baker. After his father died, Karl ran the bakery for a couple of years.

MK: Oh, was it a bakery on Chene Street?

BS: Yea, Chene and Garfield.

MK: OK. So would he have any knowledge of that bakery at this point? Is he still alive?

BS: I think he is at Wayne University area last I heard.

MK: Maybe I will try to track him down.

BS: You'll find him in the phone book. He does specialty criminal appeals, is all he does now.

MK: Ok, OK. His father owned a bakery on Garfield. He wasn't related to the Hilke people, the Hilke Bakery?

BS: I wouldn't know. We had a Ford dealer on Grandy and Alexandrine. What was his name? His daughter taught at University of Michigan and she married a professor at UM. He had a Ford dealership. He did very well. My father had a gas station he liked to bring

out a couple of cars and park them and my father would sell them. Make \$5 or \$10 dollars for selling a Model T Ford for \$30 or \$40.

MK: So how was that dealership on Grandy and Alexandrine?

BS: It was in the 20's. I can't remember.

MK: Polish guy?

BS: I can't remember the name. Might come to me.

MK: OK.

BS: But as I recall on the west side of Grandy, Willis or Alexandrine somewhere in through there.

MK: OK. I'll look it up in the directories.

BS: You know about the cigar factories of course on Grandy Street?

MK: I know a little about them. What can you tell me about them?

BS: Not very much except they were there and a lot of the women contacted all kinds of dermatitis from the tobacco. Of course at that time, occupational diseases were not compensable in Michigan. And some of them ended up with hideous skin problems. I think that may have contributed to getting the law amended to take care of occupational diseases as well as occupational injuries.

MK: There were a lot of them, a lot of those factories in that neighborhood.

BS: Oh yea.

MK: I was going to ask you about that *Rekord Codzienny*. I remember seeing the masthead and the masthead according to the paper there said they were from they were on Forest Avenue.

BS: Forest Avenue close to Dequindre.

MK: Forest and Dequindre. What do you know about that paper? It seemed like a pretty comprehensive paper. It didn't look like it had as many ads as *Dziennik Polski* but it was a lot of...

BS: It ended during the depression. You know I was a kid. I couldn't tell you very much.

MK: It ended during the depression?

BS: Yea.

MK: I see.

BS: I can't remember which one, one was liberal and one was conservative. The lawyer who had the first libel case was Cyrowski, August Cyrowski.

MK: How's that spelled, the last name?

BS: C-Y-R-O-W-S-K-I. I think. His daughter married Dr. Pasternacki. She was a lawyer. And his son was a lawyer. I think they're all gone now. He ran for State Senate in 1912. And he was quite an athletic guy. He was probably the first Polish lawyer in Detroit.

MK: And where was he at in Detroit do you know?

BS: I can't remember. I wouldn't know.

MK: Was it the east side?

BS: He was east side and he played sports with a German sports club. Their headquarters was in the building which is still there on Gratiot and St. Aubin. There's a Black radio station in that building. Like a three story building. The northeast corner of the street. And the *Dziennik* libeled him horribly. "The man isn't Polish. He's masquerading."

MK: Oh right, you were telling me, yea.

BS: "And he's German." Well he was born in that part of Poland which is German. And when he applied for citizenship – where were you born? He couldn't say Poland. There was no Poland. Germany. He played sports with these German clubs. Whatever it was, I don't remember. And he sued and got a judgment. I can't remember the numbers but it was astronomical. It was the highest libel slander judgment in the State of Michigan at that time.

MK: And he was his own counsel?

BS: No, I can't remember, I think Koscinski was his counsel. I'm not sure. You can find the records in the Detroit Bar Library. Briefs and records of the case or you can find a report. I'm not sure if that case went to...yea it might have gone to the Supreme Court. Then he got some stock from the paper and he sued to enforce the judgment that went up and down the court. So I think you might find a couple of cases: Cyrowski versus American Publishing Company.

MK: And where are those records at?

BS: Well Detroit Bar Association has a library in the Penobscot Building. And the State Bar library is in Lansing. You can get the brief and records that were filed in the case.

MK: I see, OK.

BS: I'm not sure if the UM library has them or not. They used to have a lot of them. The library may or may not have it. But you will find them, the reported cases you can find them in the index easily. Cyrowski versus American Publishing.

MK: Do you remember a situation, the murder of a Polish Counsel in the '20s that Koscinski was also involved in? I remember seeing an article that talked about the killing of this guy. I can't remember, I don't know what his name was.

BS: I wouldn't know. The second case involved John Poleski. Where he ran for Common Council and the newspaper libeled him again. It was a dozen years later. And he got--

MK: For what. What did they he was?

BS: Well, they said he was not a Catholic. He wouldn't tell anyone where he went to church. He was a Mason. Well of course he was a Mason. And they said all kinds of nasty things about him. He was defeated. I know Koscinski represented him in that case. And he got again a very substantial judgment against the newspaper.

MK: Sadowski, did he have law office on Forest and Chene?

BS: Yea, at one time.

MK: I remember seeing a reference to two names, Sadowski and somebody else on Chene there. And I wasn't sure if that was him.

BS: On Forest?

MK: Yea on Forest near Chene.

BS: Wojcinski?

MK: No it wasn't Wojcinski. It was, let me see if I've got here somewhere. I'm pretty sure I do. I thought I had it here. Let me check. It was right near Dom Polski.

BS: Next door. Wojcinski was in that office. I forget who else. Now Frank Szymanski who changed his name S-C-H-E-M-A-N-S-K-E. He had an office with Bonczak and somebody else in Rathnaw's Building on Warren and Chene before he became a judge.

MK: That's where I actually saw the other one too. Because it was probably 31 or 32 it said Sadowski and non-Polish name. I can't rember the name.

BS: I don't know.

MK: And there was a guy named Joseph Lutomski.

BS: Yea, he was a criminal lawyer. He just died here about four or five years ago.

MK: And he was located in that office later.

BS: Could be. That was a family of lawyers the Lutomski's. I think Frank was the oldest. He was a big war hero World War I. Then Joe and Anthony. Then Harry was the bail bond. Harry was a big time football player at UM. Then he flunked out of school and then there were two other brothers. One was a high school principal or assistant principal. The other was a math teacher in Hamtramck. Six brothers and one sister.

MK: Wow. There are couple of lawyers mentioned John Kaminski and Stanley Grzankowski?

BS: John Kaminski was a very nice gentleman. He was a postal employee, more than a letter carrier. Went to law school. Worked himself up. He was a circuit court commissioner which was a judge involved in landlord tenant, land contract disputes in Detroit for a dozen years I guess. And after the war, Koscinski, Wojcinski, Poleski and Kaminski had a partnership in the Barlum Tower.

MK: I see. What about Grzankowski? Do you know him at all?

BS: Yea. I knew Stanley. Stanley was an assistant prosecutor at one time. He died in an airplane crash in Missouri during the Korean War, I think about 51 or 2. His son was in the service in Missouri and he was in the hospital and Stanley was going to see him and he died in a plane crash.

MK: Was he an assistant prosecutor in Wayne County?

BS: Yea, that's right. Nice gentleman. He married into the Witkowski family. The clothiers on Chene and Piquette. [On Chene and Adele – MK] He married into that family. Nice gentleman.

MK: OK. What about Barney Chamski?

BS: He was over on McDougall near St. Hyacinth's Church.

MK: What kind of attorney was he? What did he do?

BS: General practice. Connoisseur of good wines.

MK: [Laughs]

BS: He spent more money on wines than everything else put together. He knew every vineyard in France. He'd go to France about every four or five years and come back with two, three cases of fancy French wines.

MK: It's interesting because in Polish, of course, Chamski wouldn't be an appropriate name for an attorney. I mean it's a hard one to market in Polish.

BS: Ha ha. His brother was an accountant. Was active in Democratic politics in the '30s and they had a sister who was in advertising. I forget--Lowery, Mrs. Lowery. L-O-W-E-R-Y I think.

MK: What about Zenon Pietkiewicz.

BS: Yea, Pietkiewicz. He had an office on Chene and Hancock. Let's see his sister was married to Tom Pasieczny or Pasieczny's sister was married to him. I don't know. They were in-laws. Zenon was a big, handsome Polak. Big smile on his face. Receding hairline. Nice gentleman.

MK: What kind of law did he practice do you know?

BS: He was general practice. I think he got started with Cass Jankowski.

MK: Okay. That, you mentioned Pasternacki the lawyer early on in the 20th century. Do you know where he had his offices?

BS: That was Cyrowski.

MK: But you said there was a connection to Pasternacki.

BS: His daughter married Pasternacki. Molly, Amalia married Pasternacki.

MK: Pasternacki was a lawyer right?

BS: Oh no, the doctor.

MK: Oh the doctor.

BS: They were all doctors. The Pasternacki doctors.

MK: Oh, OK. Then I know who that is. Any other attorneys you can think of in that neighborhood that...

BS: Well Art Willard was a great criminal lawyer. He moved to Hamtramck. He married Hedy Siwka. Mr. Siwka was a builder. He had lot of real estate on Chene Street. Art Willard came to Detroit sometime at the end of World War I. He was from Utah.

His father was a doctor in the Civil War. His first wife was a Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe family. He had a daughter the same age as my sister. Now the story is that he had [phone rings] Let me get my other phone hold on.

MK: Sure.

Break

BS: Willard was a very successful criminal lawyer. He claimed that he got more acquittals in murder cases than any lawyer in the State of Michigan. He moved to Hamtramck later on.

MK: Ok, good. That's about what I had at least at this point. Any other things come to mind that I might want to pursue?

BS: I can't think of anything. Stanley Dombrowski was a lawyer on Milwaukee and Chene. Very successful lawyer.

MK: What kind of law did he practice?

BS: Real estate and divorces.

MK: Was it Dabrowski or Dombrowski?

BS: D-O-M-B

MK: OK.

BS: He married Jennie Pietrzak. Pietrzak had a butcher shop on Chene Street. Well sausage shop. He didn't sell fresh meat. Sausage shop. They had two children. Johnny was the oldest. He graduated from Wayne State medical School about 1935. He did an internship at Receiving Hospital, not at Receiving, Herman Kiefer. Got TB and died. Never practiced medicine. And his sister married Stanley Dombrowski. They had no children. Stanley died in about 1976 and Jennie died about a year later. They lived on Rivard Street in Grosse Pointe.

MK: But he had a practice originally on Chene Street?

MK: Yea. That's the only place he had an office. I think he graduated from law school about 1925 or '26. He died in '75 so he served for 50 years.

MK: Wow, wow. So you say it was near the north end of Chene there, by Milwaukee or someplace?

BS: He was on Milwaukee. Building on the corner of Chene and Milwaukee, on the northwest corner.

MK: OK. Lot of lawyers on the street.

BS: Oh yea. Well there was a lot of business.

MK: What about people who represented business people? I mean in sort of business related legal issues. I mean was that...

BS: Dombrowski was one of those.

MK Who?

BS: Stanley Dombrowski.

MK: OK. OK. Was that sort of the bread and butter though. It seemed like there were so many businesses, so much retail going on in there and also so many you know, little factories and suppliers and so on.

BS: Oh, yea. Hell of a lot of litigation. Oh yea. These people sued it each other. I had an uncle, Stanley Tarczynski, god he was in courtroom more time then a lot of lawyers. [Laughs] Oh, yea. He was in and out. And my father was not as frequently but these people--

MK: What did they sue about?

BS: Well they sued for real estate commissions, they sued for libel and slander, they sued for easements, violations of an agreement to sell. My father had some lots on Milwaukee Avenue and Parker Rust Proofing had a factory next door. They wanted to buy the lots and they wouldn't pay him as much money as he wanted. Then they sued, said they had an agreement to buy. Well they didn't have an agreement. They tried to force him to sell. He eventually did sell at his own price though.

MK: What about labor stuff? What about labor lawyers, what about defending--

BS: The thirties.

MK: Were any of them in the area that specifically were focused on that?

BS: I don't think so. Well the craft unions, the building trade unions were in Detroit. The auto workers did not become strong until after the GM strike in '37. And they weren't-- Well Stanley Dombrowski did some workman's comp cases. Personal injury cases.

MK: What about immigration lawyers?

BS: Immigration lawyers, no I can't say. Most of the immigration lawyers business from the east side was farmed off to a fellow by the name of Kinzinger. He was a Polish Jew. In the Barlum Tower. He had been an officer in the immigration service and Dombrowski and Koscinski and so forth would send the business to him.

MK: And what was, how is it spelled?

BS: Kinzinger, K-I-N-Z-I-N-G-E-R.

MK; I see. Was he a Polish Jew do you know?

BS: Yea, he was a Polish Jew.

MK: OK.

BS: Very Good

MK: This is great, I really appreciate it.

BS: Lets see there was a music school on Chene and Hendrie. What the hell was...I can't think of the people who ran it. But they had a lot of space there on that building on the southwest corner.

MK: Southwest corner of lets see, southwest.

BS: Chene and Hendrie, I beg your pardon.

MK: Chene and Hendrie. OK

BS: I think Wyzykowski was one of them. ?-Y-Z-Y-K-O-W-S-K-I
Or some such thing. They were from Wyandotte, from downriver. They had a big music school.

MK: Was it on the ground floor?

BS: No. On the second floor.

MK: On the second floor. OK. I know the building, I can picture it. It's still there. I never realized there was a music school up there. What kind of music school was it? Like instrumental music or was it vocalist?

BS: Instrumental music.

MK: He himself was the instructor.

BS: Yea they had the whole family. He had a sister, Angeline,. I don't know what she played, something. How did your interview go with Maliszewski?

MK: Oh, it was great. I really enjoyed it.

BS: He was the youngest major in the service.

MK: Pardon?

BS: He was the youngest major during World War II for a short time.

MK: No kidding. He was very decorated. I remember looking through the *Dziennik Polski* from 1943. There must have been seven or eight articles on him. He must have gotten three or four major decorations.

BS: Oh yea. He was the youngest major. He was a major at age 19 or 20. Would that be right?

MK: I enjoyed talking with him. He's really a nice guy.

BS: He lives in that apartment complex on Kercheval and Cadieux.

MK: Right, right. It's right off of Cadieux, right.

BS: His sister married a friend of mine - Albert Gregory. Gregory Mayor and Tom Office Supply family. I think she became a drunk. She's now living in Grand Rapids.

MK: Well he's getting frail but he had a lot of really good memories of the street, the store. And of course his own experiences in the air force where he ...

BS: They lived on Bedford and Charlevoix. His son is running the business.

MK: Right John and there are two sons.

BS: And they're not doing it as well as their father did. They...

MK: I don't know. I haven't been in that store. But he was, he was--I really enjoyed talking to him. Had a good time. A lot of memories.

BS: If I can help you again let me know.

MK: Will do. Thank you Judge Stanczyk.

End of interview on January 30, 2003

Beginning of interview on December 18, 2003.

MK: December 18, 2003.

BS: Hello.

MK: Judge Stanczyk?

BS: Yeah.

MK: Uh, I really appreciated the interview and I went through it with a fine-tooth comb, about 90 pages so it's a lot of material. And, uh, I had some questions, some stuff I didn't quite understand and other things I wasn't sure that sort of, the a, the dates and so on. So if you don't mind I'll ask you a few questions.

BS: Go ahead.

MK: Okay. The first one deals with Senator Hittle. You mentioned that there was this rumor going around Senator Hittle was actually assassinated during WWII.

BS: I didn't understand it.

MK: There was, you made some comment about Senator Hittle?

BS: Yes.

MK: And that he may have been, a, actually, ah assassinated?

BS: Uh, well he was killed.

MK: And, you mentioned it was during the war, but I looked up Hittle in the record book and it said that he was still alive in the '50s. So am I, is there something that--

BS: I'm not sure what what the year was.

MK: Okay.

BS: Now wait a minute, it wasn't Hittle that was killed.

MK: Who was it?

BS: Oh shit. Hittle was senator for a long time.

MK: Right.

BS: Ahh, wasn't Hittle. I can't, can't remember now. I remember Hittle. He was a very high-class gentleman.

MK: Okay, so it wasn't Hittle we're talking about.

BS: It was another senator, uh, who was, uh, a link in, uh, a conspiracy. A, some very big industrial people were the small loan business and they had passed the bribes to senators. It wasn't Hittle.

MK: Okay, so was it somebody from the Detroit area do you know? Or was it?

BS: No, he was not a Detroiter the senator that was killed.

MK: Okay, so I'll track that one down.

BS: He was killed, I can't remember the year. It was, it was, like if I wasn't here I was in the service.

MK: Okay.

BS: Hittle was a senator way up into the '50s.

MK: Right, exactly.

BS: That's the wrong name.

MK: Okay, good. Stanley Zaremba, the pimp, you talked about the family on McDougall and you talked about the different children there. And you mentioned one of the married, it sounded like Stancie's daughter, somebody's daughter.

BS: Zajac.

MK: Zajac's daughter, okay good.

BS: Z-A-J-A-C

MK: Right.

BS: **Trey** Zajac.

MK: Right. What was the first name?

BS: Her name was Lorraine.

MK: Lorraine, okay, great. Thanks a lot.

BS: They had a boy who is a disc jockey in Muskegon.

MK: Okay.

BS: Was the last time I heard.

MK: Okay, great.

BS: Teddie, Teddie Zaremba.

MK: Okay, great. You mentioned Dr. Henik. How was Henik spelled, he's the guy that was in Hamtramck.

BS: H-E-N-I-K.

MK: And you also mentioned a police inspector named Burczyk or Buczek.

BS: Burczyk.

MK: How was that spelled?

BS: B-U-R-C-Z-Y-K.

MK: C-Z-Y-K. Bur, great. That's terrific. Um, you talked about some crime on the street and you talked about your cousin that bought, it sounded like Whisper and Sshwartz or something?

BS: Right, it was a a lady's dress shop on Chene, uh, north of Piquette. Piquette, Trombly area.

MK: And it was called Whisper?

BS: She bought that from Wisper. W-I-S-P-E-R.

MK: W-I-S-P-E-R.

BS: And Schwartz.

MK: And Schwartz, okay. Great. And what, what...

BS: Uh, she had worked for a Arnold Wellman in the fur business, uh, she handled lady's ladies clothing.

MK: What was her name?

BS: Her name was Jeanette Walczyk.

MK: Walczyk.

BS: W-A-L-C-Z-Y-K.

MK: Okay, great, Jeanette, terrific. Um, you talked about the bank robbery that either the Jaworski's or Podulski's were involved in 1925 on Chene Street. And the killing of Kaliszewski the policeman.

BS: Right.

MK: You mentioned the bank was on Piquette. I looked it up and it looked to me like the bank was on Harper.

BS: Harper.

MK: Yes.

BS: That's right.

MK: Okay, than Harper, great, I just wanted to make sure, cause I want to get these things accurate. In your talk about your grandson you talk about a prep school in Toronto that he went to, some kind of a college?

BS: Uh, uh, Upper Canada College.

MK: What was it?

BS: Upper Canada College.

MK: Oh, Upper Canada, that's what it was, I couldn't make it out. Upper Canada, good.

BS: The Harvard of the North.

MK: Okay, Upper Canada College, great. You mentioned the Cousin's Foundation in Alpena. How is Couzen spelled?

BS: C-O-U-Z-E-N.

MK: C-O-U-Z-E-N. Okay, good.

BS: The Couzens was one of the founders of Ford Motor Company.

MK: Oh, okay.

BS: And later he was Mayor of Detroit.

MK: Okay.

BS: And state senator.

MK: Okay.

BS: Made a lot of money. He was Henry Ford's accountant in the early days of the Ford Motor Company, Ford gave his official stock instead of cash. He bought land from Rackham for the foundry with cash, with stock rather. And then when the company was booming these people cashed their stock in were all millionaires.

MK: Mm-hm. Is that James Couzens?

BS: Yes, James Couzens. His son Frank was Mayor of Detroit later on.

MK: Right, Frank was mayor. The Curtis Building where WNBC was located, how is Curtis spelled?

BS: C-U-R-T-I-S.

MK: C-U-R-T-I-S? OK great.

BS: Yes. That was on Woodward, I beg your pardon, on the Boulevard and Hamilton.

MK: Okay, okay.

BS: Frank.

MK: Right. You mentioned Chorbaszewski. I'm wondering about the spelling. Is the spelling C-H-O-R-W-A-S-Z-E-W-S-K-I?

BS: I think it's a "b" and not a "w."

MK: Chor

BS: Chorba

MK: Oh, Chorbaszewski. Okay, but it's S-Z-E-W-S-K-I?

BS: Yeah, I think so.

MK: Okay, you mentioned Armand Gebert's wife was Eleanor Breitmeyer.

BS: That's right.

MK: Do you know your Breitmeyer is spelled?

BS: Oh Christ, B-R-I-G-H-T-M-E-Y-E-R. She was society editor of the *Detroit News*. [The correct spelling is Brietmeyer and she was Manners Editor for the *Detroit News* – MK]

MK: Okay, good.

BS: They live in West Bloomfield I think.

MK: Okay, great.

BS: Both retired.

MK: Thank you. Uh, you mentioned Stan Brynski and he married was it Dr., was it Sobocki's daughter?

BS: Brynski?

MK: Yeah.

BS: He didn't marry a doctor's daughter he married--

MK: Stan Brynski, you said married somebody's daughter, it sounded like Dr. Sobocki, I don't know who that was.

BS: I know, he married uh, uh, Dr. Zawadzki's sister.

MK: Dr. Zawadzki's

BS: Z-A-W-A-C-K-I.

MK: Oh, Zawadzki's [It's spelled ZAWADZKI – MK]

BS: Sister.

MK: Great.

BS: Dr. Zawadzki was Wayne County Medical Examiner.

MK: I see, okay.

BS: He died an early death. He was a brilliant guy. Poor bastard worked himself to death.

MK: Okay, thank you. Adam Blake, his Polish was Glysyczynski.

BS: Yeah, I think Gruszczyński.

MK: Gruszczyński

BS: Starts with a G-R-U-S-Z.

MK: G-R...

BS: It starts with a CHR

MK: Oh, Chruszczyński.

BS: Yeah, correction, yeah, I think that's right. They lived on Chene Street like, 5810, 5812. They lived next door to us. We lived at 5820. They lived south of us. Behind the drugstore.

MK: OK so that's C-H-R-U-S-Z-C-Z-Y-N-S-K-I?

BS: I think so.

MK: Okay. I can check on that. You mentioned Leslie Socha was from some place and I didn't catch. You said he was a refugee from, did he come from Italy or where did he come from.

BS: Well he came from Poland

MK: Right.

BS: after World War II.

MK: But you mentioned that there was that there was somewhere in between that he directly from somewhere, I didn't catch it.

BS: I can't remember.

MK: Okay, your wife worked at the Himelhoch building? Was this is where the GM atom bomb stuff was being...

BS: But she never worked there she worked in the General Motor's legal department, 14th floor of the GM building.

MK: So what was at the Himelhoch Building?

BS: Himelhoch Building was converted into a factory where parts were made for the atomic bomb project.

MK: And where was the Himelhoch Building?

BS: It was on Woodward Avenue just south of the David Whitney Building.

MK: Okay, and.

BS: And it was a very elegant ladies dress shop.

MK: Right, right.

BS: War years, I think the first floor I think was a mezzanine or second floor sold dresses and the top 4-5 floors were a factory.

MK: Okay, great, you mentioned attorneys. You were going through a bunch of attorneys when we spoke. One of them was would you say Pucinski and Koscinski? Was it Pucinski?

BS: Wojcinski. W-O-J-C-I-N-S-K-I.

MK: W-O-J- Woje-chin-ski. Okay. Great.

BS: Wojcinski was a pretty good lawyer. His son is a lawyer up in Port Huron now. He owned a bakery at one time. The New Home Bakery.

MK: No kidding.

BS: Yeah, Mr. Wojcinski was a a baker and they sold to the Jew, Gedalka.

MK: Right, that was the American Bakery.

BS: That was on Chene and what was it.

MK: Right next to the Home Theater.

BS: Yeah.

MK: Yeah, I interviewed Gedalka. I interviewed the daughter. Uh, so what was Wojcinski's son's name, the one in Port Huron, his first name.

BS: That's the grandson.

MK: Grandson, okay.

BS: It's Robert. But he calls himself Lord, L-O-R-D.

MK: Okay, Robert Lord.

BS: That's the grandson. Uh, Robert Wojcinski was the great trial lawyer, he died about 19 [1985 – MK]

BS: He's able to travel, but he can't drive a car. He still has a cast. He only has one leg. His wife can't drive a car because she's got bad eyes. Okay, so Piersante gets, Homer Ferguson I think was still Senator, should have a soldier drive him back in their car.

MK: And the soldier was at Fort something or other you told me. What was the fort?

BS: I can't remember. Could be Fort Bragg, but I'm not sure.

MK: Okay.

BS: They're driving across New Mexico or somewhere out in Arizona and a soldier's driving the car and they have an accident and the soldier has a broken arm. So, now Lamont is in a hospital in Arizona for months. In the mean time, the United States Supreme the Wisconsin case, there can be no guilt by association. The fact that Brynski and Sobczak associated with a bunch of bums doesn't mean they're guilty of anything. Now of course the case is dismissed.

MK: That's a great story, great story.

BS: And, the two cases, Sobczak and Brynski are reported the same by the Michigan Supreme Court Reports, I can't remember his--

MK: Okay. You talked about Pete Mazur and the gas station that he had and the armored car stuff that he did. You, but you mentioned the owner of the gas station was Pete Chudzyk. How is Chudzyk spelled?

BS: C-H-U-D-Z-Y-K.

MK: C-

BS: C-H-U-D-Z-Y-K.

MK: Okay, great. Chudzyk.

BS: Now Chudzyk probably had no part in the armored car business.

MK: Okay.

BS: I don't know for sure. Chudzyk was a, was a professional gambler and he, he had a gas station as a front.

MK: I see, okay.

BS: Mazur rented the space from him. The station is still there. I don't think it's an active station anymore. Chene and Frederick.

MK: Right, right.

BS: Uh, a man who pumped gas actually was John Regey. R-E-G-E-Y.

MK: Okay.

BS: He had been a partner of my father's for the poolroom business.

MK: Okay. Uh, you talked about your own career, and you mentioned that you worked for a law firm called Dann, Atlas, Tilchen.

BS: Yeah, in 1946.

MK: Is that D-A-N?

BS: Two n's.

MK: Two n's?

BS: Yeah. Sol Dann was the head of the firm.

MK: And then the second name is Atlas, and the last name is Tilchen. T-I-L-C-H-E-N.

BS: Correct.

MK: And they were in in, you said the Fount Tower?

BS: Barlum.

MK: How is that spelled?

BS: B-A-R-L-U-M. South of the Cadillac Tower.

MK: B-A-R-L-U-M.

BS: Yeah.

MK: Okay the Barlum Tower, great. And then you mentioned about being a lawyer for Green County. I didn't catch that part.

BS: I was a lawyer for Wayne County for 9 years.

MK: For Wayne County.

BS: Yes.

MK: Okay, okay, good. In that Brynski thing, you mentioned they were counting ballots at the Brown Tower?

BS: What tower? That was the Barlum Tower.

MK: Oh that was the same, same place?

BS: Yes, that was, Wilkowski was the state senator who headed the--

MK: Wilkowski, that's what it was.

BS: Yes and Bruno Nowicki. They both went to jail.

MK: But they were doing it at the Barlum Tower.

BS: Yeah, they rented space for the recount.

MK: OK. You talked earlier about something called bitter parlors. What were they? You talked earlier in your interview about gambling. Pool halls and something you called I think you said bitter or biggert parlors. [He actually said billiard parlors – MK]

BS: Bingo.

MK: Oh, bingo parlors.

BS: yeah.

MK: Okay, bingo parlors, I didn't catch that part. Uh, okay, well that answers all of those questions.

BS: Most of the pool halls did not allow gambling. They, they, the owners, my father was a pool hall owner and they had a pretty high code of ethics. The only way there would be gambling in the pool hall, a club would rent the hall for a day.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: And, the owner only had the key, unlocked the door and locked it. And, they would pay the rent, and of course the cops knew about it. But, if I was going to go down to the police station and say, such-and-such a club is renting my pool hall on Thursday afternoon and they're going to playing poker for money. So.

MK: Right.

BS: So, I don't think, they're paying me \$50 for the use of a room, that's it.

MK: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

BS: One of the reasons for that was during Prohibition, they didn't want to have any whisky on the premises.

MK: Mm-hm.

BS: So when this club would rent the pool hall for an afternoon or an evening, would be on the day when business was slow. They would have whisky, the pool operator didn't want that, didn't want any part of it.

MK: Mm-hm. Great, well, you answered all the questions. I really I really thank you. And I'll check on see who that senator was who was killed '44 and uh, and correct that in the interview.

BS: I'm trying to think, what's that guy's name. Hittle was, was a chairman of the judiciary committee. He was a very high class senator, and I say this because I had a personal experience with him. I had a client who was a brother-in-law of a prominent prominent family in Detroit, who was a city fireman. He fell off a ladder and fell into a building and he had permanent brain damage. And he was involved in a hit-and-run. A pedestrian walked into the side of his car and fell under him. And he drove away because he was he was insane. So under the law existed in whatever the year it was, uh, he would be in a mental hospital for the rest of his life. And I talked to Stanley Nowak who was in the Senate then about getting some help. He introduced me to Hittle and Hittle had the statute amended, so people in that category, uh, would not remain in a in a booby hatch for the rest of their life. We went to lunch and they wouldn't even let me pay for lunch. I was just a young lawyer out of the service. Very high class people.

MK: Good. Well thank you very much. So I want to wish you Happy Holiday and a Merry Christmas. And do you, are you interested in getting a copy, I can send you at the beginning of the year a copy of the transcript if you want. If you don't that's fine, too.

BS: I don't, I don't really need it.

MK: Okay.

BS: If you publish a book I'd like to see it.

MK: Oh yeah, absolutely. No you, you you provided lots of great information. So if I have any other questions I'll give you a ring. And I really appreciate your patience.

BS: The kid who went to Upper Canada College is now working in Labrador City, Labrador.

MK: Wow, wow.

BS: There are some colder places in the world. (laugh) It's pretty cold up there.

MK: Wow, it's a, you must be pretty proud of him.

BS: Pardon? Yeah, last year he worked in Dakar, Senegal, West Africa. Now he's up in Labrador.

MK: So the opposite end of the uh, the climate

BS: Right.

MK: extremes.

BS: Right. Okay, good luck!

MK: Thank you very much. Bye-bye.

Break

MK: The senator we talked about? Does Warren Hooper sound right?

BS: Hooper that's it. Senator Hooper.

MK: It wasn't Hittle but it was Hooper.

BS: Hooper was the guy.

MK: Great one other thing. The Dann, Atlas, Tilchen firm was in the Fount Tower? Was tower was that?

BS: Barlum

K: Oh, that was also Barlum,. I'm sorry.

BS: B-A-R-L-U-M.

MK: OK. You also mentioned a couple of clubs in your interview that I forgot to ask you about. One was the Bon Temps.

BS: The Belltone.

MK: What was it called?

BS: I think it was called Belltone.

MK: Belltone and that was above the, on Frederick there?

BS: it was on Chene Street near Frederick. It was upstairs.

MK: And who operated that?

BS: I think, oh Christ, I can't think. Alex was his first name. He was a , a kind of a promoter.

MK: Oh yeah, you did mention his name.

BS: Kochanowski.

MK: Kochanowski, Alex Kochanowski. Right. Was that an illegal club? Was that a drinking club? What was it?

BS: It was a drinking club. They had a club liquor license.

MK: Oh, they did have a liquor license.

BS: It was kind of a hang out for the actors and the radio people. When radio came in it went from stage to radio, the newspaper people. It was that kind of a bohemian type club.

MK: OK. And you also mentioned the Blossom Heat, I think on Jefferson?

BS: Yeah.

MK: What was that...was that right? Blossom Heat?

BS: Blossom Heat is now owned by the City of St. Clair Shores as a recreation center.

MK: It was a casino?

BS: It was built originally as a gambling casino in the 1920s.

MK: I see. OK. And then one other name you mentioned that I want to make sure was spelled right, Gamalski

BS: G-A-M-A-L-S-K-I, Gamalski.

MK: Great. Got it. OK, so thanks again. It was Warren Hooper then.

BS: Yea, that's the guy. Warren.

MK: Terrific, thanks a lot.

BS: Is there anything else I can help with you with?

MK: Not right now thank you.

BS: All right.

MK: Bye, bye.

Break

Telephone follow-up on January 13, 2004

MK: This is a follow-up with Judge Ben Stanczyk on January 13, 2004. I'm doing this by telephone from my office.

Break

MK: Great. I have some follow-up questions and also some questions that really weren't follow-up but were related to our interview. When you were talking about different attorneys in the area, different lawyers there were a couple that I came across names that you didn't mention. One was a woman, Helen Sosnowski. Do you remember her at all?

BS: Yes.

MK: What do you remember about her? According to the records she was at 5068 Chene, which would have probably been around Warren or someplace.

BS: Yes well, she was at Warren, but before that she was on Chene and Medbury. Her father was a member of Congress.

MK: That was John Sosnowski?

BS: His daughter.

MK: I see.

BS: And then she left private practice and went to the Friend of the Court. She was a senior attorney for the Friend of the Court.

MK: Do you where she went to school or any background about her?

BS: No I don't.

MK: Did you know her, meet her?

BS: Oh yes. In the forties, well when I started practice law, she was already working for the Friend of the Court. She was in an office on Warren and Chene. Let's see who was in there, Al Bonczak? I think his family owned that building.

MK: Bonczak?

BS: Yeah, B-O-N-C-Z-A-K.

MK: I see.

BS: And I think Frank Schemanske was there, the Records Court Judge. Other lawyers there that I can't remember who.

MK: You know, I mentioned to you the Sadowski partner and the name that came across on the list here was Moriarty. Do you remember him at all?

BS: Just the name.

MK: Because I saw it listed as Sadowski and Moriarty on Chene Street and I wondered...

BS: Near Trombly.

MK: I'm not sure where, somewhere on Chene [It was near Hancock, 4771 Chene – MK] There was a psychologist listed in the Polk Directory as living on Chene and practicing in the 5400 block, would have been between Frederick and Kirby [Not true, between Kirby and Ferry – MK] Joseph Salkowski. Do you remember him or any mention of him at all?

BS: I remember the name but I can't associate with anything.

MK: OK

BS: Don't remember... I knew the name.

MK: OK. Also uh there was an attorney Kwasiborski, Anthony Kwasiborski.

BS: Right.

MK: Do you remember anything about him?

BS: Oh yes, he was a big handsome guy. His son is a big time lawyer today.

MK: And what kind of law did he practice? Do you know where he went to school or anything?

BS: I think he went to UofM. I'm not sure but all of his kids went to UofM and I think he may have.

MK: What generation was he relative to you?

BS: I didn't understand.

MK: What generation was he relative to you?

BS: I would say he was about ten years older than me.

MK: Oh, so he was older than you?

BS: Yeah, more or less ten years.

MK: OK, and he practiced on the street? He had a law practice on the street, on Chene Street?

BS: He was on Chene in the thirties and forties I think.

MK: OK

BS: The thirties maybe, then he was downtown. His son graduated from law school about '42.

MK: OK, you mentioned, actually you didn't mention this, but I wonder if you ever came across Leokadia Popowska?

BS: Leokadia, yeah, she worked for the Legal Aid Bureau. Her father had a gasoline station. The first curb stone station on Chene Street right after World War I.

MK: Curb stone?

BS: Yea.

MK: What's curb stone, I don't remember any?

BS: It had the pump right on the curb.

MK: Oh, I see. And it was on Chene and what?

BS: Uh, between Ferry and Kirby, east side of Chene.

MK: What side of Chene?

BS: East.

MK: East side of Chene. OK.

BS: Three partners in there. Uh, Popowski, Waszak, I forget who the third one was. Ted Waszak was a partner. Ted Waszak moved over to Van Dyke and Knodell or Edgewood I think. One of those streets. [There was a gas station on the northeast corner of Knodell and Van Dyke – MK]. He was the oldest brother of Walter Waszak and Charlie Waszak. Charlie was a doctor, Walter was a lawyer.

MK: Is that W-A-S-Z-A-K?

BS: Well, yes that's how it was but then they changed it to V-A-S-H-A-K. Vashak.

MK: I see, OK. What about her? What do you remember about her as a person? Did she have a profile in the community? Was she known?

BS: Oh, yes. She worked for the Legal Aid Bureau. And she was well recognized as a social, I don't remember if she was a member of the bar or not. She was a social worker type. Well recognized as a very, very nice lady.

MK: Do you know if she lived in the neighborhood? He had the gas station there but where did they live, do you know?

BS: Well, it seems to me that they lived around Iroquois, Rohns and Warren, Burns maybe, one of those streets. Van Dyke.

MK: OK: You mentioned the Liberty Creamery, your family's involvement in that.

BS: That's right.

MK: I remember, I recall in some interviews that I did that in the early 1940's, probably like '40 or '41 that one of the partners killed the other. Did you know anything about that?

BS: I'm not sure, one of the people that was murdered was a neighbor of ours when we lived on Curt Street in the '30s. His son was a social worker or probation officer. I can't remember the details.

MK: There were two names, Psciuk was one of the partners.

BS: That's right.

MK: And I'm not sure what the other one's name was but...

BS: My relatives, one was my father's brother Bill Stanczyk. And the other one was his brother –in-law Karl Nowak. His wife, let's they were married to sisters. I remember that there was a murder in the '30s, '40s.

MK: Right, that's what I heard.

BS: But I can't remember any details.

MK: But your family was out of it at that point?

BS: Pardon?

MK: Your family was out of the business at that point?

BS: My uncle died in 1925.

MK: Oh, OK.

BS: Soon after the creamery started. I don't know when Karl Nowak left.

MK: I see. OK. Do you, you also mentioned in the interview John Alcritte or Alriite?

BS: Okray O-K-R-A-Y.

MK: O-K-R-A-Y. OK And he was a court clerk in Recorder's Court?

BS: Correct.

MK: And Okray was the name of the building also?

BS: Well they had a three story building with offices on Chene and Medbury. Sosnowski the lawyer and his brother who was a real estate broker had offices there. And some other professional people. Kaliszewski had a florist shop there. And Schramm had the drug store. Early on, the Okray's had a grocery store then in the early twenties they knocked the building down and put up a nice brick building, two story.

MK: I see. You mentioned the very first time I interviewed you that you had two photographs. And that one of them was of Muskie and Borkowicz in the St. Stan's and the other one was of Dom Ludowy officers in front. And I wonder if you still had those and whether it would be possible for me to stop by and make copies of those?

BS: Right. It would take a few minutes to find them but I have them.

MK: How would you want me to do it? Should I give you a call to arrange a time to come by?

BS: You could.

MK: OK, should I like wait a couple of days and give you a buzz?

BS: Correct.

MK: OK. I will do that. You also mentioned in the interview , the partner of your dad in the pool hall was Rezey or Regey?

BS: Regey. R-E-G-E-Y.

MK: R-E-G-E-Y, Regey. OK.

BS: He and my father were partners.

MK: OK.

BS: In fact, he became a kind of a derelict later on.

MK: Sorry to hear that.

BS: Yeah. I'll tell you something interesting about him. He's one of the few people whose children got an order that they did not have to support him.

MK: [Laughs]

BS: I never heard of that except in the case of John Regey. And the reason was he had a son who was exactly my age, who was hit by a car that went over the curb. And he had a permanent brain injury. Had a big hole in his forehead. Some young doctors at Ford Hospital saved his life. And of course, brilliant, the kid was brilliant in one way. They settled the case. I don't remember the numbers, 40,000 or 60,000. And Regey just pissed it away. His kid's money. And his daughter was married to a pharmacist, I can't think of his name at the moment. Had a drugstore on van Dyke. I beg your pardon, on Seven Mile and Charest. And later had the drugstore, here on Audubon. And Regey would come in to clean. On Saturday morning.

MK: Uh huh.

BS: He'd carry out rubbish before five bottles of whiskey had which he put under his friends car. So his kids got an order that they did not have to support him.

MK: Do you have any idea what years we're talking about?

BS: Well, yeah, the kid was hurt by the car on Armistice Day 1918. 11-11-18. And his daughter had that drugstore married a pharmacist, oh Christ, I can't think of his name, in the thirties. Daughter was about three years older than the boy. Regey was a very talented mural artist. He was one of the few people who knew how to paint ceilings at churches, where he lay on his back, on a scaffold. He fell off a scaffold at Holy Redeemer Church broke his back but survived. Walked around with a limp. Just turned out to be a no good bum.

MK: The , you mentioned that the Dom Ludowy moved to Chene and Frederick to Zywiecki's something parlor. What was that?

BS: Pool room.

MK: Pool room.

BS: Yeah, that was a pool room. Zywiecki had a pool room. Like Waszak, my father worked there during or before World War I. They bought that building and then they had a fire.

MK: Ok. OK. You also talked about Robert Wojcinski the attorney and I think you said he was a brick fire lawyer. What kind of lawyer is that?

BS: He was a trial lawyer.

MK: Oh, trial.

BS: He was a partner of Arthur Kosciński, who later became a federal judge.

MK: OK, a trial lawyer. It sounded somewhat like brick fire and I couldn't understand it. I don't know why it was so confusing. Good.

BS: His mother was very prominent in Polish affairs. He was the first secretary of the Central Citizen's Committee. And when Madame Curie was in Detroit there was a tea for her at the J.L. Hudson Company, she was the chairman of the committee she poured the tea. Very, a very liked lady. Spoke Polish, English, Russian and German of course. They owned that bakery, the Home Bakery. Robert Wojcinski was a big hero in World War I. He came back from the service and went to law school. he was good trial lawyer. he died about 1985, 86.

MK: Good. That's all of my questions.

BS: The lawyer who was maybe not Polish you might want to mention.

MK: Who was that?

BS: Arthur Willard. Willard's family, his father was a doctor in the Civil War. So after the Civil War he couldn't practice in the South so he moved out to either Utah or Idaho. Arthur was a baseball...a professional athlete. He was in the service in the Navy in World War I. And then on his way back somehow he got routed through Detroit. At the train stop, he's going to be in Detroit for several hours between trains. So he gets on the Baker Streetcar behind the New York Central Depot and he gets off at Chene...Grandy and Warren, in front of Northeastern High School, Perrien Park. And he got acquainted with Cass Jankowski who was a senator, who was quite a prominent person., whose office was on the west side of Chene. He went back to the station, go this bag and stayed in Detroit. And he married Hattie Siwka ,S-I-W-K-A. They lived across the street from us. We were 5820 so they were 5821 probably. And then he moved to Hamtramck. He was a very prominent criminal lawyer. He claimed he got acquittals of 160 murder cases in Michigan.

MK: Wow, wow.

BS: Very, very high grade lawyer.

MK: OK.

BS: Anything else.

MK: No, what I'll do is I'll give you a call in a couple of days about the two photos and come by to make copies of them.

BS: All right.

MK: Great.

BS: There's a chance a guy in Romeo's been calling me. He's trying to put together some kind of a photograph compendium on Chene Street.

MK: No kidding.

BS: Yeah, and I told him to get in touch with you. Apparently somebody wants to do a national thing on neighborhoods so they picked on Chene in Detroit. And they're going to do something on Buffalo, Pittsburgh. And he wants to borrow some photographs from me.

MK: What's his name?

BS: I can't remember. I got a letter form him upstairs. He's going to come over here in a few days. He wants to borrow some pictures.

MK: OK. Well don't give him the one of Borkowicz.

BS: I'm not going to give him any pictures. I'll show them to him. We'll go to my office and make a xerox of them. If he wants to fax them to somebody or whatever, we can do that too.

MK: OK. So I'll give you a buzz and then I'll drive by and I'll bring my camera and just make copies on the spot.

BS: All right.

MK: Terrific.

BS: Bye.

MK: Thanks a lot.

End of interview follow-up from 1/13/04.

Start of interview 1-23-2004

MK: This is Marian Krzyzowski and I'm here with Ben Pearlman at the home of Judge Ben Stanczyk in Detroit and today is January 23, 2004 and we're here do some follow up on some of what Judge Stanczyk told me in our telephone interviews. But also I wanted to talk a little about Central Citizens Committee since I haven't really asked you about it. Couple of things first before we get into the Central Citizen's Committee. Arthur Popiel do you remember him?

BS: Yeah.

MK: What do you remember about him? In terms of--he lived on Chene Street above the Kovitz department store. Or at least he had office there, I remember.

BS: He had some serious problems. Popiel, I can't tell you much about him. I really don't know. It's a little before my time.

MK: Ok, OK. You mentioned you lived on Dubois and then you lived on Chene. You also lived on Curt. What other streets did you live on in the City?

BS: Well, from Curt we moved to Badger, which is the same neighborhood. In 1937 my family moved to Bliss which is near Outer Drive and Van Dyke. Then in '43 my sister got married and I was in the service. My father sold that house and bought a house on Doyle, near Van Dyke and McNichols. Then we moved here. My mother died in 1945 and I was still in the service and on Courville in '49. My father lived with me until 1955.

MK: Do you remember the addresses on Curt and Badger?

BS: 8032 Curt I think. 8215 Badger.

MK: So you would have been down by Erwin on Badger? Close to Erwin.

BS: Just off Maxwell.

MK: OK.

BS: Second house east of Maxwell.

MK: Ok great. If you don't mind my asking about the Central Citizen's Committee? Can you tell me what the Central Citizen's Committee was and I know you were president of it for a while. What as it and who was a involved in it?

BS: It was originally created to assist the Polish war effort in World War I. Leopold Koscinski, the attorney, Arthur's brother, was the first president. Mrs. Eva Wojcinski was the first secretary. And it was sort of an umbrella organization for the various fraternal and social clubs. It was very big in World War I. Then between the wars it went down. During World War II it became again a patriotic organization. I became president in 1951, I think. I was president for about six years. Well this was a time of the Cold War. Poles were very concerned with what was happening in Europe. And it was the Katyn Massacre that came out. There was the vote frauds in Poland the takeover of Poland surreptitiously. And at the same time we had this big influenc, influx of people from Europe who didn't want to go back to Poland. They didn't want to live in a Communist state. Other places in Europe were not too welcome. Belgians didn't want any foreigners. The French didn't want any foreigners. They stayed in England. They had trouble with the language. So we had this huge influence...influx of men and women from Europe with a lot of patriotic zeal. And as a result we had parades and all sorts of manifestations to keep the problems of Poland before the American public. At one time we had over 100 delegates, which means there were no individual memberships. They were all representing a lodge or club, a veteran's post, etc.

MK: So it was an umbrella organization that representatives from social, political, cultural organizations.

BS: That's correct.

MK: In the City of Detroit.

BS: Correct, greater Detroit.

MK: Any you said you were president of it for those years in the early '50s. Who else was--

BS: Roman Ceglowski was a lawyer. He was president.

M K: Roman Ceglowski?

BS: Yes.

MK: C-E or S-E?

BS: C-E-G.

MK: OK, Ceglowski.

BS: Chester Kozdroj was president off and on for many years. He was an attorney. John Okray was president in the 1920's. Afterword Alfred Ulman succeeded me as president. He was big in the Polish National Alliance. I can't remember the others.

MK: What...you mentioned in your interview, I think it was Robert Wojcinski's was the first secretary. Who was the first Secretary of the Central Citizen's Committee?

BS: Who were they?

MK: Who was the first secretary of the Central Citizen's Committee? You mentioned, was it his mother?

BS: His mother.

MK: His mother, is that Evaline?

BS: Evaline.

MK: OK.

BS: She was quite a big person in Detroit's Polish community. In 1925, I think, Madame Curie came to Detroit. She was chairman of the committee that had a tea for her at the J.L. Hudson restaurant. It was quite a big social event. She's a very active woman. Spoke Polish, Russian, German, English and she worked hard on social problems. Assisted in forming the *Liga Spraw Polskich*, the Polish Activities League. Which was an east side organiz... which was both east side and west side of Detroit. They had a home in Hamtramck, but they taught things like embroidery. My sister used to go there for Polish story telling. It was a community house. They had it on the west side. I don't know the streets. They had a camp near Wanda Park, which was Utica Road and 16 or 17 Mile Road. Where children who were from homes that were not too prosperous they made big contributions for the kids to go there. Klara Swieczkowska was the big thing. Central Citizen's Committee was somewhat instrumental in forming that organization.

MK: The Committee, did it have location, a physical office someplace?

BS: No, we met at Dom Polski for many years. Until sometime in the 1960's. They moved to Hamtramck, to the Polish National Alliance.

MK: You mentioned Ulman after you. While you were there who else was very active? Who do you remember that was part of the Central Citizen's Committee?

BS: A lady by the name of Mary Cichowicz. She was a westsider from Del Ray. Was also a bar owner. She was very active in the Polish community. There was Adam Mortka from Hamtramck.

MK: Mortka?

BS: M-O-R-T-K-A. Was in active in the Central Citizen's Committee. There was Antoinette Staniszewski. Her husband shortened the name to Stanis, S-T-A-N-I-S. She was very active.

MK: where was she from do you know?

BS: Yes, she was from the west side. And there was Stella Lecznar, L-E-C-Z-N-A-R. Very aggressive. Very lovely lady who worked with. She was a big time supporter of Governor Williams. And worked for hard for all the causes.

MK: And where was she from?

BS: She was from the west side.

MK: Anybody else from the east side, anybody else in the Chene Street neighborhood?

BS: I'm trying to think. I can't think of any off hand.

MK: OK Did the Central Citizen's Committee have some sort of a political profile too? Was it thought of as being more Democrat, more Republican, more...

BS: It was more liberal and Democratic. It was liberal and Democratic. It seems that at that time, in the 50's and 60's most of the clergy were Republican for whatever the reason. They looked n the Democratic Party as the party of Black people and wage earners, factory workers, blue collar. So they tried to elevate themselves a little higher. So the Central Citizen's Committee, whether by default or otherwise was a liberal Democratic organization.

MK: In being an umbrella organization, with representatives form a lot of the Polish American organizations in the area, it seems to be similar to the PNA. I mean the Polish American Congress, it also being an umbrella organization. Was there an overlap here? What was the relationship between these two?

BS: The Polish American Congress was a national organization. Tried to be international at one time. But it was a national organization. And Congressman Machrowicz, later Judge, had been president for some time. When he was elected to Congress in 1950, of course he left Detroit. So the Polish American Congress in Michigan fell on bad times. That leadership was not there. I'm not saying this to be critical it's just a matter of fact. The result was that the Central Citizen's Committee got this big upgrade.

MK: In terms of your tenure as president, was there anything particular that you recall that you feel was an achievement or your major kind of contribution to the organization and the community?

BS: They had a Polish Consulate in Detroit. They had offices in one of those big two family homes on West Grand Boulevard. I don't remember the address. And they were inviting Polish leaders to social events and of course we felt this was really not consular business. This was purely for propaganda. And I think it was about 1953 or '4, we drafted a resolution asking that this office be closed. Eventually the State Department did order it closed. Because they couldn't show they were doing very much commercial business. They might help with an adoption problem or something of that sort from time to time. That was one of the things that we did. We had the Pulaski Day parades in October, which later became the Polish parade in Hamtramck for Labor Day. Lots of people, lots of enthusiasm. These kinds of manifestations we had guests, the Polish generals, who were exiled, they couldn't go back to Poland. And some of the people who had been in the Polish government in exile in London, would come to Detroit. Some of them were pretty good orators. We were able to get a big crowd on Belle Isle so Anders came here in 1956 [General Wladyslaw Anders was the commander of the Second Polish Corps, which was formed in the USSR and marched out through Persia and into Palestine, fighting in North Africa and then in Italy. – MK] He was the Supreme Commander of Allied forces in Italy. Took Monte Cassino from the Germans. And this of course attracted people. Lots of media attention, television was coming into its own then.

MK: Great. I think that answers my questions. So maybe we can begin to look at some of the photos.

MK: OK, I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll clean up this table a little bit.

BS: Mr. Popiel who was a common attorney in the 1920's. Seems to me he was the City attorney at one time. Assistant prosecutor, apparently a good lawyer, good reputation. He aspired for public office but I can't remember what the office was. Where was I?

Break

MK: What do you mean he went to pot? What do you mean Tarczynski went to pot?

BS: Well he made a lot of money. He was a successful businessman. Then he used to gamble big. Grandfather did the same. A cousin of mine did the same.

MK: Gambled?

BS: Yeah.

MK: Where did they go gamble?

BS: Oh every place, pinochle in restaurants, for big money - barbershop on Saturday night.

MK: Which barbershop?

BS: Szczepanowski, right next to Niebrzydowski. Chene and Farnsworth. [Zygmunt Niebrzydowski had his first bakery at 5208 Chene – MK]

MK: He'd have a game going at night? Or what? Gambling at night?

BS: Yeah.

MK: What kind of gambling.

BS: Poker, pinochle.

Break

BS: Folding chairs and they used the mirror off the wall as a table. They played cards for big money.

MK: And who played besides your dad?

BS: Not my dad. My uncle. They were businessmen , professional men.

Break

MK: Kolowicz?

BS: Yeah.

MK: And what was his story?

BS: Well George was organizer, president of a bank. It failed and he was sent to jail for violation of banking laws.

MK: He accepted what?

BS: Violation of banking laws. Sent to jail.

MK: Oh, sent to jail.

BS: Lending money to himself. And while he was in jail, his wife come out to visit him and he wanted the want ads and he'd tell her to go out to buy real estate. He had the money secreted somewhere apparently. And when he came out of jail he did pretty well. He ended up owning the Whittier Hotel. He ended up the American Optical Company. He organized the first coast to coast trucking company. He put together the Denver Chicago Trucking Company and Detroit Cleveland Navigation Company.

MK: It pays to go to jail.

BS: Well, he was a brilliant man. He owned the Griswold Building, American Optical Company, all kinds of business. He died in January of '56 I think.

MK: Where did he live? Do you know?

BS: He lived at the Whittier for years.

MK: He lived at the Whittier?

BS: Yeah. And before that he lived in Palmer Woods. He started in Hamtramck. He was city clerk of the Village before he was 21.

Break

MK: The Szkoła Ludowa was located where?

BS: It was in the recreational hall of the church I believe was on Mitchell and Hancock. It was not a Catholic Church. They had classes for in Polish from 4:30 to 6:30 during the school year. And we went there to learn Polish grammar and Polish spelling, etc. And they had a dance group and they had a choral group, that sort of thing.

MK: So you attended that school also?

BS: Yeah, yeah.

MK: For how many years did you attend?

BS: Probably four or five.

MK: And in this photograph that I have from the Szkółka Ludowa you identify several people here. In the back row middle.

BS: I think that is Eleanor Niebrzydowski [According to Irene Niebrzydowski, it is not her sister but herself, Irene Niebrzydowski. –MK].

MK: OK, and your wife to be is on the far right sitting?

BS: Correct, yeah.

MK: And then...

BS: Irene Scislowski.

MK: Third person from the right sitting.

BS: I think this is Irene Gajec.

MK: And next to her on the right, left is Irene Gajec. OK, great. Terrific.

End of interview from 1/23/04

This is Marian Krzyzowski and I'm again at the home of Judge Benjamin Stanczyk, in Detroit, Michigan. And today is April the 29th of 2004. Thursday. And I'm here to follow up again for the third or fourth time on some questions for Judge Stanczyk related to the Chene Street neighborhood.

MK: The first thing I wanted to ask you—and I asked you this on the telephone the other day—is at one point you told me about how Mr. Januszewski took over control, or ownership, of the Dziennik Polski. Could you just tell me a little bit about what you know about it? Who owned it before and how Mr. Januszewski got it?

BS: I'm not sure if it's Wojcik or Wedda. Both of them. And he was in debt. And had just been going into bankruptcy. The story is that in the face of that, he made a verbal agreement with Januszewski.

MK: Was this a personal debt? Or do you know if it was the paper that was heavily in debt or if it was—

BS: Both.

MK: Both?

BS: Januszewski offered to take the paper from him with the understanding that down the road when he would get back on his feet, he would reconvey, but he never did. Of course he couldn't enforce a verbal contract, this was a social contract to start with.

MK: So, he literally gave it to Januszewski for the debt, and then Januszewski never, never, you know, never, never—

BS: Never [REDACTED].

MK: And so what happened to Mr. Wedda or Wojcik, or whoever it was, do you know what happened to them?

BS: What went on in business I don't know. I never followed up. It was in the 30s. I have no idea.

MK: Mokay.

BS: I'm not sure if it was Wedda or Wojcik. You might jot that down somewhere?

MK: I will. I'll check back with the papers. I wanted to ask you some more biographical information on Antoni Wojsowski. You mentioned sometimes on the phone, from, you know, his—I know for awhile he was a bookkeeper for Glos Ludowy in the '30s. And you mentioned to me he something about the FBI, the Nazis—could you just maybe expand on that a little bit, and tell me details that you remember?

BS: Trying to put these things together. He was an accountant. They didn't have CPAs when he graduated from college in 1905, but in Poland of course, whatever the degree was, he had it. He sold insurance. At one time he had a soft drink business in Reading, Pennsylvania. And after World War I, he went to Poland as an accountant to help out the new government. Apparently our intelligence services used him at that time, off and on. Early in the 1930s when Nazis came into power, they made a big push in the United States to neutralize the United States. We had the America First Movement, we had anti-war demonstrations, disarmament, all this sort of thing, which apparently were financed by the Nazis. And putting tidbits of information together, it appears that he was one of the people who worked on that. And was able to trace money transfers from Berlin, to Zurich, to Los Angeles, to Montana, etc. in the United States. I say this because in 1936 or thereabouts he bought a summer cottage near Brighton, Michigan, for cash and my wife graduated from college and he bought her a new Ford car, for cash, which was unusual. He was in the insurance business, and people weren't buying much life insurance during the Depression. The money apparently came from government sources,

for the intelligence work that he was doing. He went back and forth to Europe several times. I don't know how many.

MK: Interwar period, you mean? Between the wars?

BS: Yeah. Through the '20s and the '30s. I don't know how many times he went across the ocean.

MK: What about, how did he get there to Glos Ludowy, where did that come from, do you know?

BS: I don't know. But he was of a liberal mind. And I think most fellows at that time were not communists. But the paper was obviously left.

MK: Right.

BS: During World War II, he formed an organization, the Polish Labor Council, Rada Pracy, which was definitely an anti-communist kind of a thing. Don Binkowski in his book writes about it.

MK: Right...right. And then, during this time he was—where was he living, during the war years? Where was he living?

BS: On East Grand Boulevard.

MK: I know you told me the address, do you remember what it is, in case I don't have it... Was it before the public library? Before—

BS: It was blocks just north of the library. 2063, would that be right?

MK: Could be, so it's just north of, past the library. More towards Chene.

BS: Towards Hamtramck.

MK: Towards Hamtramck, yeah ok. Ok. You're right. The Boulevard went up further.

BS: Where the houses were demolished, where stuff was moved over onto Grand Boulevard and Moran, two houses away from Lutnia.

MK: Ok. Which, west of Lutnia?

BS: Yes.

MK: West of Lutnia, 2 houses. That house is still standing probably.

BS: Yes.

MK: Ok, we talked a little bit about the Palmer Bakery and Blake and so on, on the phone. Would you tell me a little more about what you remember of that?

BS: Well Adam Blake was a bootlegger. In the 1920s bootlegging was just an honorable business because most people felt that the prohibition act was a denial of their liberty. Alcoholic beverages have been a part of our culture for a couple thousand years, perhaps longer. And he built a building which is still standing on Chene Street, Chene and Palmer, on the northwest corner. He had a men's haberdashery store. And there was a, he built a still in the basement.

MK: Was he then Blake at that time?

BS: Yeah.

MK: So he, was he Polish, or—

BS: No. His name was Gliszczynski.

MK: Gliszczynski.

BS: Yeah. He built this building. Access to the still, in the basement, was through a dressing room. In the store. Feds had a search warrant, they came in, they couldn't find the still. Well _____ building. So they got another search warrant, came in with an architect, made a lot of measurements, in the basement and on the ground floor and figured out that there must be an exit, an entrance here. The building is still there, on Lavery. There's a bakery there, Richard Stanish had a bakery there. His brother was a big-time gambler. His brother was killed.

MK: Blake?

BS: In an auto accident right out here on Mack and Cadieux, I think it was about 1923 or '24. There was a gambling casino at Eight Mile and Mack. Apparently his brother whatever his name was had quite a lot of money driving home down Mack Avenue and he thought somebody was chasing him, to rob him. And he missed a turn at Cadieux and hit a tree or whatever. He was killed in the accident.

MK: What about the Blake that owned the haberdashery? What ever happened to him?

BS: Well after repeal he went into operating a numbers business, mutuals.

MK: Out of that location?

BS: No he moved at Harper-Van Dyke. He sold the building but he had the bakery there. And the upstairs had been converted into a banquetting hall. Nowak—

MK: Right. It was called Nowak.

BS: Nowak Hall. And he, Blake he moved to Harper-Van Dyke. He worked--

MK: Where at Harper Van Dyke?

BS: An apartment, above the Eastown Theatre.

MK: Oh...

BS: There were apartments there. Which--

MK: In that same building?

BS: Yes. At the corner of Maxwell and Harper.

MK: Right. The next block past Van Dyke

BS: Just east of Van Dyke. But he lived there. He died sometime in the 1950s, I can't tell you when.

MK: And did he run his numbers out of there?

BS: No.

MK: Ok, I came across the name of an attorney that I'd never heard before, on Chene Street, Francis Balicki. 5765. That would have been on the same—that would have been between Hendrie and Palmer, on the west side of the street, in the '40s. Have you ever heard of Mr. Balicki?

BS: Yeah I heard of him.

MK: Well what kind of an attorney was he?

BS: I can't—I can't remember.

MK: Mhm. Because that was almost across the street from where you would have been, except further south.

BS: 5820—

MK: Right, so you were a block—

BS: Whatever. About 500 feet away from him.

MK: Yeah. You mentioned on the phone you had some information—at least you remembered some of the information about the doctors and dentists on Chene Street. In the neighborhood. I wonder if you could start going through some of the ones that you do know. That you remember.

BS: Families. Kolasa family. K-O-L-A-S-A. John Kolasa was the oldest. In the 1920s and '30s he had a business selling wrapping paper and sundries to merchants. He helped his brothers get through school. One was a dentist. One was an M.D. And his other one was a mortician. Helped them all get through school.

MK: Do you remember their first names?

BS: No I don't. [The doctor was William Kolasa and the dentist was Peter Kolosa – MK]

MK: Ok. And where was John Kolasa's business? Where was he at?

BS: Well he operated out of a store on Chene Street for many years. Then when he got up in years he didn't feel like he wants to carry those bundles around. He got into real estate. He had a lot of real estate right here on East Outer Drive, near Warren Avenue. After his first wife died he remarried. In fact I think I tied the knot for him. I'm not sure.

MK: And where on Chene Street was his store?

BS: It was between Hendrie and Medbury, on the west side of the street.

MK: So it's right across the street from your—from where you were at.

BS: Right, right.

MK: And---, go ahead.

BS: But later I think that same building, or the one next to it, was occupied by the Polish baker's union. They had a building there, a clubhouse, with a couple billiard tables and a . That's where they sold whiskey and beer. Let's see, Polish bakers would come over there, first thing in the morning, after work. They worked all night, get through at seven or eight o'clock in the morning so they'd stop in, have a shot and a beer, before going home to eat.

MK: Was he upstairs or downstairs?

BS: Well he had, it was a warehouse that he had downstairs, and it was either behind it or above it, I'm not sure.

MK: Mhm.

BS: It was next to Svoboda, the jeweler.

MK: Oh. Ok. You know I interviewed—I interviewed Svoboda's nephew. The one that owned that jewelry store. So he was next to Svoboda's, eh?

BS: I think he was next to Svoboda.

MK: And the doctors and dentists, where did they have their practice?

BS: They were on Chene, just south of Ferry, on the east side of the street. I'm not sure if it was the same building, or the adjacent building.

MK: And who—one was a dentist, one was a doctor?

BS: Yes.

MK: Did you ever come across them? What were they like? You know, what were they —

BS: The dentist was a very upstanding citizen. The doctor was a little bit of a wild man. I think his first wife committed suicide, I don't know why. He had a big family, lived in Indian Village, on Iroquois or one of those streets. I think there were some adopted children. In addition to his own children, a big family. One of them is a professor at Lawrence Tech.

MK: And his name is still Kolasa?

BS: Yes.

MK: And he teaches at Lawrence Tech.

BS: Yes.

MK: Hm.

BS: I'm not sure what he teaches.

MK: Okay. The next, the doctor's son.

BS: Yes.

MK: And what about the dentist, where did he live, do you know?

BS: I don't remember.

MK: Did he have any kids or any family?

BS: Yes. But I can't remember.

MK: Mm.

BS: I remember the doctor because he was interested in Democratic politics. In 1952 he was interested in Adlai Stevenson and Estes Kefauver, and I remember going to Chicago to a fundraising to pay off Stevenson's debts in 1953. We went together. He just felt that Eisenhower was not the right president and he wanted to see him get out of the White House.

MK: And so when did it—when did he start his practice? What years did he start working?

BS: I don't remember.

MK: No? But in the early '50s he was still there.

BS: Oh yes.

MK: Ok. You mentioned Konieczny.

BS: Yes.

MK: Tell me about Dr. Konieczny, who was he, and where did—

BS: He was down on Chene and Hancock. He got his medical training in Europe. Came to the United States before World War I, I don't remember when, and he was kind of a politician. He was a liberal thinker. Big handsome man. Good judge of hard whiskey. And apparently he—from what I heard—he was a very able physician.

MK: He was an M.D. then, not a dentist.

BS: What?

MK: He was an M.D.

BS: Yes, he was an M.D. And he worked for the city physician's office. Made house calls. Back in the days when we had city physicians making house calls. Well liked, spoke several languages. He had a cottage near West Branch, we used to go hunting there. He wouldn't take a dime for use of the cottage. He just wanted a piece of venison.

MK: Did he practice there when—what years was he on Hancock? And Chene.

BS: That would have been in the '40s and '50s.

MK: '40s and '50s.

BS: Yeah. We used to hunt on his property in the '40s and '50s. In West Branch, use his cottage, he gave us the keys, especially. He wouldn't take a dime, but just wanted a piece of venison.

MK: Do you know where he lived? When he was practicing?

BS: I don't remember.

MK: And was he married? Did he have kids?

BS: He was married. Seems to me, though, he and his wife were estranged at one time. I can't remember the details.

MK: Okay. You mentioned Siwka.

BS: Izydor Siwka was an M.D. Mr. Siwka, Sr. owned a lot of real estate on Chene Street. His daughter was ___a Pandean sister, I forget her name, was married to a Scotsman, Arthur Willard, big time truck driver. He had an office on Chene Street for a short time.

In one of those big houses, on the west side of Chene. He had his office downstairs and they lived in the same house. He lived there for a short time and they moved to Hamtramck in the 1920s. Very successful criminal lawyer. Had a brother came to Detroit from Idaho. He'd been a professional athlete at one time. He was in the navy, and when he was discharged went back to Idaho. For some reason he got shunted around on the trains. So he ended up, rode the right train from New York and Detroit, Could not get another train so easy. So he got on the streetcar, the Baker Streetcar behind the New York Central Depot, and got off at Perrien Park, Northeastern High School. Walked around. And went up to the office of Cass Jankowski, which was right across from Perrien Park. And he stayed in Detroit. He never went back to Idaho. He had a daughter by his first wife, who was exactly the same age as my sister. And I remember he would take my sister to to the store, to buy clothes for his daughter. Later she became a judge in Oakland County.

MK: What's her name?

BS: I can't remember. She was judge in Madison Heights or Ferndale, or Pleasant Ridge. One of those towns in southern Oakland County. She was justice of the peace in the 1930s and '40s. She married a banker.

MK: What about doctor Izydor Siwka, where was his practice?

BS: He was on Chene Street, in a building that his parents owned, though by that time he owned it. He practiced...

MK: Which intersection? Near what and what?

BS: Near Medbury.

MK: Ok.

BS: He was next to the Miller Funeral Parlor.

MK: Okay so on the west side, the west side of the street. And what was he like, did you meet him? Was he —

BS: Yes. He was not a very outgoing person, but he was a very scholarly person. My wife knew Mrs. Siwka, relationship.

MK: Was he trained in the U.S. or in Europe?

BS: Siwka?

MK: Yeah.

BS: Oh no he was American trained. American educated.

MK: Do you know where he went to get his medical training then?

BS: And another interesting family, was the Kosakiewicz family. Mr. Kosakiewicz was a house painter, a very good one. He knew how to paint churches, and commercial establishments. He knew how to put grain onto wood. We had it painted over with enamel. And he knew how to work with wallpaper. Wealthy people used wallpaper made of cloth, actually. It was a different trade then. His wife was a seamstress, she'd learned sewing in Brooklyn. They came to Detroit in, right after or maybe during World War I. They had a daughter, Jenny, who was a concert pianist, concert violinist, I beg your pardon. She played with the Windsor Symphony. She never made the Detroit Symphony. She was a fragile kind of girl. Tall, slender. And didn't have the stamina for the long rehearsals and the long traveling. They had money. She went to finishing school in Boston. Directly out of Northeastern High School. I mentioned earlier as a ruse, they let it be known that there were hot merchandise in Detroit and people would flock to buy it. [laughs] Well merchants put out that rumor. It wasn't hot merchandise, it was regular merchandise. Mrs. Kosakiewicz was one of those, she would get a dozen fur coats, that came out on consignment from New York at the end of the season, April—March, April, May—and let it be known that she was fencing them. Well they just came in and a half an hour all the coats were sold!

MK: What year was this?

BS: In the 1920s. Jewelers used to do the same thing. They got 40 diamond rings, and they were all sold in an hour. It's all hot merchandise. It was hot.

MK: Where was this—where were the Kosakiewicz, where she operating out of? What part of Chene?

BS: Around Chene across from Siwka. Near Medbury.

MK: Oh, ok.

BS: And our neighbor to the north was Okray, O-K-R-A-Y family, John Okray was a, big family, over a hundred people there was, many children. John was a clerk in the recorder's court, a bond clerk. Very high class family.

MK: What about, let's talk about other dentists and doctors that I've come across. There was of course Dr. Knobloch and Pasternacki.

BS: Yes.

MK: Those were two doctors that were on Chene Street. But there's also—

BS: Pasternacki's daughter became a lawyer.

MK: Mhm.

BS: No, I beg your pardon. She married...she married a Pasternacki.

MK: Did you know Knobloch?

BS: Yes, just casually.

MK: 'Cause he was involved in Democratic Party politics. He was the Wayne County coroner.

BS: Yeah he ran for coroner and got elected over **Frontczak** in 1932. He continued to be coroner for 20 years more or less. But by the time he was ready to retire, the coroner's office was abolished and we had an appointed medical examiner.

MK: Mhm. What about, there was also a dentist, Guzinski. Do you remember those—that name at all? The guy that I was thinking about, I think I mentioned to you, was Stanley Lipski. He was on Chene Street. And I think it was—his son was also an attorney, Popiel. Changed his name to Popiel.

BS: Yes, Popiel was his mother's maiden name.

MK: Oh was it?

BS: Yeah.

MK: I guess his father was a dentist, Stanley Lipski. Do you remember him?

BS: We had an attorney, Popiel, who was an assistant prosecutor. And that was his uncle. He took that name.

MK: So his mother's brother?

BS: Yes. Now the story about young Popiel, he went to law school but he was never let take the bar. He couldn't get past the committee on character fitness. He had some problems.

MK: [laughs] I guess so. Did that happen often? That people weren't allowed to take the bar?

BS: Yeah. He married into the Jaworski family. They had a sausage business. And the story is that he took the business into bankruptcy.

MK: No kidding.

BS: No.

MK: That's what happened to the Jaworski's business, it went into bankruptcy?

BS: Yeah. I don't know whether it went into a formal bankruptcy, but it went out.

MK: Yeah. That was—I could never figure out what happened to them because it was so—they seemed to be doing so well in the '40s and '50s,

BS: That's right.

MK: And then all of a sudden you know. They had stores all over the city, it was like as big as Kowalski's.

BS: Yeah. high cost. He got into the, Art Popiel got into the business and ran it right into the ground.

MK: Surprised. Did you ever meet him? Did you ever see him? Was he involved in politics at all?

BS: I'm not sure. I met him in the 1940s. He couldn't take the bar exam. And that's when he married the Jaworski girl.

MK: So he never actually practiced?

BS: No, he was never a lawyer, he couldn't take the bar exam.

MK: Interesting, because I have a photograph from 1940 of that block of Chene Street and he was above the Kovitz, I think, department store. There was a window display that said, "Arthur Popiel, Adwokat." But he must have, you know, he actually didn't practice, if he didn't pass the bar, he couldn't.

BS: That might have been his uncle.

MK: Oh. That could've been his uncle.

BS: Yep.

MK: Do you know what his uncle's first name was? Maybe you're right. I'm going to check on that. Because I thought it was him, but no, you may be right. Because I can't believe that the guy would be allowed to, you know, advertise himself as an attorney if he didn't pass his bar exam.

BS: No he did not.

MK: Did you ever come across a doctor named Frances Krynicki? I mentioned to you, because he was on Chene Street for awhile too.

BS: I can't remember.

MK: Okay. And then there was a really, a very popular Jewish doctor. He used to be on, I think it was on Milwaukee or East Grand Boulevard, I can't remember which. Bloc. B-L-O-C. And he delivered—

BS: B-L-O-C-H wasn't it?

MK: B-L-O-C-H, right.

BS: Two brothers.

MK: Okay. Tell me what you know about them.

BS: Not very much.

MK: They delivered—apparently they delivered thousands of Jewish kids all over the city. It was the most popular, you know —

BS: There on Milwaukee and Chene Street.

MK: Milwaukee.

BS: And Mitchell.

MK: Yeah. Yeah that's right. What do you know about them?

BS: Not very much.

MK: They were two brothers you say?

BS: Apparently yes. I just know that they were there.

MK: Mhm. Any other doctors or dentists that come to mind?

BS: There were some doctors in the Iris Theater Building. I can't remember their names. Dr. Williamson was on Chene and Kirby.

MK: Who was he?

BS: He was an M.D. He lived on East Grand Boulevard and Palmer in a house. Well regarded, well respected.

MK: Was he Polish or not?

BS: No he was not Polish. But he was well respected in this community. He didn't have any money, he took care of patients anyway. Somebody else would pay for it. In 1926, I think, I was sick. ----- He'd come to the house. On Chene Street. He made house calls.

MK: On East Grand Boulevard, that strip of East Grand Boulevard from Chene going east, there were a lot of doctors and dentists living.

BS: The Coyne Building a Dr. Font, he was a Portuguese. I think his name was Fontica Anthony Font, F O N T. He was a great surgeon.

MK: And he was in the Coyne building?

BS: In the Coyne building. He took my appendix out in 1931.

MK: Mhm. And where did he do it—where did he do it—

BS: In Grace Hospital.

MK: In Grace Hospital. Because some of the surgery...

BS: Higby was the doctor across the street in the theater building.

MK: Iris?

BS: Yes.

MK: He was in the Iris building itself? So there were offices above it?

BS: Right.

MK: Okay, and he was an M.D.

BS: Right.

MK: This was also in the '30s?

BS: Right.

MK: There were probably some—there were probably some doctors too above the...I was just thinking, well there was Bittker. Bittker? There were Jewish doctors on the north end of Chene Street. Did you ever come across Bittker? Doctor Bittker, dentist, or? Okay. David Bttker. That's what I heard.

BS: I never knew--.

MK: Right in that area, around—

BS: Milwaukee.

MK: Milwaukee, yeah, exactly. Exactly.

BS: There was a dentist, down Forest and Chene, Dr. Dzurin.

MK: How's that spelled?

BS: I think originally it was spelled D-Z-U-R-I-N.

MK: D-Z-

BS: U-R-I-N. He changed it to J-U-R-I-N. He was totally high society. Prussian high society. Spoke several languages. I remember he was retired in the '50s and had a relatively nice _____. Always drove a fancy car. Mercedes. Jaguar. And that sort of thing.

MK: Where on Forest and Chene was he?

BS: That would be on the southeast corner.

MK: Ok. There was a drug store there on that corner.

BS: Right. I think there were some offices, behind the drug store, facing Forest Avenue.

MK: Ok. I interviewed the daughter of the owner of that drug store. A guy named Meyer Silverman owned that drug store.

BS: Yeah.

MK: Silver Drugs. And I actually have a photograph from the '20s of him standing inside that drug store. There was, there was a drug store on that corner for a long time.

BS: Right.

MK: I have a photo from 1913 of the first PNA meeting at the Dom Polski. A panoramic shot, and his drug store's on that corner in 1913. So it's, something's been there a long time. So did you ever—did you come across very much, was he active politically, or?

BS: I don't know. I can't answer. I don't know.

MK: And he retired in the '50s?

BS: Well I can't remember when he retired. But it seems to me that he had some relatives living on our street here: Flowers, it's Kwiatkowski.

MK: Kwiatkowski?

BS: Yeah. Mr. Kwiatkowski, he called himself, changed his name to Flowers, was a pharmacist. They were related somehow. Or maybe just a professional contact. And he would come to visit.

MK: Mhm. And I don't know if I mentioned to you this, but I tracked down—I think I told you—the policeman, Kaliszewski's niece. You know the guy who was shot on Chene Street? I tracked down, you know—

BS: She had a flower shop on Warren ...Kelly's.

MK: Yeah.

BS: That she inherited from her parents.

MK: Her name was Irene DeArmit. That's what her married name was. I tracked her down in St. Clair, Michigan. I'm gonna go interview her in June.

BS: When she was born, her uncle was shot.

MK: Right. That's what you were telling me. That's—I'm really interested—

BS: In 192-.

MK: She's got some photographs, and she's got some stories too, so I'm really looking forward to it. I also interviewed Mr. Joseph Placek. Do you remember him?

BS: I know the name but I—

MK: His father had a kind of a run-of-the-mill grocery store at the corner of Palmer and Mitchell. Right kiddy corner from the school.

BS: Oh yeah.

MK: Up until the early '40s, and then he just, he lived there after that but the store closed in the '40s. Late '30s. But I interviewed him. He lives in Ann Arbor. He's the, he was head of acquisitions, Slavic acquisitions, for the university. And I knew him for many years, but I never knew that he was the Placek that was, you know, living there on the corner of Mitchell and Palmer. Any other doctors or dentists that come to mind at all? From that neighborhood?

BS: Well, there was a dentist on Frederick and Chene. Above the billiard parlor, but I can't remember his name.

MK: What year would that have been?

BS: Pardon?

MK: What year would that have been?

BS: In the 1920s. I remember my father taking me there to have teeth extracted. Dziwiecki had a billard parlor.

MK: Who had the billard parlor?

BS: Dziwiecki. D-Z.

MK: D-Z. Dzie--wecki.

BS: Dziwiecki.

MK: Oh, Dziwiecki.

BS: Yeah.

MK: Oh, Dziwiecki. Ok, yeah. The earliest I have here was in '34, the billiard parlor was at, what was the number, what would that be?

BS: 5300 or thereabouts.

MK: 5300, no. Near the Fredro?

BS: It was across the street.

MK: Across the street from the Fredro.

BS: On the east side.

MK: Ok. I've got down here, I've got, it's hard to say because there're some vacancies in the '30s here. Here's a lawyer, Arthur Koch. K-O-C-H. Ever hear of him? Might be Jewish, a Jewish name. Right on the 5300 block, on the east side—on the west side of the street. Schilkey's Bakery.

BS: What year is this?

MK: '34.

BS: Oh yes, Schilkey family, Gustav Schilkey. In that block. He was a real estate broker.

MK: How's that spelled?

BS: S-C-H-I-L-K-E-Y. Gustav and the...

MK: I see Williamston listed here.

BS: Williamson.

MK: Williamston. The physician Williamston, he and the dentist named Guzinski—

BS: Lived across the street.

MK: Right. He was in the corner, upstairs. Williamston and of course the Mackiewicz were there.

BS: Yeah. He was, sold glasses.

MK: Right. There was—so it must have been, he must have been gone by then because, well Schilkey's on here, the real estate guy, 3334 Gustav Schilkey. So did you know him at all?

BS: Oh yeah. When they came to Detroit, they rented an apartment in our building on Dubois Street. Then they bought a house on East Grand Boulevard between Chene and Dubois. Near where the International Institute was later, and the Post Office. They lived there for a short time then they moved on Chene Street. My parents knew them.

MK: What was—where was he from?

BS: They came from Brooklyn.

MK: From Brooklyn?

BS: Yeah. Mr. Schilkey had learned to sew in a garment factory.

MK: Were they Jewish?

BS: They were Polish.

MK: Polish?

BS: Yeah. And he was a machinist. He worked in some small factories. Whatever he was doing, he was making these toys I think. He made whatever tools were necessary to make toys. And when he came to Detroit he didn't want any part of the factory. He worked somewhere in a munitions factory during the war. Got into real estate. He bought and sold big time real estate. But about 1946 they moved to California. They adopted a little girl in 1927. Romanian family, her brother was Eddie Michalski, who ran for state legislature.

MK: Her brother?

BS: Yeah. They were all adopted, but. The parents died. The whole family was adopted out.

MK: Oh so they kept the name, the original?

BS: No, they picked up the name of the adopting parents. They were Romanian. Very, all very handsome, and that girl married...I forget his name...

MK: Where did the name Michalski come from though?

BS: Well, the Michalski family adopted them.

MK: Oh the Michalskis, they adopted them.

BS: Halina was adopted by the Schilkey family. She was married in 1942, I was here, on a weekend pass from the army, and went to the wedding reception. She married a man who later became a big time industrialist. Marriage didn't last very long.

MK: There's also on that street the Farmcrest Baking Company. In the '30s. Do you remember them at all?

BS: No.

MK: Michalik, barber.

BS: Michalik the barber, yes, I knew him.

MK: What did you know about Mr. Michalik?

BS: Well, he was just a barber.

MK: Did you go there for a haircut?

BS: Yeah.

MK: And was he somebody that was born in Detroit do you know? Was he from Europe originally, or?

BS: I think he was an immigrant.

MK: Okay.

BS: He was kind of a tall, blond haired, handsome guy. The theatrical people from the plays, and the Fredro, the Rozmaitosci Theater used to go there, get their hair cut, and so forth.

MK: Sophie's Beauty Parlor was next door to him. And then...

BS: A restaurant. Round Bar. And Zosia's Restaurant.

MK: Right.

BS: They were on that same block.

MK: Right, right. And Mrs. Dobiesz was there for awhile. Maybe a little earlier--

BS: Right. She died. In that building. Her husband and my father used to work in tool factories in the off-season. I remember when, the last time they worked they worked at the supplier for the Hudson Motor Company out near Congress Avenue. My father coming home with a tool box with Mr. Dobiesz, and he became a hopeless cripple. He had rheumatoid arthritis

MK: Oh so it wasn't like an accident. It was something that—

BS: Yeah. He got, he was all crippled up.

MK: Right.

BS: He died in about 1955.

MK: When did, when was he—do you know roughly when he became ill? What years he—

BS: Well it was late '20s. '27, '28.

MK: Wow, so he was ill for a long time.

BS: Yeah. Mrs. Dobiesz was a very talented lady. Very talented [REDACTED]. In fact after he died my uncle dated her for awhile. And she died in a shooting, it was tragic, she was the victim of a hold-up. She was a small woman. The man had threw her down the stairs, she had a broken hip. So she was on a crutch for the rest of her life.

MK: On that same block that we're talking about there was also a beer garden by Veronica Filipiak, do you remember that name at all?

BS: No.

MK: A plumber named William Katz? A beer store by Clara Petz.

BS: No.

MK: There was a dressmaker, Dolores Clock.

BS: No. I don't know them. See in the '30s I was in college.

MK: That's right. You weren't around anymore. Weisbrodt Furniture Company.

BS: Which one?

MK: Weisbrodt. Weisbrote.

BS: No.

MK: There's a fur store, Anthony Bolek, Furs at 5316.

BS: Lendzions had a fur store in -kiewicz's building, over near Medbury.

MK: Right.

BS: 5800 block. 5858.

MK: And then there's a florist. Jacob Markunin. And I wonder because that same florist's name is up here on Harper.

BS: That could be the same one.

MK: I suspect it's probably the same one. Yeah I've been reading a lot of things that Don Binkowski sent me, actually, related to the Glos Ludowy. He had a lot of material on Mr. Nowak, Dombrowski, several of the other people. What struck me about all that was how much interplay—you know, how much conflict there was internally, between those folks.

BS: Oh there was a lot of conflict.

MK: --between those folks.

BS: There was a lot of conflict. I remember the Polish National Alliance Convention in Buffalo. In 1951, maybe. Nowak came as a reporter. And Januszewski was anxious to get him out. He sponsored a movement. A resolution. To keep Nowak from the, off the convention floor, as a reporter.

MK: Did it succeed?

BS: Yeah. Yeah. There was a lot of tension. A lot of sparks were flying. Nowak was an unfortunate character. He came to the United States as a kid three or four years of age. And whatever he learned, whatever bad stuff, he learned it here.

MK: Mhm.

BS: He didn't bring it over from Europe.

MK: Mhm.

BS: So, why do you deport him?

MK: I don't understand though you know, I guess it's part of the psychology of power, but you know he was a very bright—he seemed like a very bright enough guy. And he was very committed to worker's rights. The '30s, and real early '40s. But then you know I remember reading his wife's biography of him. And at the end of the biography, there's an article that was reprinted from the Free Press that he wrote after Martial Law was declared in Poland. He'd gone there. And you know I read this piece that he wrote, and it sounds like the Dziennik Polski writing about union organizers in the '30s. I mean, it was—

BS: Right.

MK: You know, he just like, somehow he didn't connect. Like something was amiss. You know, with the way he was thinking. I mean like he literally could've put Januszewski's name on it, wrote it in the '30s, and published it in the Dziennik Polski.

BS: Nowak was a very honorable man. I had a contact with him on the professional level. He was a State Senator. In 1946, Michigan went Republican. And the legislature was Republican. And I had a problem involving a very substantial family in Detroit. A very unfortunate situation. I wanted to get a statute amended so somebody who was insane as a result of an accident, would not be confined in a state hospital. **Insanity came off**. And this individual was a city fireman who fell through, whatever it was, and he had an internal head injury. And then he was involved in a hit and run, which was not his fault. A pedestrian fell under his car. He drove over the man's legs. He was charged with a hit and run. Now, under the law, he's insane. He's permanently insane, as it existed, so I figured out an amendment to write, and asked Mr. Nowak to help me. While he was in Detroit, I made an appointment, he introduced me to the Senator Hill, chairmen of the judiciary committee, we had lunch, and I had prepared the amendment that I needed, a little brief of the facts of this particular case. And he wouldn't let me pay for the lunch. And he shoved this bill through, it became law. Eventually, my client, left Ionia State

Hospital, lived a normal life. Comparatively normal, for his state. So in the next election I wanted to give him a campaign contribution. And he said, “No, you’re just out of the service. You did your duty. I didn’t. I don’t need any money from you.” He wouldn’t take a dime. Very honorable.

MK: OK, well I think that wraps up this part of it, and maybe I’d like to go back to your photos.

BS: Ok. I’m trying to think of who else there might be. Stanley Dombrowski was a lawyer, on Chene and Milwaukee. Stanley married Jenny Pietrzak. She was a violinist, she never made big time. But she was a schoolteacher. She taught in the Grosse Pointe system, and they lived on Rivard Street in Grosse Pointe, had no children. Stanley made a lot of money. He had good, high class real estate. He had a big hunting lodge near _____, Michigan. As I say, they had no children. And in the ‘70s, Stanley had cancer, he knew he wouldn’t live very long. And she had cancer, _____. So, Stanley had a niece, Pauline Dombrowski, who married a tavern owner who was murdered in a hold-up. And they had several children. So rather than fool around distributing stuff, they gave their entire estate to that family for those children to go to college.

MK: Wow.

BS: Very fine. Stanley worked in a factory to work himself through law school. Very fine gentleman.

MK: Where did he go to law school, do you know?

BS: Detroit. Was it, what’s now Wayne—Wayne Law School. It was a new law school then.

MK: You know I’m gonna interview in May, late May is the—you mentioned Jankowski, Cass Jankowski had a brother named Stanley, who had a real estate business on Chene. And I’m gonna interview, Stanley’s son. So they’re gonna bring some other people who, were Jankowski family members

BS: He was killed in a tragic auto accident in 1931. And we had a Congressman from Chene Street, John Sosnowski. Do you know about him?

MK: Tell me about him.

BS: Pardon?

MK: Tell me about him.

BS: Well, he was a lawyer. I’m not sure, look there were two brothers. One was a lawyer, one was a real estate man. He considered himself a big Republican, so he’d run for office. And couldn’t make it. In 1924, the Republican nominee died, after, between the primary and the general election. So the Republican committee filled that vacant seat with John

Sosnowski. So he was in Congress for one term. Clancy was in Congress from the east side.

MK: Who?

BS: Clancy. He was elected in 1912 as a Democrat and stayed on as a Democrat. He was a newspaper man, a great PR man, super. And in the '26 election he became a Republican and defeated Sosnowski. For the next 30 years we heard about John B. Sosnowski being the great Congressman. Well he was only in Congress for two years! [laughs]

MK: What years, those years would that have been?

BS: '25 and '26.

MK: '25 and '26.

BS: Yeah. He was elected in '24 as a Republican. Clancy was defeated. Two years later, Clancy now becomes a Republican. He stayed in Congress until the '32 Roosevelt landslide.

MK: Were they dry or not? Was Sosnowski—were the Republicans dry back then? Was there a difference between Democrats and Republicans on prohibition?

BS: Well, yeah. The Democrats were for repealing it, they didn't want prohibition. The Republicans were kind of split. But apparently Sosnowski got acquainted with J. Edgar Hoover, and for years, Sosnowski apparently used to entertain Hoover. Pretend that they're big close buddy friends. I don't think they were. Sosnowski had a daughter, a lawyer, who worked for the Friend of the Court. A very fine lady. A very shrewd, skillful lawyer.

MK: Good. Okay. Well thank you very much.

BS: Okay.

Break

MK: Tell me about an organization.

BS: The Brigadoons was a social club, a fishing club. Joe Temrowski had a real estate office on McDougall Street near St. Hyacinth's Church. He had a lot of people working for him and during the Depression nobody had any money. So to sort of give them a little pep, he took these people fishing in the Upper Peninsula. They were coming back on a boat, I guess somebody had a few drinks, and he's reading a book and [redacted] asked them about the caps that these fellows were wearing. He was reading a book on

Brigadoons, and he gave the answer, “We’re Brigadoons.” [laughs] And the name stuck. Now the organization carried on for another 50 years after Joe died. I was president of it. And then in the late ‘80s it got to a point where fellows were too old. But we used to fish in northern Canada, and the Florida Keys, the Baha Peninsula. In 1974 we went to the Canary Islands to fish shark. I think in the late, the middle ‘80s we went to Iceland to fish. But as I say, _____..

MK: So who besides Temrowski knew who was in it, do you remember?

BS: Yeah. There was Henry, a real estate broker just died recently _____...Bill Pine, John Jankowski, Stanley Kaminski, Judge Majewski—

MK: Was John Jankowski, was he related to the Jankowskis?

BS: No, no, he was the deputy sheriff. He was captain of the sheriff’s department. Kaz Stankowski was in the sheriff’s office, he was—

MK: Stankowski?

BS: Stankowski.

MK: Stankowski.

BS: With an S-T-A-N-K-O-W-S-K-I.

MK: Right, right. His son was a great tennis player. And Henry **Stoladowski** was a big time real estate broker. Anywheres from 20 to 50 would go on trips. We’d go to the Upper Peninsula—into Canada, we’d generally take a bus from Detroit to Sault Ste. Marie, and get the Algoma Railroad and go up into the bush country. And sometimes there were some fly-in camps, so we’d drive to **Hog’s** Junction, or some place in the Upper Peninsula, then fly in. And then we’d go to Florida, some guys drove, some flew down. Baha, we flew down.

MK: This started in the Depression years?

BS: Well, it started in like 1932 or ‘3, during the Depression years. It went on until the late ‘80s.

MK: That’s a long time.

BS: Yeah. Well, the guys just got too old. But it was great fun. Let’s see who used to go. Tondryk.

MK: Furniture guy.

BS: Yeah, furniture, appliances. Doctors. We had a couple doctors went with us. Doc Sowinski.

MK: How's that spelled?

BS: S-U-W-I-N-S-K-I. Or S-O-W, I'm not sure. Dr. Pelaga. We had a great time.

MK: Mhm.

BS: Walter Sumaracki.

MK: Mhm.

BS: We made up a kitty, for prizes. We'd pay for the lodge in American money. There was an exchange, 10 or 15%. So, that would make up a kitty. And we'd have a big party in the wintertime, invite our wives, girlfriends, and give the prizes to the biggest—for the biggest fish. We had an interesting experience. Walter Sumaracki was a wealthy man, a real estate man, his brother and he made oodles of money in real estate. The first morning out, Walter gets a walleye, which weighs six pounds. And the last day out, my son was then in high school, he was about 14 years old, comes in with a walleye about 5 and three quarter pounds. And Judge Tomaszewski says, "You know Walter, I think Stanczyk put some sinkers in there to catch the fish." [laughs] Walter says to me, "You better cut that fish open! You put sinkers in there!" I said, "Walter, I'll be glad to do it, here's a \$50 bill. If there's no sinkers, your 50's gonna be mine." He walked away. [laughs] So my kid got the trophy, and he got \$250 bucks.

MK: That's great.

BS: We had some great parties.

MK: Good. Okay. [PAUSE]

MK: We're talking about Judge Felix Lemkie. Who was who?

BS: He was Common Pleas Judge in the City of Detroit. Came to the United States as a teenager during the time of the Civil War. Ended up as a drummer boy, Not as a full time soldier. And he was elected, he went to law school, I think, though he may have read law, to be a judge in 19—no, I think it was 18--

BS: 1880s, and served up until 1923. He was defeated by Judge Jefferys. And—

MK: Who became mayor of Detroit?

BS: Pardon?

MK: Was that the same Jefferys that became mayor?

BS: No, no, no, no, no. It was a different family. In 1919, when servicemen were returning, we lived in a big house on Dubois Street. Downstairs was what had been a store building, used as an office. And on Sunday he'd come over to perform marriages.

For people, men who lived in a boarding house, the lady lived in a boarding house, and Uncle Joe Jazwiecki'd make a wedding cake, and that would be the reception.

MK: Jazwiewcki?

BS: Yeah, Joe Jazwiecki. Whose picture you have in there.

MK: Right, the Van Dyke Pastries, there.

BS: Yeah. At that time he had a bakery on Forest and St. Aubin. Trzech Slodki, The Three Sweets. He was a partner there.

MK: What was it called?

BS: Trzech Slodki

MK: Trzech Slodki.

BS: The 3 Sweets.

MK: All right.

BS: And they'd go down—somebody would go down to see Judge Lemkie, when they'd get their marriage license, they'd go to the Stanczyk house on a Sunday afternoon and perform a marriage. He'd put on a frock coat and a top hat, and he'd perform a marriage. And then we'd have coffee and cake. I was a kid, four or five years old, I looked forward to that, because we'd have cake, and coffee. [laughs]

MK: Did—so he was related to the Lemke Furniture people? Not the furniture, the hardware store people.

BS: I think so, yes.

MK: Okay.

BS: He was of small stature.

MK: And where did you get the portrait of him that hung in your court?

BS: At the University of Detroit Law School. I don't know where they got it, and it hung in my courtroom for about 10 years, I don't know what happened after I retired.

MK: Well did it belong to the U of D? Maybe it went back to U of D?

BS: I have no idea. I suggested that it should go to the historical museum, or to the DIA, but I don't know what happened to it.

MK: Great. Thank you.

Break

MK: We were talking about dentists, the first Polish dentist was who?

BS: Lazowski. He was on Russell and Garfield. His son was a dentist, just died recently at the age of 92 I think. Dr. Lazowski was killed in an auto accident in 1929 I think. He had a cottage in Windsor, come over to Detroit to take care of a patient on a Sunday morning. Was in a taxi cab to get the ferry back to Windsor. He was killed in an auto accident. I'm not sure what year he was _____ to practice. His wife was, her maiden name was Jaroche, J-A-R-O-C-H-E. They were a French family. They were LaRoche. And when they got to Poland, the capital L looked like a J. Big family. Very high-class family.

MK: And so when did he die? When was he—

BS: I think '28 or '29.

MK: Did your folks know him?

BS: Oh yes.

MK: How did they know him?

BS: Well he was the family dentist.

MK: So he was the family dentist?

BS: Yeah.

Break

BS: Read the record that was made at the trial which went to the Supreme Court in narrative form, you'll get a background of more than you can get reading the opinion.

MK: And what are the **Sacco and Karr** cases about?

BS: Well, **Sacco v. Starcinski** involved a promise for a note.

MK: Mhm.

BS: Which Starcinski gave, and there may have been a little bit of fraud but the Supreme Court couldn't see it that way. And Karr was in Hamtramck, his father lived in Hamtramck. Had a Ph.D. from Michigan in Library Science, his name was Kaczmarczyk. And he was fired by the Hamtramck Board of Education. Now you know, for a Polack to get fired in Hamtramck with a Ph.D., [laughs] you really gotta screw up. Just by coincidence, Karr's wife was Starcinski's niece, in the cases of _____.

MK: Oh, Zofia Kaczmar--, she was Zofia.

BS: No. No, he was not her son. He was Mr. Kaczmarczyk's son by a prior marriage.

MK: Oh okay.

BS: As I say, the library may or may not have the briefs and records.

MK: What years are the Sacco and Karr--?

BS: About 1937, '38.

MK: 1937, 1938.

BS: Yeah.

MK: Ok.

BS: They're in the same volume.

MK: Ok.

BS: And if they don't have the records, they can get them from the Supreme Court, for like 72-hour loan.

MK: Ok. Great.

BS: Then I wanna say to you the next time you come in, about the Lutomski family. Do you know anything about them?

MK: Just barely. I've seen the little notices in papers and so on. Now tell me, what about them.

BS: Well, there were six boys and one girl. Two of the boys were school teachers. One was assistant principal, the other was, I think, a social studies teacher. And there were three lawyers, and then there was a bail bondsman. And they were a real prominent family. They were high class lawyers. Joe Lutomski was a criminal lawyer. His brother, Tony, was a tax lawyer. He worked for the IRS. The oldest boy, Frank, was a big hero in World War I. He was in the Marine Corps. Got shot up pretty bad.

MK: Well there was a post name for him.

BS: That's right.

MK: Frank Lutomski Post, I remember that.

BS: That's right. And he died during World War II. He was a lawyer, he was general practitioner.

MK: Mhm.

BS: Harry was a bail bondsmen, Harry was a big hero. Harry played football, at U of M, on that famous team, with Jerry Ford. Harry was quarterback.

MK: Uh-huh.

BS: Then he flunked out of school.

MK: [laughs]

BS: But they were a high-class family.

MK: Mhm.

BS: And the other thing I want to tell you about is the Polish Century Club.

MK: Right.

BS: Are you familiar with it at all?

MK: You know, vaguely, you know, just from the papers and stuff.

BS: Well the Polish Century Club was formed I think about 1916. They had a hall on Canfield and Russell, in that area. Then in '25 it moved to the East Grande Boulevard and Elmwood, they brought John Lesinski's house. Kind of a mansion house. And they were there for, until about 1962 I think, or '3. They moved out to East Outer Drive, and they were there until '99.

MK: I remember that, I remember, yeah.

BS: And they were a big influence in the Polish community. And by coincidence, both the Brynskis and the Sobczaks were president of the club at different times.

MK: Mhm.

BS: [laughs] And during the '20s all the Polish bootleggers belonged to the club. When prohibition was repealed, they went into mutuals operations. All the Polish gamblers belonged to the Polish Century Club.

MK: [laughs]

BS: But, so, if you look up those six cases, they give you an insight as to what these people were doing and how they were doing it.

MK: Very good. Yeah I will definitely--

BS: Then I'll have--I will give you some perspective on Brynski-Sobczak cases. It was two brothers, Joe, and Stanley. Joe was the oldest. Joe was a real smart guy. He was a mess officer, on a Navy ship. He could serve breakfast for 3,000 people no problem. You know he just knew how to organize. And when he bought that building on East Outer Drive, he was the chef. Well anyway, they were convicted, and the Joe the older decided "I'm not gonna screw around with appeals, waste money, I'm gonna do my time," whatever time I think he got, one to three or something. "I'll do my time, I'll come home, and I'll keep my nose clean." Stanley, the younger guy, of the Brynskis they decided they're gonna appeal. So, of course, they wanted to get their appeal in a hurry, because the other brother's in jail! So they paid the reporter double the price to get a legal transcript. Follow?

MK: Yeah.

BS: Now, in the meanwhile, a case involving a similar issue, faced the United States Supreme Court for the state of Wisconsin, it involved guilt by association. So now the attorneys decide, they don't want the appeal to go through in 40 days. They wanted to stall it until that case is decided in the federal court system in the United States Supreme Court. So, just by coincidence, Joe Lutomski's office in the Guardian building is burglarized over the weekend. Now what was stolen? An old typewriter, some postage stamps, \$5 or \$6 dollars in petty cash, AND the Brynski transcript—

MK: [laughs]

BS: Do you follow?

MK: [laughs] Yep.

BS: [laughs] Just by coincidence. And in the meantime, the court reporter, Lamont Chester, he got the money for the legal transcript, he got double the price, he got several thousand dollars. So it's the Korean War, so he buys a new car, he goes out to California with his wife, because her uncle has been promoted to brigadier general.

MK: Mhm.

BS: And, now Lamont only has one leg. He lost a leg when he was a kid. 9 or 10 years old. While he's out in California, fishing, he takes a fall on the dock, and he breaks his one remaining leg. And he's a big man. 275. With one leg. And he's in a body cast, so he can't drive. His wife has bad eyes, she can't drive. And in the meantime there's a detective, Pisanti, a cop. He's mad, he says, "Hell, Lamont can't deliver the transcript while he's out in California. His notes are somewheres in Detroit." and Pisanti he's just hopping mad, he's out at Jackson, to see Stanley Bryn—to see Joe Brynski. To see what kind of information he could get out of him. Involving some Detroit cops. Finally he

prevails on Homer Ferguson, to have the army drive Lamont, the court reporter, back to Detroit. So it was a sergeant from Toledo who's driving him. In their new car. And they're in New Mexico somewhere when the sergeant loses control of the car, they go into the ditch, and the sergeant ends up with a broken back.

MK: Wow.

BS: So now they're in New Mexico, the car's a total wreck, he's got litigation, he's in another army hospital, this goes on and on and on. Finally, when the United States Supreme Court decides the Wisconsin case, Lamont is back to Detroit, miraculously he delivers the transcript.

MK: [laughs]

BS: To get to the Michigan Supreme Court. And of course, they were both exonerated by the courts.

MK: That's great.

BS: Yeah. But if you read the original records that went to the supreme court, it's in narrative form, not a question and answer, it gives you an idea of what these people were doing. They were high-class, big time gamblers. Stanley Brynski bought a house on Lake St. Clair, at Windmill Point. From Julie Harris, the actress, a tremendous house. Then he had, for cover, a boat salesroom.

MK: Mhm.

BS: And Joe Brynski had a catering business, where he sold coffee and sandwiches to a couple of factories. And the Sobczaks had a bowling alley on East Outer Drive and Van Dyke and then they had a salesroom, Colonial Motor Sales in Roseville, Michigan.

MK: Did you ever come across the name of Kotek?

BS: Kotek?

MK: Kotek, yeah.

BS: I might of heard it, but in a social setting.

MK: The reason I ask is because he was supposed to have been a big-time accountant for these guys in the numbers and he was, you know, he was the guy who sort of kept the numbers, you know the accounts, for all these —

BS: I can't place him.

MK: Mhm.

BS: I can't place him.

MK: Ok.

BS: Ok, so if you read those and then the next time you come in we'll talk about the Polish Century Club a little, some more.

MK: Very good. Thanks a lot.

BS: All right. Bye-bye.

Break

This is Marian Krzyzowski and I'm at the home of Judge Benjamin Stanczyk in Detroit. And today is September the 23rd, 2004. And we're here to talk a little bit about the Polish Century Club.

MK: Judge Stanczyk, may you can just begin by telling us, what you know about the beginnings of the organization. Why was it created? Who and where it was established?

BS: As I understand it, it's Polish businessmen who couldn't get mortgages, for business. Polish tradesmen wanted to build homes, they couldn't get mortgages. The bankers took a very hard look at the Poles. In the United States and in Detroit particularly, it seems. Many of the men came here alone. They may have left a wife in Poland. And the banks figured they can't foreclose if you default. In 1914, after the war started in Europe, many of the single men were going into Canada to enlist in Canadian armed forces, to go and fight in Europe. So the banks took a very hard line. There's just no such a thing as mortgages for single men. If they were married, had a family, and kids, here, they could get a mortgage. So the businessmen, the undertakers, there were a couple of lawyers, the doctors and the priests, formed the Polish Century Club. And in fact they tried to boycott the banks that wouldn't deal with the Poles.

MK: And this was a Detroit-based organization?

BS: It was Detroit-based. They had their clubhouse on Russell and Canfield, Alexandrine, in 1916. Then in 1926 they moved over to the East Grand Boulevard and Elmwood, where they bought what was then a mansion-house from Congressmen John Lesinski. John became a Congressmen in 1932.

MK: It was a mansion-house you said?

BS: Well it was a big house.

MK: Oh.

BS: It was on the corner of East Grand Boulevard and Elmwood, I guess in 1916, even 1925, it was a mansion-house. It was about a 10 room house. A big house on the corner. And they stayed there until 1965.

MK: And which corner of Elwood and the Boulevard was it?

BS: On the northeast corner.

MK: Northeast corner. Ok.

BS: John Lesinski built three houses. They were pretty much identical, they were on big lots. They were big houses. Finished basement. Two-story house, lots of room. John Lesinski had a big family. I think his first wife died in that house during the flu epidemic, a couple of his children were born there.

MK: And did he live in that house or did he live in one in—

BS: He lived in that corner house and he sold it to the Polish Century Club.

MK: But he lived in the corner house.

BS: But he moved to Dearborn.

MK: Mhm.

BS: He dealt in real estate in Dearborn, moved out, and he sold it, the club, was there.

MK: But he also owned the two homes next to it?

BS: He built them, I don't know whether he owned them or not, I have no idea.

MK: Mhm.

BS: And the club became pretty important. theoretically we had prohibition in the 1920s so the saloonkeepers and the brewers became bootleggers. And it was a home for them. They kind of dominated for the next 15 years. The Polish Century Club, they raised money for political causes. They in fact helped John Smith become a big wheel politically in Detroit. He was president of the council and acting mayor. He was elected on his own in 1925. And they were influential.

MK: Were they partisan in a sense? Were they Democrat, Republican? Were they wet, dry?

BS: Theoretically they were non-partisan. They were big conservative. Businessmen. They raised money, not officially, but the leaders of the Polish Century Club raised money, political money, and the businessmen were able to put up posters for candidates for public office. And they were able to get cards out, they were able to solicit petitions, and all this sort of thing. So they were very influential. After repeal of prohibition, of

course, they didn't need that kind of an umbrella, and then another group took over the leadership, and that was the gamblers, who operated Polish Bank. The Brynski brothers and the Sobczak brothers, became big. And many others. And again, they had influences, no if's, and's, or but's about it. I'll give you an illustration of this, a schoolmate of my wife's was married to Stanley Brynski. They had a big home on Windmill Point on the lake.

MK: What point?

BS: Windmill Point, it's next to a park.

MK: Winbrow?

BS: Windmill.

MK: Oh, Windmill, ok.

BS: They bought the home from Julie Harris, the actress. On the lake, lots of land. And Mrs. Brynski was entertaining her high school friends, and the phone rings, 30 seconds later she says, "Girls you gotta leave, because we're gonna be raided, I'll get arrested in a half hour." [laughs] Somebody in the police department told her. And the Polish Century Club was influential in getting promotions for people in the police department, all kinds of policemen moved up the ladder pretty quickly. They were in fact they were good cops, they became command officers, inspectors, lieutenants, inspectors, commanders, and so forth. And the Polish Century Club hosted small wedding parties, it was the big place that could only accommodate about 100 at dinner, pretty crowded, but the clubs had their installation parties there, funeral breakfasts, and so forth.

MK: Going back a little bit to the first generation of Century Club members, and people that ran it, do you know, remember, any names at all? In that group?

BS: Well, there was Wujek, the undertaker. Wasik, the undertaker.

MK: Ok.

BS: They were big. The Polish brewer.

MK: Zynda?

BS: Zynda. There was Dr. **Lazowski**, who was the first Polish dentist, Judge Koscinski, Kaminski later became a judge. Wilkowski, the hardware man. Witkowski, the clothing man. They were the big people.

MK: Okay. So then, kind of prohibition ended and they kind of phased out of that organization? Is that what happened? And in the '30s Sobczak, and Brynskis, they're the ones who moved in? or how'd that happen?

BS: They were in the club.

MK: They had been in the club.

BS: Yeah. And they needed a cover, they needed a front to carry on their business. The Polish Century Club was ideal. So again, they continued to raise money to help public officials get elected and so forth. They were effective. Businessmen, tavern owners, clothing store owners, hardware store owners, put out signs, talk to customers about so and so running for public office and they were effective, no question about it.

MK: When you ran your campaigns were they still a force in the community?

BS: Oh yes. Yes. 1959, 1961, sure. In the '60s, the building became too small, too crowdedT the community was changing. So the Polish Century Club bought a building on East Outer Drive, it had been a showroom for a lumberyard, East Outer Drive, just north of Seven Mile Road.

MK: Was it by Holy Cross Church, I mean Holy Cross hospital?

BS: Yes. Yes, right near. And the catering business became fantastic. Joe Brynski had been a mess officer on an aircraft carrier. Now he couldn't serve ham and eggs for his family, two kids. But he could serve a breakfast for five thousand on an aircraft carrier. And he developed good menu, good kitchen, the food came out served hot, the building was paneled, it was a nice-looking building, closed packing, so it became a very popular place for parties, banquets, club functions of all sorts, etc., etc. And it prospered, they paid off the mortgage in a hurry. Like I say, it was an elegant building, they had good staff, good kitchen, everything about it was great. It went on for many years, very successfully.

MK: As I recall, correct me if I'm wrong, though. There was also a Polish Century Club building in Hamtramck. Or wasn't there?

BS: That was called a Polish-American Century Club.

MK: What was—what that different from?

BS: That was a different group.

MK: I see.

BS: The Hamtramck businessmen felt they didn't want any part of the Detroit Polish Century Club. So they formed a club. And subsequently, the Hamtramck club moved out to Sterling Heights, they're now at Fourteen Mile and Hoover. Sterling Heights.

MK: And it's still called Polish-American Century Club?

BS: Yes. That's correct.

MK: Okay. And then let's go back to the Detroit one. So in '65 they moved out into, to the new building on Outer Drive. How long did they function as an effective organization in the things that you were describing?

BS: Well, Coleman Young was elected mayor in 1973. We had the riot in 1967. And suddenly the effectiveness of the club slowed down. The community was changing rapidly. And things in city hall didn't go quite the same way. The state political scene changed. By that time, Eddy Shalhan, who was a lumber dealer from Detroit Fuel and Supply company and his brother, was president Charlie Nowak was a small town Republican politician. They sort of controlled the club. But the Brynskis and the Sobczaks were still important. Although their importance had waned. Politically, the club's fortunes started to go down. In the late '80s, and '90s, the community changed. The Polish community was devastated with the building of the Cadillac factory, Chene Street literally disappeared, Northeastern High School was torn down, Greusel School was torn down, a couple of Catholic churches disappeared. So the big exodus was into Macomb County. And Oakland County, out of Detroit. So by the early '90s, the club started to lose its influence as a political power. And it seems a new group came in. And they decided we don't want any part of Detroit, it was kind of a racial thing. Businessmen all of sudden discovered their business was gone. Tavern owners lost their business. Hardware people lost their business. People in the police department couldn't get promotions anymore. Coleman Young insisted on promoting blacks, and whether they were Irish or Polish, or whatever, promotions were just hard to get for whites. So my observation is that the then offices of the Polish Century Club decided, "We have to get out of Detroit, we've got to get out of Detroit fast." And one of the things they did was to keep their prices artificially low, so the club was losing money. They didn't have to! The prices, for whatever food and drink, they were cheaper than other clubs, and other catering companies. So the club was losing money, they didn't have to lose money. And finally in '99, the club sold the building to a church. And they not, the Young Turks, so to speak, who were Macomb County peanut politicians and small-time businessmen. hadn't planned on what they're going to do. They got three quarters of a million dollars for the building, they probably could have got a lot more if they had held out, but they wanted out of Detroit. On paper the club, actually the club was losing money, as they say, because of the prices they were charging for members and for outsiders were artificially low. The benefits they were giving to members were fantastic. Members came to monthly meetings, they didn't pay for dinner. They had a birthday dinner for the member and his wife. They had an installation dinner in January, a member could bring a guest. So they were passing out 14 free dinners, for the membership. Dues were low. Then the club faced a political problem, the courts held that if an organization sets itself up as a club, but they allowed non-members to use their premises, they had to admit anybody who applied. So in order to get around that kind of a situation the club limited membership to less than 200 active members, members who had paid dues for 20 years then became honorary, non-paying dues members. So that of course reduced the income of the club substantially. And they kept the active membership at somewhere, like 180, so they were below that 200 line. And so the structure of the club changed somewhat in that respect. Now, the Club in those days, in the '60s and '70s and the '80s, put on all sorts of things. For many years, when Polish groups, sportsmen, or artists came into Detroit, the Polish

Century Club entertained them at a dinner. In 1984 a training sailing ship came into Detroit, they had won the race, I think it was Canary Islands to Bermuda to Halifax, or something. And they had rescued the crew of a Canadian yacht in the ocean, it was about to capsize, so they came into Detroit, their larders were empty, because they had fed these people, and this was a training ship, they had a crew of about 50. So the Polish Century Club first gave a dinner for all the crew, and they couldn't leave the ship simultaneously so those who were on board got the same dinner, including kegs of beer and all that went with it. Then the members who were in business decided that they were gonna replenish the larders so for a week 3 or 4 station wagons were running between Eastern Market and wherever, to fill the larders of the ship, now this was a Polish Century Club function. The hockey team came into the United States, and probably the travel agents had swindled them. So they had a problem getting transportation. The red tape of getting money out of Poland and so forth, so between several of the members, the team was kept in a hotel, and they got food and lodging and they went back to Poland with new blue jeans and new jackets, all courtesy either of the club proper, or members of the club. The Polish ballet comes into Detroit, 150 in the cast. Big dinner party, Friday noon, they had a performance in the evening. I don't think, they didn't get any liquor, but they got Coca-Cola and milk on the table, full meal. The Polish Century Club did these kinds of things. They set up a scholarship fund, I was chairman of the fund for a couple of years back in the '70s, and we started to give scholarships to children and grandchildren of members and non-members. It started out at \$500 then went up to \$1,000 and now the scholarship fund raises something between \$20 and \$30,000 a year. And these are the kinds of things that the club did. They did all sorts of good things. But as I say, by the '90s, the young guys said "We want out of Detroit." The policemen were just teed off I think, there's no way they can get a promotion. Out of a dozen sergeants, could never make lieutenant.. I had a clerk working in the Common Pleas court, a girl, [REDACTED] I think was her name. She was a college graduate so we hired her as a clerk 2, she got promoted to a clerk 4, she came in one morning, she said, "Judge, I'm leaving. I took the exam, I'm going to be a policeman. In 3 years I'm gonna be a sergeant, in 3 more years I'm gonna be a lieutenant.' Well, the last time I saw her, she was still a sergeant, for 20 years. She'd never make lieutenant in the city of Detroit. These people were teed off. So now we're out of Detroit. And as a result, since '99, for five years now, they theoretically have a home at the cultural center over in Troy. But they—the membership has dwindled. There aren't any new members, there's no reason why anybody should join the club. It doesn't have a clubhouse of its own, it has meetings at the cultural center.

MK: What happened to the $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million dollars?

BS: Well, it's invested, it's growing. We've got a couple guys who know how to manipulate money, sell stocks and whatever. So, the money is growing. So now they have a room in the cultural center for which they pay rent, I think it's \$20,000 a year. They can't have their own bar, they got, they have problems.

MK: And what, you know, when did you join the Century Club?

BS: What?

MK: When did you join the Century Club?

BS: I think in '51 or thereabouts. I was on the board of directors for 3 or 4 years.

MK: So you were on the board, did you have any other functions besides the scholarship activities?

BS: No, I was on the board we kind of were overseers over the club operations, it wasn't very big. When I became a judge I had to leave the board.

MK: In addition to the Brynskis, and Sobczak, and Mr. Shell, who else would you list among the more active members?

BS: Charlie Nowak was active.

MK: Charlie Nowak?

BS: Yes.

MK: Well, did he run for Congress on the Republican ticket ever?

BS: Yeah, he ran for several offices several times. He was a beer salesman. He was a World War I veteran. Pleasant, likeable guy. **That's when they were married.** Henry Sobczak was prominent, he was secretary for many years. For about a year and half, when the building on Outer Drive was being renovated, for a year maybe, he was secretary. And he arranged for the club to meet in other club buildings and so forth.

MK: Was it an exclusively male organization?

BS: Oh it was all male. No women. That was one of the reasons we kept the membership down. Below 100 Below 200. So wmen could not come in. Theoretically it was a Catholic organization, and theoretically someone with a criminal record was not admitted, but [laughs] that didn't always apply.

MK: That's right.

BS: The Wilkowskis were big for awhile in the Polish Century Club. Tony—

MK: The clothier? The clothier or the hardware people?

BS: The Hardware man. The Witkowskis the clothier, they were big in the Polish Century Club. Wujek the undertaker and his son Eddy were big. After Eddy died, Tony was in the club. And they were, they were important.

MK: Well the political figures you mentioned who were in it, were there others? Did any of the other congressional representatives, like Lucien Nedzi or were any of those associated with—?

BS: They were not big.

MK: No?

BS: No. The Polish Century Club's basically very conservative. Lucien Nedzi was liberal.

MK: Right. So how did you find yourself there? [laughs]

BS: [laughs] Well, I was president of a Council of the Polish National Alliance. I was on the Central Citizens Committee. So I became a member of the Polish Century Club

MK: What about someone like Ulman, was he ever a member of the Polish Century Club?

BS: No. No. No, I don't think so. He was kind of Hamtramck politics. I'm trying to think who else there might be. Johnny Owens was a big Republican, he was in the club, although I don't, he was never—I don't think he was an officer, he was on the board at different times. He just died recently. He was a referee in Traffic Court. He'd been Assistant United States attorney at one time.

MK: From the way you've described the Century Club and its, kind of, Detroit roots, it seems you're saying that there's quite a distinction made between Hamtramck and Detroit—

BS: Oh yeah.

MK: --business associations, businessmen, and is there more about that? I mean, you know, they're literally across the street from one other. In fact they're like—so what was the dynamic then?

BS: Well the Hamtramck businessmen tried to become a close-knit group helping each other. They had a couple of banks that were Hamtramck banks. They didn't rely on Griswold Street banks. You had the Bank of Commerce, and Liberty's big bank, and I forget the third one now.

MK: People's?

BS: People's State Bank. People's State Bank was eminently successful. It still is. And the merchants sort of wanted to become a close-knit group. The Polish Century Club had the reputation in the '20s of being bootleggers. In the '30s and '40s the numbers racketeers and they wanted to avoid that. But they didn't do it, because they had people in the Polish Century Club in Hamtramck who were in all sorts of enterprises. And they weren't very high-class.

MK: Right. Was the Hamtramck group, I mean, both in Hamtramck and I know on Chene Street, but I'm wondering whether the Jewish merchants were active in any of these things?

BS: No.

MK: Because in Hamtramck they also had a significant number of Jewish stores up and down the street.

BS: Yeah that was one of the reasons the Polish Century Club was formed. In 1916, the Jews who came to the United States, were better educated than the Catholic Poles. And they set up businesses, and they were able to get loans. Polish businessmen were not as well educated, and they couldn't get loans. Just impossible. The bricklayer and the carpenter wanted to build a house, they can't get a mortgage. No way. They've got a wife in Poland. The bank figures, "We can never foreclose. We can never debt service." So they can't get a loan now. The Jewish businessman had a wife and kids. So he gets a loan. To get a hardware store, or dry goods store, or whatever.

MK: So the Polish Century Club, the initial foundation, how did the finances work then? What did they provide that allowed the actual Poles to take—

BS: Boycotts! They boycotted banks. If anybody had a savings account, the word went out, don't deal with this bank, they don't want to give us a mortgage.

MK: I see.

BS: Boycott was the big thing and we had two Polish newspapers of course.

MK: Right.

BS: So the word was out, 'boycott.' And all of a sudden passbook holders who had \$100 or \$200 in the bank started withdrawing their money and moving to another bank. And the bankers woke up.

MK: Back in Hamtramck, were the Jewish merchants at all active in the Hamtramck merchant's associations, or not? I mean, were they viewed as being outsiders? I mean—

BS: I can't answer—I really don't know. I worked at a drugstore in Hamtramck when I was a kid. High school and college. But they pretty much stayed to themselves. The Jewish ghetto at that time was over on the east side of Detroit. There weren't many Jews living in Hamtramck. There was never a synagogue in Hamtramck that I know of.

MK: Well there was the one on Delmar. There was a synagogue just off of Holbrook and Delmar [Avas Achim aka the Delmar Shul 9244 Delmar?—KM]

BS: Yeah.

MK: Just east of—just west of Hamtramck.

BS: Right

MK: So today the organization exists on paper, it has a, it has a---Does it have any kind of functions, activities, is it active in any way?

BS: Well, the club has some social functions.

MK: The scholarships?

BS: Yeah the scholarship is a big thing. Ray Okonski, a successful businessmen.

MK: Who?

BS: Raymond Okonski. O-K-O-N-S-K-I.

MK: Great. And what's his business, where's he come from?

BS: Well he graduated from the University of Michigan, first he was an engineer, then went back and got an MBA. And he got in to the communications industry. He made disks and tapes. His biggest customer was General Motors.

MK: Oh yeah.

BS: At one time he was doing \$15 million a year with General Motors. 40 employees making disks and tapes. He was number—he was big. He sold his business, I don't know to whom he sold it so he's still on the payroll as a consultant. They keep him there so he doesn't set up a competitive business. Very successful. He runs the scholarship committee and he's president of the Polish Century Club. Eminently successful.

MK: How old is he? What age—what generation was that?

BS: He's in his early 70s. I think his wife is a couple years older, she was a schoolteacher.

MK: Are they originally from Detroit or did they?

BS: Yeah, yeah. He was Hamtramck, she was west side. She was not Polish. She still uses her maiden name, Sloat. S-L-O-A-T.

MK: So what's your sense, is there a future for the organization? Or it is pretty much—?

BS: Well it depends on how they can get along with the cultural center. Some things are happening that may rapidly, Stanley Grot is the currentt precedent of the cultural center. The rumor is that he's going to Washington, he's getting some, a big job. In the federal admin—government, I don't know what the hell he can do, but that's beside the point.

MK: [laughs]

BS: Stanley won the lottery twice. He had a restaurant in Hamtramck and then he moved out to Sterling Heights, became a councilman. Made substantial contributions to the Republican Party, so when Candace Miller was Secretary of State, she gave him a job. He was director of Secretary of State activities in Macomb County. I don't know what he did, but that was it, and—

MK: He ran the cloak room. [laughs]

BS: He's president of the cultural center. Now if he goes to Washington, there's gonna be a void there I don't know what the leadership's going to be, there's all kinds of talk. Merger of an actual physical merger, now there's gonna be a problem, because the cultural center is dominated by wealthy widows. And [laughs] I don't know how they're gonna—if they can pull it off, they can get it rolling. And the cultural center is doing well. They operate a restaurant, they bought a good piece of land on the corner of DeQuindre and Maple Road. They sold off a portion of the land to the credit union of the Polish American Congress. Put up a nice building. Then they sold another chunk of land to a group of doctors. I don't know what the financial arrangement is but they're in pretty good, fit financial condition.

MK: Is that a non-profit, the cultural center?

BS: Yes.

MK: Is it a non-profit?

BS: Yes.

MK: With its own board?

BS: Yes.

MK: And the Century Club is still a male organization?

BS: Yes.

MK: Ok.

BS: But its membership has dwindled, there's no reason for people to join! Literally, they, well, they have a baseball outing. That's no reason, anybody can buy a ticket and go to the baseball game. They have an outing to the race track. Again, it's not a big reason to join. They have a dinner meeting, so you pay \$15 for the dinner. And anybody can go to the cultural center and have dinner. It's not a big thing. They have a meeting on a boat on the Clinton River in the summertime. Those are not big activities.

MK: Right.

BS: The other thing they did for several years is do a fundraiser for an orphanage in Poland. So it was questioned the wisdom of doing that, and whether the money is spent most effectively.

MK: Right.

BS: I don't know.

MK: What about the political activity of the club? The tradition of being politically active. Is it now? I mean, do members—

BS: Well there's been a kind of a split because some of the small guys want to be influential Macomb County politicians. And I don't think they're as successful as they'd like to be. One is Polish to a certain extent. We've got some Polish judges elected in Macomb County. There seems to be Italians are the dominant political group. Both numerically, and in terms of the intellect. The businesses they own and control, they're the important group, moreso than the Poles.

MK: How about Sterling Heights?

BS: Well, but all Macomb.

MK: All Macomb?

BS: Yeah. It's all pretty much dominated by good successful Italians, business people and politicians.

MK: So what do you attribute the lack of influence of the significant Polish community in that county?

BS: Well a couple of things have happened. A lot of the Polish businessmen who came into the Polish Century Club were automotive suppliers, had small factories. And they're disappearing, fast. There were builders. Binkowski, the Shells, Boruckis and some others. Milewski was a big-time builder. They're gone. And there's no one to replace them. Milewski was building 100 to 150 houses a year. Now he must have made at least \$2 a house, this is when judges were making \$18,000 a year. And he was making a thousand dollars a house, he was building 150 houses a year. Plus commercial. He developed, he and Harold Emmons developed several subdivisions.

MK: Harold who?

BS: Emmons.

MK: Emmons?

BS: Yeah. Harold Emmons is a brilliant guy. And he selected Milewski to do his, to develop his subdivisions with him. And they did very well.

MK: What about in Oakland County? I mean, is there any influence at all because of the Troy, so on, Polish presence?

BS: I really don't know, no. Now that's very much conservative Republican WASP country. And it seems that the group that's in the cultural center are not real astute politicians. When they bought the building, they acted like, "I need a liquor license." I said, "Look, I'm not going to screw up. Look, Frank Szymanski got indicted for trying to help somebody in the liquor business. I'm not gonna have any part of it." Why do we

have friends?" "You hire a lobbyist, I don't want any part of it." So I said, "What about the mayor, the police chief of police. Throw a birthday party for the mayor's wife. Chief of police, butter him up a little bit, you don't give him a bribe, you give him a birthday cake. Invite the board of directors of the police union, the fire union, to have their meeting at your place. So when the law, by, automatically as the population increases, liquor licenses increase in the state of Michigan. Just go be on the list to get a liquor license. Well they just couldn't do that. Eugene Cole, who was a broker, sold real estate. Had been with the liquor commission. Retired after x number of years, finally said, "Listen, get a resort license. Which has some limitations, but they're not going to interfere with your business. If you have a resort license you don't have any problems, eventually you'll get a Class C liquor license. Well they finally did that.

MK: Any other thoughts about the Polish Century Club other than that? I had some other questions related to attorneys, but I wanted to make sure that we covered pretty much everything that you wanted to share about the club.

BS: Well, I don't know what to tell you. As I say, when Cavanaugh was mayor, there were promotions in the City departments whether it was the budget department or treasurer's department, so forth. Gribbs was mayor for four years, he was kind of a non-entity.

MK: Yeah and the other thing I was going to ask you about Gribbs, where did Gribbs fit into the old world of Polish political, social, picture in the city?

BS: Well he had a brother who was a priest, a missionary in South America. And that gave him tremendous clout with the Polish clergy. With the Orchard Lake people, who, and the clergy was pretty influential, whether you like it or not. And that was the basis of his clout. He's a handsome guy, good speaker, so.

MK: He was an attorney right?

BS: Oh yes, yes. He was a judge. He became a circuit judge and then a judge of the court of appeals.

MK: So, do you know, was he from the city of Detroit? I mean, did he live in, what part of the city did he live in?

BS: He was a west sider.

MK: West sider?

BS: Yeah. He came from a farm up in the Thumb. And he was at U of D, I'm not sure whether he taught in the law school. I can't, I'm not sure, but he taught, I think he taught in the law school for a short time.

MK: Looking back on the relationships and knowledge you have of the Polish American attorneys in the city, who among them would you say were the outstanding ones, that you

personally, you know, were aware of? Who was, you know, who was really very very sharp? You know, legally, and their ability to act as attorneys? Who were the tops?

BS: Well Pucinski was, became a lawyer about 1920 or '21. He was a big handsome guy. Good speaker. Veteran, World War I. He was a good trial lawyer. John Palecki was a real estate lawyer. He was not a trial lawyer, but he was very well. He was in the state legislature at one time, then he was the managing director of the Tract Index Department, which was county office, where the land records were kept, and he was quite an authority on land records in the middle west. Good lawyer. Arthur Koscinski became a federal judge. He was a good legal scholar. U of M Law School grad. He was good.

Tomaszewski was a prosecuting attorney for many years, became a judge when Gribbs appointed him in 1954, I think. He was good. Frank Szymanski never had a big, probate judge, never had a big practice. But Frank studied physics at Notre Dame and he was not **petitioned** as a physicist. Brilliant guy, no ifs, ands or buts. Good decisions. No reversals, knew how to settle cases, did very well. Bonczak worked for the city of Detroit.

MK: What's Bonczak's first name do you remember?

BS: Aloysius, Al Bonczak. His family had a—his father was a tailor, and he was one of the merchants on Chene Street. Polish Century Club. Al was not brilliant, but he was a plodder, he was a hard worker, when he went to court, well-prepared. No ifs, ands, or buts. There were a couple of others, whose names escape me at the moment.

MK: Setting aside the Polish attorneys, who in your experience, you know, as a judge, and in court, what other Detroit attorneys that were, in your mind, outstanding?

BS: Bill Koney, Koneczka. Worked for the county then became a judge of the courts.

MK: How's that?

BS: K-O-N-E-Y, his name was Koneczka. Those World War II veterans, he was in the air corp. World War II, was kind of a diamond in the rough guy. Very astute. Worked for the county. Tax courts. Took my desk when I became the judge. When I was promoted, he was on the district tax court. He was sharp, there's no ifs, ands, or buts about it.

MK: Anybody else that stands out in your mind as being you know —

BS: What?

MK: Anybody else that stands out in your mind as a Detroit attorney?

BS: The Polish attorneys?

MK: No. Just in general.

BS: William Henry Gallagher was one of the top trial lawyers. Very high-class. Ed Barnard was a successful politician and he had an awful lot of clout. He was attorney for Checker Cab, and he had cab drivers elected precinct delegates.

MK: [laughs]

BS: That's right, they voted out of the vacant lots. He got the round-table petitions, he got 25 signatures, and he was elected a precinct delegate. And Ed Barnard controlled the Republican Party apparatus. He decided who could get nominated, at party conventions, and they could circulate petitions. And he and Keegan I think was political boss in Grand Rapids, there were three or four of these guys. They were attorneys, they were shrewd. No ifs, ands, or buts about it. Tom Chawke was an actor.

MK: C-H-A-L?

BS: A-W-K-E. Big handsome guy. Very successful trial lawyer. It was a pleasure to watch him in the court room. Tall, 6'2", sharp dresser, suits fit perfectly. Cufflinks that just showed a little bit from under his jacket. Starched white shirt, made a great picture in the courtroom. Very astute. Very very good. No question about it, very good lawyer. Now we had a couple of judges who I considered great judges.

MK: Who?

BS: Skillman. Was a judge in recorders court, he was a felony judge for 42 years.

MK: What's his first name, do you remember?

BS: William McKay Skillman. W. McKay Skillman. He was [REDACTED] in St. Andrews at the Masonic Lodge. Died in 1966.

MK: Is he at all related to the Skillman Foundation family?

BS: Yes. Yeah, that's the same family. His father was horse trader and a hay buyer. And these people were sharp. Skillman was a pretty good lawyer. No ifs, ands, or buts about it. Robert Toms was the prosecuting attorney of the circuit judge. He was a very competent lawyer, he was one of the lawyers at the Nuremburg trials, I think, he was one of the judges at the Nuremburg trials.

MK: Toms? T-O-M-S?

BS: T-O-M-S, Robert Toms. Robert Toms was the prosecutor in the infamous case of Doctor Sweet.

MK: Ossian Sweet?

BS: Pardon?

MK: Ossian Sweet?

BS: Yeah. He was prosecutor at that time, and I think Columbo was one of the defense lawyers who, he brought Clarence Darrow into Detroit. They were, they were tops. And

we had Judge Webster, the two brothers. One, Clyde was the shiner and Arthur was the scholar. Very very good lawyers, both of them.

MK: What about the federal judges we had in this area?

BS: Picard was a colorful character, he came from Quebec Province originally. Great politician, he was nominated for the United States Senate in 1932 I think it was, or just a few years. He didn't make it. **Wranks got him to** work. He became a federal judge. We had a couple, later Judge **Toepfel** who was considered a good scholar. His two daughters became appellate lawyers. And we had Judge Simon who later went to court of appeals. He was good. Can't think of who else is there. Tom Thornton was a United States Attorney then he became a federal judge. Judge Moinet was harsh on sentences.

MK: Who?

BS: Moinet. M-O-I-N-E-T. He put on this tough veneer. Very tough, but actually he was a pretty decent guy. I don't think he was a great legal scholar. And there was Judge Ernest O'Brien, who knew how to settle cases. Judge Koscinski was a very scholarly judge. I was assigned a criminal appeal. He succeeded Moinet and just as a matter of courtesy, judges who were appointed do not reverse the predecessor. Judge Moinet had sentenced this man to 65 years in jail for a bank robbery. And I appealed, not the conviction, because he pleaded guilty, but the sentence. And the United States Court of Appeals in Cincinnati reduced his sentence from 65 years to 20 years. Koscinski gave me the assignment. I didn't get any money for it, but it gave me an entree into the jail, and a lot of publicity went through the federal system. As a matter of fact, within three days after I argued the case, word went through the the federal prison system, "Hey, there's a smart kid out of Detroit. He knows how to get **bring** bank robbers." [laughs]

MK: [laughs] That was pretty interesting.

BS: Of course we had Frank Murphy who was a great politician. He was a World War I veteran, University of Michigan Law graduate, came from the Thumb area. His home is now a kind of a shrine in Michigan And came back to Detroit, he was a United States Attorney. He was elected the judge of the records court, the criminal court, he was elected mayor and was recalled in 1930. Roosevelt appointed him governor general of the Philippines when the United States was trying to get out of the Philippines gracefully. We didn't want to be seen as the conquering country we'd been there since the Spanish War. Then he was attorney general of the United States, then Supreme Court Justice.

MK: Okay. Well, thank you very much. This was very enjoyable and very informative.

Break

MK: You were just talking about your dad's pool hall and you mentioned some things that I think you hadn't mentioned before about it, maybe you could just lead into it, what you were just saying.

BS: Well my father and John Regey, R-E-G-E-Y, were partners. They were on the ground floor of the building, on Chene and Hendrie. And Regey was continuously broke. He was behind in alimony, had all kinds of problems. Threw money away. _____ wanted to renovate the building. He wanted to put stores on the ground floor. And move the billiard parlor upstairs. So Regey renegotiated the lease without my father's knowledge. And my father, to keep peace in the family, went along with the deal. I think they were there until about 1925 or '26.

MK: Which building was this? This was on — which corner of Chene, was it —

BS: On the northwest corner.

MK: Northwest corner, okay.

BS: Yeah. Next to the market. The market opened in I think about 1920. Ferry Market.

MK: You mean, it was on Ferry and Chene? Not Hendrie.

BS: Ferry and Chene.

MK: Ferry and Chene market, yeah.

BS: Right, correct.

MK: Okay. What happened to Regey?

BS: What happened to him?

MK: Yeah.

BS: Oh he died as a bum. Regey's son was exactly my age. And Armistice Day, 1918, he was playing on the sidewalk, when a car jumped the curb and hurt him. He had a fractured skull. He said young doctors at Henry Ford hospital kept him alive. He had a plate in his head, he had a big hole in his forehead, and the case was settled I think for \$40,000. _____. And Regey tried to become a big-time bootlegger after prohibition, all of a sudden he was in jail, in and out. And his kids' \$30,000 disappeared. He was a talented artist. He knew how to paint ceilings in office buildings and churches. Lay on his back on a scaffold, he did very well at it. But he was a drunk, he piddled his money away. He just couldn't do it. He daughter married a pharmacist, they had a drug store on Seven Mile Road, east of Conant. And then he would come in on Saturday to do the cleaning, and he'd take a case of whiskey off the aisle and give it to one of his friends for a few bucks. So finally they got an injunction, he was not allowed to come into his daughter's home or place of business.

MK: How long ago did he die? Do you know when he died?

BS: I can't answer that. I became a judge in '57, he'd come up to visit me periodically—

MK: So he was still alive then.

BS: He was living in what you'd call a mission, somewhere along the ballpark. And he'd always complain that somebody had stolen his shoes, then he'd hit me for \$5 or \$8, for a pair of shoes.

MK: Was that his original name?

BS: That was his original name.

MK: Or did somebody change it? So was he Polish, he wasn't Polish?

BS: He was Polish.

MK: R-E-G-E-Y, was that?

BS: Yeah. He was from Austrian Poland. He spoke German, as well as Polish and Hebrew. Confidence man.

MK: He wasn't Jewish though.

BS: No, no, no, no. His wife divorced him. He did time at DEHOCO or non-payment of alimony a couple of times. He lived on Lark and Strong, which is near Harper-Van Dyke. They had a tragedy, his father-in-law hanged himself in the basement. So his wife wouldn't sleep in the house after that, they had to move out.

MK: I remember seeing a photograph of him actually in a, one of the—

BS: Chene Business Association? Something like that?

MK: Something like that, yeah. He's in several photographs that I have.

BS: Dom Ludowy?

MK: Yeah, Dom Ludowy. Also, I've got ads. He used to run ads in the Polish papers for painting.

BS: Painting, yes. Very talented! He worked for DeLorenzo. DeLorenzo did the Fisher building. He did a lot of gold leaf work. Painted churches. He knew how to paint ceilings, on a scaffold on his back. He fell off a scaffold in a church on Junction and Fort Street, Holy Redeemer I think it is. Fortunately he didn't kill himself. [laughs] Pretty high ceiling. He got some workman's comp. money for it. Died a bum.

MK: Okay. Thank you.

Break

Testing, 1, 2, 3. Testing, this is Marian Krzyzowski testing.

MK: ...you know, known in the community, I wondered if you could tell me what you know about him, you know, where he came from and?

BS: I understand Bruno [Nowicki – MK] came to the United States about 1926. After the Pilsudski Putsch in Poland, he was a college student at the time, he was probably 20 years old or thereabouts. For a short time he worked for Ford Motor as an interpreter/translator. And then he got into politics. He was deputy city treasurer, city of Hamtramck. He had aspirations for public office, he never made it. Then he was in the monument business on Van Dyke Avenue. He sold that business, very successful businessman.

MK: Was he in the Polish Century Club?

BS: Yes. Yeah.

MK: Did he ever have any business dealings on Chene Street? Was he involved? Do you—

BS: I don't know. I can't answer that.

MK: Well was he more in Hamtramck or?

BS: I don't know. His wife and my wife were friends. She's been dead about 20—

MK: What was his wife's name? Do you remember?

BS: I can't think of that. I can't answer that.

MK: Was he active in—you said he wanted to run for public--but was he associated partisanship wise with Democrats, Republicans?

MK: He was basically a Democrat because it was popular. Bruno was an opportunist, he always wanted to be on the winning side. So he was a Democrat in the '30s. And he was a successful businessman, there's a monument on Michigan Avenue and Third Street I think. Pilsudski monument. I beg your pardon, I can't tell you, it isn't Pilsudski. Under the Johnson administration, there was a highway beautification act. And—

MK: Kosciuszko, isn't it?

BS: Pardon?

MK: It's the Kosciuszko Monument right?

BS: Kosciuszko.

MK: Yeah.

BS: It's the Kosciuszko Monument. The rumor is that Bruno arranged to buy a monument in Krakow, sister city of Detroit, for \$100,000 in round numbers. But on paper it was worth a half a million. And the federal government paid a half a million for the monument. Bruno came out smelling like a rose out of that. I never saw any paper that would documented it, but Carl Levin was the one who put this thing through. It was—the monument had to be on a highway, it could not be—it had to be on a state highway or federal highway, not on interstate, not an I. But so it's on Michigan Avenue, which is Detroit to Chicago, one of the oldest highways in the State of Michigan...

MK: Right. I remember that, I mean I was there when they, when they had the unveiling.

BS: Yeah.

MK: What about George Sadowski? What kind of attorney was Sadowski?

BS: George never had a--[phone rings]

Break

MK: George was what?

BS: George never had a big law practice as such. He was in the real estate business. He developed subdivisions, he had a golf course, Sunny Brook, and he was successful. He was short in stature. Big shoulders, impressive looking guy. Good speaker, spoke good Polish, spoke nice English. And he was elected to Congress, he formed the Detroit Democratic Club, which was powerful, in some respects. Was elected to Congress in 1932. Tenerowicz defeated him in '38. George came back in '42. Then Machrowicz defeated him in '50. Then he retired to his golf course. Very affable guy, very pleasant guy. And looked after **Skupski too**. Any federal construction that went around Detroit, he insisted on having Polish contractors, Polish people working on it, post office building in Hamtramck. Polish bricklayers had to be there. Federal building, **Lukasiewicz** brothers worked. Some of the big time contractors, they did all the interior wood trim. That was **Vincent Lukas's** father and uncle. Sadowski was very influential. And he stayed with it. In '42 we were in the war, he was elected to Congress and he got defense contractors contracts for small-time industrialists, people who had a small factory. They couldn't take a prime contract but they could be a supplier to Ford or GM or whoever.

MK: What about Machrowicz? What was he like?

BS: Well [small laugh] Machrowicz was a lawyer. He had the good fortune, he was elected to Congress in 1950, of having an office next to John Kennedy. And became very friendly with Kennedy. And one of the first judgeships was available for Kennedy, was given to Machrowicz in 1961. He was smart enough, he saw that the city was changing, demographics were changing, and the future for Polish Congressmen was not very **quick**.

So he was able to get out. Now, some people insisted there was a machination there, in his appointment. Under the Constitution a congressmen may not be appointed to an office which he created. The judgeships were created in Michigan. Machrowicz resigned from Congress. The letter of resignation was in the office of the clerk of the House, but was not made public, until a certain date in Detroit when it was too late to file for municipal election. So there was a hiatus of 20 or 30 days when he was not a congressmen, and that's when the vote was taken to create the judgeship in Detroit. There was a lawsuit that I was a party to. A man by the name of Czarnecki, Teofil Czarnecki bought and sold real estate, he was a bachelor, lived frugally, and at the time of his death was, I think it was about 1950, or '52, left, had half a dozen pieces of real estate. He had a brother in England who was a veteran of World War II and a sister in Poland, and he went to Machrowicz, he wanted to avoid probate, didn't want the money to come into the hands of the communists, so Machrowicz and Kaczmarek made arrangements with him, he transferred all his real estate to them. And a couple years went by, and his brother in England didn't get any money, the sister in Poland didn't get any money. So a lawsuit was brought against Machrowicz and Kaczmarek and they settled, they paid up and the money was sent to the brother and the sister.

MK: What about Lucien Nedzi?

BS: Who?

MK: Nedzi.

BS: Lucien Nedzi was a shrewd lawyer. Graduate of U of M Law School, saw service in both World War II and Korea. And he was shrewd. He saw what was happening so he stayed in Congress for 12 years I think, or 14 years. Then he left.

MK: Was he originally from Detroit?

BS: Yeah, he was Detroit-Hamtramck. Yeah. His father was a skilled tradesmen, he was a toolmaker, dye-maker.

MK: Where did—do you know where his father worked? What did he—

BS: I don't know. I can't answer that, I think he worked in some of the small so-called jobbing shops.

MK: Worked at Packard or something like that.

BS: I can't answer that. I know that during World War II he worked in a jobbing shop, that took on custom jobs, fancy jobs that required great skill and precision. And what are they—the prevailing, well the pay was about double or triple the prevailing wage for a toolmaker.

MK: What about John Dingell, the original, the old man. Not the one that's now in Congress.

BS: John was elected to Congress in 1932. He was a salesman for one of the big meat-packing companies, I don't know if it was Swift or Armour or one of those. Went off to Colorado in the '20s, 'cause he had TB, so he lived up in the mountains for two or three years to get rid of the TB, didn't have antibiotics then. And he had great influence in the House, he was on the Ways and Means Committee. The story is not from him, but from people who were in Washington at that time, that he would call the White House, "What time is the chief gonna be through with his nap? I'm coming over." That was it, he'd go over to see Roosevelt. He was the father of the Social Security Act and laid the foundation for Medicare and Medicaid. He and Senator Wagner of New York wrote the Social Security Act as we now know it. Very liberal, very progressive. And very sharp. Mrs. Dingell was his office manager. They had an apartment at the Reid Plaza hotel, I visited them several times. Very sharp, very astute.

MK: And his son become congressmen right after he—

BS: His father died in 1955. And John was elected. John worked for two or three years as Assistant Prosecuting Attorney and of course he's now the dean of the House of Representatives.

MK: Right.

BS: Great outdoorsman. Until he had the hip replacement, he could walk 10 miles to use the floor after breakfast and never feel any after-effects.

MK: Wow. Any of the other congressmen that you recall? Any of the other Polish congressmen you recall?

BS: Well, we had one who was kind of a fly-by-night. John Sosnowski. He was elected to Congress in 1924. He'd run for Congress a couple of times, as a Republican. Clancy was the congressmen from the east side of Detroit, he was elected in 1912. He'd been in the building trades, he was a newspaperman. Very effective, knew public relations. And in 1924 was the big Republican movement, Sosnowski was a candidate in the primary. He didn't make it. But the nominee died. Had a stroke or whatever. So the party specialists picked Sosnowski, the nomination, he was elected for one term. Clancy came back in '26 as a Republican, and defeated Sosnowski. So it was just one term. He was a lawyer, his brother was a real estate agent. Sosnowski was a big handsome guy. Became great friends with J. Edgar Hoover. The story is, again, can't verify it, but I suppose you could if you dug far enough with the freedom of information act, but Sosnowski did undercover work for the FBI and did all sorts of tricks for him. For the FBI.

MK: Getting back to crime, it occurred to me that during prohibition, and I guess even after it, the Purple Gang in Detroit controlled, from my understanding, controlled, the illegal liquor distribution.

BS: Well, they controlled sugar.

MK: They controlled sugar?

BS: Yeah. The moonshine was, 90%-, 99% of the moonshine that we got was made from sugar. And they controlled the sugar. If you didn't buy sugar through the Purple Gang, you were in trouble.

MK: I see, I see.

BS: And then after prohibition, the remnants of the Purple Gang, and some of the Irish revolutionaries got into the kidnapping business. But after 3 or 4 long sentences they got out of it. The Purple Gangs were Jews. And they could find out through their loan connections; big bank deposits. The Irish revolutionaries who came here after 1925, they were body snatchers. They knew how to do a kidnapping. They knew how to find a safe house. They knew how to do the mechanics of the kidnapping. Well between the two, they were very successful. A contractor finished a big paving job, and he made a \$90,000 deposit, **went to _____**, snatched. Walter Thompson ad agencies kidnapped, Jackie Thompson was kidnapped. Over in London, Ontario, John Labatt's son got kidnapped. **[NOTE: IT WAS JOHN LABATT HIMSELF WHO WAS KIDNAPPED.]** This was after the Lindbergh kidnapping. Kidnapping was big. Henry Ford was very paranoid about protecting his grandchildren. So in the '30s there were a lot of criminal lawyers who did work for Ford Motor Company, which was not very much, they got paid about three times what their services were worth, because they had contacts with the underworld. In the event of a kidnapping, they would be in a position to help. The Purple Gang didn't last very long after prohibition. The Collingwood massacre they were involved in and they just fell apart.

MK: So it was the sugar market they controlled.

BS: Yes. Yeah. It was the Open Sugar Gang, it became the Purple Gang. I don't know where they got the name Purple. Controlling sugar was the big thing. Now, as a matter of fact, after repeal of prohibition, you can't go to the store and buy 100 pounds of sugar, unless you're a baker, and it's delivered to the bakery premises. By a wholesale supplier. You can't go to the supermarket and buy a 100 pound bag of sugar. You buy a 5 pound box.

MK: Right, right.

BS: Controlling the sugar.

MK: Yeah that makes sense. That makes sense too, 'cause I've interviewed a number of people who owned stores that sold 100 pound bags of sugar during prohibition and they said that there were, you know, that they were connected to the Purple Gang.

BS: That's right. Sugar was the key thing, because if you make moonshine from grain, you had to dispose of the mash, which was a problem. If you worked with sugar you had nothing for disposal. All you had were the bags to throw away. As a matter of fact, there's a house on Olympia and Maxwell, built by a building contractor, Wojnarowski and a bootlegger by the name of Zuk, Z-U-K, bought the house, and Wojnarowski had to build a tunnel from the garage to the basement. The tunnel was big enough to

accommodate a small wagon. It would take a hundred pound bag of sugar, and it had a cable system for moving it. So he could drive his pick-up truck into the garage, with a thousand pounds of sugar, and move it into the house where he had a still. The house is still there.

MK: Where? Is it the corner house or what?

BS: The corner house. Yellow brick house.

MK: Which corner?

BS: That would be the southwest corner.

MK: Southwest corner and it was on Olympia.

BS: Olympia. And Maxwell. Maxwell ends at Olympia and then Murat becomes the north divide.

MK: Right, right, right.

BS: Nick Zuk was a nice guy. My parents had a summer cottage on Lake St. Clair, what is now a fancy banquetting hall with a nightclub for awhile, near Crocker Boulevard, just north of Crocker Boulevard. And Nick bought 3 cottages there. He lived in one. He had a restaurant in number 2, and a blind pig in number 3. And he sold it to, after prohibition, to **Harry Dunk. Harry Dunk [Dunn?]** sold it to somebody who now has a nightclub. I can't remember the name now. It's a big fancy establishment, it's a banquetting hall now.

MK: This was **_____**?

BS: Pardon?

MK: This was who? Who are we talking about now?

BS: Zuk.

MK: Oh Zuk.

BS: Zuk had a bar in Detroit. Zuk worked for a distillery in Po—in the Ukraine. He didn't know **C2H5O8_____**. But he knew that you need so many pounds of sugar, and so much water, and so much yeast, to make moonshine. They made vodka in those days. They didn't make it from sugar, they made it from potatoes, and rye and barley. But he knew how to run a distillery. Very successful.

MK: So I wonder, if the subsequent owners of the house on Olympia, knew that they had a connection there below—

BS: I have no idea.

MK: --the garage.

BS: I have no idea.

MK: I lived on Knodell, I may know where this house is.

BS: Yeah. It's a yellow brick house. Wojnarowski was a brick layer. A very good contractor. Adolph Wojnarowski -- he was a friend of my family. [Adolph Wojnarowski was listed in the 1913 Detroit City Directory as a bricklayer at 928 Chene.]

MK: Good. Well thank you very much.

BS: Did you ever check up on what used to be a brewery, on, I think on either on Mitchell or Jos. Campau? Between Gratiot and Mack?

MK: Yeah, I drove down there actually, and there are some buildings there, but there, it, the only buildings that's there as I recall, because I followed up on that. Is a low, it's this low-slung building, was that a single-story building or not?

BS: One story. That was a brewery.

MK: Ok yeah that building's still there.

BS: Yeah. That was a brewery. Sienkarek and Adam Blake, and some others, _____, had breweries there.

MK: I found a lot of ads for Adam Blake the clothing store.

BS: Yeah on Chene and Palmer.

MK: Yeah, yeah.

BS: That was an interesting building, he built that building with a still in the basement. And in order to get access to the still, you had to go through one of the dressing rooms in the clothing store, there was a ladder. [laughs] The Feds had a search warrant, they couldn't find the still. [laughs] So they did all kinds of things, and finally they had a search warrant, they did a lot of measuring and they figured out that that's the way to get through. And if you look at the garage, you can see that it was built with very high doors so the truck could get in and out. Very big garage. Adam was a, after prohibition, he got into the numbers business, he was big in the Polish Century Club. His parents lived next door to us on Chene Street. His brother Frank was killed in an auto accident right out here on Mack and Cadieux. Now the story is, there was a gambling casino, a couple of them out here, what is now _____ and _____, the other one was on Mack and Vernier. And Blake had, Frank Blake had hit the crap table pretty good I don't know for how much. Several thousand dollars. And he thought somebody was chasing him. To steal his money. And he missed a turn at Mack and Cadieux, which had a bend, and he hit a tree and killed himself.

MK: And when did Adam Blake die?

BS: Pardon?

MK: When did Adam Blake die? When did his brother die? When did he—

BS: Adam Blake?

MK: Yeah. When did Adam Blake die?

BS: Adam Blake died in the '60s. 1960s. He was laid out at the funeral home on Miller near Van Dyke. **Malysz** Funeral Home. I did the Polish Century Club service for him.

MK: And when died—what was he—was he just retired? Did he have money?

BS: No, no. He was running numbers.

MK: Okay.

BS: No, he would come into the Polish Century Club every afternoon with a small briefcase, full of one and five dollar bills and change them into 20s and 50s.

MK: And where did he live at that time, do you know?

BS: He lived in an apartment building, on Harper and Maxwell.

MK: Over the Easttown Theatre Building?

BS: Nortown Theatre Building.

MK: Easttown, yeah.

BS: Yeah. He was a nice gentleman, had no children.

MK: Okay.

Break

This is Marian Krzyzowski and I'm at my office at 506 East Liberty, in Ann Arbor, and today is Friday, December 3rd, 2004.

MK: In 1940, in the '40s, before Glos Ludowy and Wojsowski and that group split, that there was a printing room, or a printing area, in the Dom Ludowy and that the Glos Ludowy had been printed there at one time, is that right?

BS: They had a printing shop. It was on the west side of the building.

MK: And was Glos Ludowy actually printed there?

BS: I think so.

MK: What was the relationship like between the folks at Glos Ludowy and the Dom Ludowy before this big split, say before the Katyn massacre stuff came out? Were they cooperating, were there friendships, what was that like, do you remember?

BS: I really don't know. But they were, let's put it this way: they were not unfriendly.

MK: Ok. Because I also know, I think I mentioned this to you, that Mr. Wojsowski for awhile was a bookkeeper for Glos Ludowy.

BS: That's right.

MK: And I'm sure he didn't, he wasn't, you know, he didn't stay on after the Katyn stuff, and then when he set up the Polish American Labor Council, but was he the bookkeeper for a number of years? Or was this just like a one time shot that he did, or, do you know?

BS: The bookkeeper for Glos Ludowy?

MK: Yeah.

BS: I think he was there for several years.

MK: I see. And, so then the relationship must have been pretty good for awhile there anyway.

BS: Right.

MK: Ok.

BS: They were—Wojsowski and Januszewski were very good friends in the 1920s.

MK: I didn't know that. Januszewski was a friend of Wojsowski's?

BS: In the '20s and '30s. And then they broke. I don't know why. There was a time in the '40s and the '50s—Januszewski died in '53 I think, where if Wojsowski was in a group and there was a photograph taken, they would obliterate the Wojsowski photograph.

MK: No kidding.

BS: Yeah. Oh yeah.

MK: [laughs] As far as the Dom Ludowy itself goes, was there a second floor above the main entrance, in the church hall or not?

BS: No, no that was a church, Lutheran church, with beautiful stained glass windows, it was a one floor.

MK: I see, so there was no second floor.

BS: No, no.

MK: What about a basement? Was there a basement there at all that was utilized in any way for functions?

BS: Well, they had all kinds of parties there. Different groups; the Polish Women's Alliance, Polish National Alliance, Filarets, and so forth. We of course had meetings and parties at Dom Ludowy. And they also owned a building, facing Jos. Campau Avenue, a house.

MK: Right. When did they buy that one? Was that bought much later on? Or was that pretty much early on also?

BS: I don't know when they bought it, all the time when I visited the Dom Ludowy they had that little house there. In 1920s during prohibition, it was a blind pig.

MK: Oh.

BS: It was a little house, and then, with repeal they had a club liquor license.

MK: And during the prohibition period, who were—who ran the blind pig? Was it actually the association itself or?

BS: I can't answer, I don't know. I never—I got out of law school in '39, and when I got out of school of course I was working all kinds of hours, I didn't get involved, then I was in the army for four years. It was only in '46 when I came back from the army, that I got involved in Polish fraternal affairs and Polish civic affairs. So what happened before that I really don't know, it'd be hearsay.

MK: Ok. In terms of the Central Citizen's Committee you mentioned you had difficulty becoming a member because of some rules that had been instituted. What exactly were the rules that kept you from joining immediately?

BS: To be an officer, you had to be a member for two years.

MK: I see.

BS: And when I became a delegate, I had a lot of friends—family friends, friends of my father and Wojsowski—I was nominated to be, I think, a director. Then somebody raised the point of order that I was not eligible. I had not been a delegate for two years. Well of course I wasn't, I was in the army for four years.

MK: Right, right. Because I wondered, during that period when there was a split between the pro-Communists and the anti-Communist progressives in the city, the Central Citizen's Committee also underwent a big upheaval. You know I read some articles where Chester Kozdroj and his entire administration were removed from office as CKO

heads in the late, in the mid 40s. And I just wondered if this rule was tied to some of the stuff that was going on back then?

BS: I don't know.

MK: Uh-huh.

BS: Kozdroj was kind of an ambivalent guy. He was—he played all the fields. He taught at Orchard Lake at one time. And he tried to get a teaching job at Wayne. He couldn't, he couldn't make it. Pretended that he was preaching Catholic doctrine. And then in '48 I think it was, Kozdroj, Wojcinski, and Zapala went to Poland, as guests of the Polish government.

MK: In what year?

BS: I think it was '48. They were in Poland for a long time, like a month. I'm not sure exactly but it was more than just a long weekend. And they came back with precious artwork, paintings, and this kind of stuff that ordinary citizens don't even have a chance to buy. Well they were gifts.

MK: Right.

BS: And Wojcinski ended up representing the Polish Consulate in probate matters. Which is a perfectly legitimate practice of law. Someone dies in the United States and they have an heir in Poland, somebody has to represent that person. Consul General hires counsel who are paid out of proceeds of the estate. Kozdroj wanted that business, and he could never get it, for whatever the reason. Wojcinski had it. For many years. I think Wojcinski died in about '85. Abouts. He had it for a long time. Zapala didn't want that kind of business. Then Sobieraj got the business, when Wojcinski retired from practice. Wojcinski retired before he died. And Sobieraj had it until he retired. It was a very lucrative business.

MK: Yeah but I'm sure it was being viewed as tainted in the Polish-American community.

BS: Right, right.

MK: Yeah. What about—I asked you in the letter about the, you know, Jozef Sobieski, was he, do you remember, did you ever hear of him being president of the CKO?

BS: That I don't know. He was a building contractor. He was a plastering contractor actually. His son was a member of the state legislature, John, and his grandson is the general counsel for Michigan Mutual Insurance Company now. He was very highly regarded in the community. He had two daughters, I dated one of them, in fact. One was a nurse, the other went to college. The two girls died early on. They didn't live very long. I'm not sure how long John lived. He and my sister were contemporaries at U of M. And he got bounced out of school for either drinking, or driving a car, or both. In the '20s that was verboten, you couldn't do that.

MK: Right.

BS: Students were not allowed to drive a car. So he could not graduate from U of M. I think he graduated from U of D, but I couldn't swear to that. And he was a member of the state legislature in the '50s, and '60s. He worked for the county treasurer's office. Whatever, he was a kind of a clerk or something. They were a very fine family. Mr. Sobieski was very well regarded.

MK: What about Stanley Krajewski? What Stanley Krajewski positively inclined towards the Central Citizens Committee? Or was he more conservative?

BS: Well—[slight laugh]

MK: The reason, let me tell you, the reason I'm asking is because he said some things in some of his articles that I don't know how to interpret. And I'm just wondering if he has a political agenda.

BS: Well I don't think Stanley had any political principles as such.

MK: Okay.

BS: He was an unfortunate person. He was in Poland when the war broke out, and he was injured because he was an American citizen. And when he got back to the United States he had tuberculosis. I don't know what kind of education he had. And then he got a job working for the Polish paper, until his wife retired as a schoolteacher and they moved to Florida. I don't think Stanley had any real principles.

MK: OK. What about Stanley—this guy Stanley Janicki? What do you about him? He was obviously in the CKO roughly about the same time you were probably, or not?

BS: Janicki was a very fine gentleman. He was a gentleman in the real sense of the word. He was an officer of sorts in the Polish army, in WWII now. I don't know what he ever **he did or not do**, but he was educated and he was a lawyer in Poland before the war. And he was in the reserves, and he came back with some disabilities, because he was in and out of the VA hospital, I think he died in the VA hospital. He was a cultured gentleman in the real sense of the word. He was educated, cultured, fine man, all the way.

MK: Ok, yeah, because he's written some of these articles and they seem pretty good to me, but you know there were some inconsistency between what he said and what Krajewski said. You know, and I wondered kind of if Krajewski was a little, a little biased in some of the stuff?

BS: Yeah. Yeah, General Anders was here in 1956. Anders was commanding general of all Polish armed forces. And he was the head of the Battle of Monte Casino. Well after the war, there were all kinds of political intrigues. There was government, a communist government in Poland, there was a government in exile, there were people who didn't support either, you know, it was a kind of a turmoil. And we invited him to May Day Observance at Belle Isle. It was one of the biggest crowds ever at Belle Isle. Soldiers

came in from Toledo and Grand Rapids and all over. And then Anders wrote a letter to me thanking me for the opportunity to speak in Detroit. Then he mentioned that it was especially important to him because of the political upheaval in Detroit. Well Stanley Krajewski made a big to-do about this. He, oh, he said some terrible things about me, about conspiring against the government in London and being a fellow traveler, he said all kinds of things about me. He wrote a couple of nasty articles in the paper.

MK: Okay, so that, I can now put that into context.

BS: Yeah.

MK: Okay, well very good, I appreciate it. I'll call you again after I look through some of the—some more of the Central Citizens Committee papers in the Bentley of yours and Wojsowski's papers over at the Reuther.

BS: All right.

MK: In the meantime I want to tell you too that I don't know if I mentioned that my son did pass the bar in New York so he's—

BS: Oh, congratulations.

MK: --a full-fledged attorney in New York, and he's relieved, I'm relieved, and we're just very happy.

BS: What are the big firms there, in New York?

MK: He works for Cravath.

BS: Cravath, yeah.

MK: Yeah.

BS: Cravath was a general in the Civil War.

MK: No kidding.

BS: Oh yeah.

MK: I didn't know that.

BS: Mr. Cravath was general in the Civil War. He founded the firm. They were attorneys for the railroads were being built, and so forth. Oh yes, Cravath is a top law firm in the United States.

MK: Good. So he's relieved, like I say he passed the bar and not—

BS: Congratulations.

MK: The big part is behind him. [laughs] Thank you, good. Have a great weekend and I'll probably be calling you in a week, couple weeks, after I look through these papers.

BS: Very good.

MK: Thanks a lot. Goodbye. [hangs up phone]

MK: This is Marian Krzyzowski and I'm at the home of Judge Benjamin Stanczyk in Detroit, Michigan, and today is October the 27th, 2005. And we're here to talk a little bit about the Sobczak-Brynski case. Kind of recapping it.

MK: So we're talking about Brynski Sobczak, the big numbers **book** that came out of the Chene Street neighborhood. Both Brynskis, Joseph and Stanley, as well as Henry Sobczak, were involved very heavily in the numbers operations in the area. They were the principals of what was called the Polish Bank, in the neighborhood. And eventually in the early '50s I believe it was, they were arrested, and charged, and I wondered if maybe you could tell us a little more about the details of the charges and what happened there.

BS: They were convicted by a jury, in recorder's court, which is a felony court. Joe Brynski, the older, did not appeal. He figured he's going to go to Jackson, do his time, get time off for good behavior, and get out in a couple of years. Stanley Brynski and Sobczak took an appeal. And due to the fact that Joe was in jail, they wanted to expedite the appeal, move it as rapidly as possible. So they paid the court reporter Lamont Chestnut extra money, to speed the transcripts. In the meantime, a case from the State of Wisconsin, was coming up before the United States Supreme Court. , an appeal had been allowed, because of a conflict in various states on the question of guilt by association. And immediately, the tactics changed. Now, we're going to stall the Michigan appeal, to decide to watch what the Supreme Court is going to decide in the Wisconsin case. And just by coincidence, the law office of Joe Lutomski, in the Guardian building, was burglarized on the weekend. What was taken? The Brynski transcript, an old typewriter, postage stamps, and a few dollars in petty cash. You follow?

MK: Yeah. What was Brynski's transcript doing in Lutomski's office?

BS: He was one of the lawyers.

MK: Oh, he was one of the lawyers.

BS: Yeah. He was one of the lawyers.

MK: I see.

BS: He was a criminal lawyer. In the meantime, Chesnut got the money for the transcript, bought a new car. It was during the Korean War. went out to California. His wife's uncle was being promoted to general. And they drive out to California. Lamont had lost a leg as a kid, could not have a prosthesis, he was on crutches. He's fishing, takes a bad fall and breaks his leg. His only leg. Now he's in a body cast, he can't drive a car. His wife has bad eyes, she can't drive a car. They're stuck in California. Piersante, the detective in

charge of the case, is up in arms. He's got these two guys out on bond, they're probably back in business, he's harassing them, having a hell of a time. So he's on the phone with the sheriff in Alameda County continuously and he drives out to ascertain that Lamont is in a body cast, can't drive a car. This goes on for several months. Finally Piersante gets **Central Home Refurbishing** to have a solid drive Chesnut and his wife back to Detroit. He's got a new Studebaker car, the front seat has a recliner, so they get an army sergeant from the Toledo, Ohio area to drive them back. They're driving across New Mexico, and the car's involved in a terrible accident. It's a total loss. The sergeant has multiple fractures, broken back, all kinds of things. Chestnut and his wife are stuck in New Mexico now. They didn't want to go there, but they were forced to go there, by **Central Home Refurbishing** and Piersante. Finally after long last, of a lot of haggling with insurance companies about a new car, hospital bills, motel bills, etc. etc., Lamont gets back to Detroit. And about that time, the United States Supreme Court decides the case from Wisconsin. There can't be any guilt by association. The fact that the neighbor was a pimp, and you had coffee with him, doesn't mean that you're a vice lord. Or your neighbor is a murderer, doesn't make you a murderer, because you talk to him over the front lawn, or you happen to belong to the same social club, or whatever. So the Michigan Supreme Court not only just granted a new trial, which is the ordinary recourse that was granted to people who've been aggrieved by a **_____** decision, but set aside the convictions and dismissed the case against both Brynski and Sobczak, I forget the citation but you can find it easily. It's the only case I've ever seen where that happened. Well then of course Joe came out of jail, and they decided to go clean, they had to make some money. So Stanley Brynski got into a bar. **Chene and Ferry**, I think it was, Joe Brynski went back to cooking. He learned to cook as a kid, his mother had a rooming house, a boarding house. He was in the Navy during the war. He was a mess officer on an aircraft carrier. And Sobczak went back to selling automobiles at Colonial Dodge in east Detroit, **on _____** and Gratiot Avenue. And they stayed clean. In the meantime of course, they made a fortune in the numbers business. Stanley Brynski built a mansion type house on Windmill Point Drive on Lake St. Clair.

MK: What drive? I'm sorry.

BS: Windmill Point.

MK: Windmill Point.

BS: It was a house that belonged to an actress Julie Harris. Big beautiful mansion house, and they were known to have pretty fancy parties. Sobczak got into the automotive business, Colonial Dodge, I think. And that pretty well **determined**, they got out of the mutual business.

MK: What about the other Brynski brother?

BS: Joe?

MK: Yeah.

BS: Well, he became manager at the Polish Century Club. He died a few years ago. His widow Anna just died recently. Gives you some idea of how they operated—how well they lived. I don't know how much money he paid for the house on Windmill Point Drive, but it was pretty fancy digs, lakefront property, sold by the square foot. It's high-priced real estate, if there's any in the Detroit area, that would be it. They had lavish parties. Mrs. Brynski would invite her high school girlfriends to a luncheon. And my wife and she and her sister were in the same neighborhood, they were close friends. Her brother was a prominent pathologist, he was a doctor.

MK: What was her maiden name, do you know?

BS: Yes, Zawadzki.

MK: Zawadzki.

BS: Yes. Dr. Zawadzki was a pathologist, Wayne County Medical Examiner. So she has this garden luncheon, the phone rings, she's on the phone ten seconds, "Girls you have to leave. In ten minutes I'm gonna be arrested, we're gonna be raided." [laughs] Anna Brynski was kind of a large lady, she had difficulty finding clothes to fit. And the story is the clerks who waited on her, at Sak's and other pretty fancy stores, would go out of their way to find proper attire for her. And the result was they always had a \$100 tip. That gives you some idea.

MK: This is Stanley?

BS: No this is Anna, this is Joe's wife.

MK: Joe's wife, Joe's wife.

BS: Yeah. Stanley and Helena were divorced, he remarried. So that's the story of the Brynskis.

MK: And your wife was a friend of Ann?

BS: No. Helena.

MK: Helena, ok.

BS: Well they were schoolmates in high school. Had the same age group, the same classes, they lived in the same neighborhood, they walked to school.

MK: Where did Joe Brynski and his wife live? Where did they live?

BS: I don't remember.

MK: To get back to the case. Homer Ferguson was who at the time?

BS: He was the circuit judge.

MK: He was the circuit judge.

BS: No, at that time, he was the United States senator. Had been the circuit judge, elected to the Senate in 1942. Served for 12 years.

MK: So what was his interest in this Brynski thing? Why did he want--?

BS: Well, he considered himself to be the great crime-busting judge in Wayne County. He'd been a judge for a dozen years perhaps or more, and he just enjoyed doing criminal trials, especially conspiracy type cases, not casual murder or something of that sort. He just got a great big kick out of it. He just enjoyed it. It was a great pastime for Homer Ferguson.

MK: He was a Republican Senator?

BS: Yeah. He defeated Prentiss Brown, Democrat in 1942.

MK: And so the whole thing here was to try to get a copy of the transcript or get Lamont to redo the transcript?

BS: Well, I think Lamont had a carbon copy.

MK: Oh, he had a carbon copy.

BS: I think so. After Judge Skillman died, Lamont worked for me as a court reporter, so he told me the ins and outs of this case.

MK: Did that case—when you were around—did that case get a lot of publicity? Was there a lot of stuff in the papers about it? You know.

BS: No.

MK: Not much?

BS: No, because it was looked upon, that kind of gambling, was not looked upon as a heinous crime. With numbers, it was, people were betting small, small amounts of money, and of course now the state is doing exactly the same thing with the lottery. And so forth. So it was not looked upon generally by the public as a horrible situation. And the Polish Bank had a good reputation, they never welched, they always paid.

MK: Who else besides Joe Lutomski was, do you know, who was on the defense team? Do you know who?

BS: I don't remember the names. If you lined up the briefs and records in the law library in Ann Arbor, or in Lansing, you'll get the name of the lawyers. There were several, a lot of lawyers involved. It was big stuff.

MK: Ok. Great, well thank you very much.

Break

MK: Talking about Stella Dobiesz and her husband—

BS: Adam. Adam Dobiesz was a skilled tradesman. He was a tool maker, dye maker, pattern maker, very skilled tradesman. He and my father were good friends, they worked at various factories over the years. Dobiesz's came to Detroit at the end of World War I. She was a _____ nurse, and a seamstress, a good stylist. And they settled in the Chene Street area I don't know how they got acquainted with Polish clubs and Dom Polski. And I think the last place where Dobiesz worked was in about 1927 at Clayton Lambert, my father worked there that winter, pool room business going into other businesses. I remember he came home, and we were on Chene Street then, and my mother worked nights. My mother made a big breakfast, they had some whiskey and they were celebrating. Then Adam became a hopeless cripple, he had rheumatoid arthritis and died in the summer of 1955, so for 20 years or more, he was absolutely crippled, he couldn't do anything.

MK: So this was a gradual kind of a? I thought it was an accident that he was in.

BS: No, no, no. She was involved in an accident. She was held up, and she put up some resistance, and the bandit threw her down the steps. She had a stairway from the store in to the basement. She was a small woman I remember, she weighed maybe 120 pounds. And I think she had a broken hip as a result. It was in the late 1970s. She was a very talented lady. Adam was in and out of nursing homes, he was in Wayne County Hospital for several years, and he finally died in '55.

MK: Do you know where they came from? Did they come directly from Poland to Detroit or did they?

BS: No, they came from Boston.

MK: They came from Boston

BS: From the Boston area. Boston apparently was a garment center of sorts. They were in Boston.

MK: And do you know if they were born in Poland? Or were they born in the States?

BS: No, no they both came from Poland.

MK: They both came from Poland.

BS: Yeah, and in about 1960 more or less, she came to me one day, her nephew had come into the United States with his wife, and he was a skilled tradesman of sorts in

Poland, could I get get him a job? So fortunately I had some friends, the **Burnham** family, they had, they have a small factory in Warren and I forget where, and he got a job there. Then they had a relative in Grand Rapids who was a successful fruit farmer. And he was—at that time he was childless. I think a couple of his children were killed during World War II. And the family from Poland inherited quite a bit of money.

MK: So this was, this, do you know the relatives in Grand Rapids, the nephew, was that on his side or her side? Do you know? In other words were they named Dobiesz?

BS: Mrs. Dobiesz's relatives, I'm not sure of kinship.

MK: Oh. Do you know, were their names Dobiesz or was it not?

BS: No, no, no, no, no, I don't know what their name was.

MK: Because I would, it'd be nice to be able to track down somebody who knew more about the family. I wonder if this nephew is still around, if's he still alive, or--We don't have any other names or?

BS: No, no. His name was Dabrowski, he died in Poland. And then she came back to the United States. And she worked as a housekeeper, for wealthy families in Grosse Pointe.

MK: Dabrowski's wife?

BS: Yes, his widow.

MK: His widow, I'm sorry.

BS: And as I say, she worked for several families in the Grosse Pointe area. And then she was—she had a boyfriend who lived near Nine Mile and **Back**. And I would run in to her and this gentleman periodically. At the store, post office, etc. I got a call one day from her daughter; Mrs. Dabrowski had a heart attack and died over the weekend.

MK: Was her daughter born here or was she?

BS: No, no, over in Poland. Poland. I was in Poland in the '80s, I stopped in to see them. They were living in a nice home, because they had this money they inherited from a Grand Rapids relative.

MK: And do you know what part of Poland that was in?

BS: Yes. That was in the northeast. It was east of Gdansk.

MK: East of Gdansk.

BS: About an hour taxi ride from that, Gdansk.

MK: Toward Bialystok?

BS: Bialystok, yes. I don't remember the name of the town. If you really want to know, I can probably find it.

MK: Well I'm kind of curious, you know, to track as much down as I can about her because she was on Chene Street for a long, long time.

BS: Yeah. She started working for somebody, I don't remember who, in '18 or '19. And very soon thereafter went into business for herself, until she died in sometime in the '70s or '80s.. She had a sister who was very talented, but she was a drunk.

MK: What was her sister's name, do you remember?

BS: Yeah, Mania.

MK: Mania? And was she married or not?

BS: She married John Golinski. They're all dead.

MK: Where did they live? Did they live in the neighborhood there?

BS: Yeah, they lived in the Chene Street area. As a matter of fact, after Mrs. Dobiesz bought that big building on Chene Street, she had one apartment, and her sister had the other.

MK: Ok so she was upstairs.

BS: Yeah, they had two apartments upstairs.

MK: And did Mania Golinski ever have any kids do you know?

BS: No,

MK: No children.

BS: My mother was a very talented cook, and a very talented housekeeper. She put her grandmother—or her mother—was an only child, she was orphaned, and apparently the family had a little bit of money. She was brought up in a finishing school, where girls learned the fine art of pastry-making, decorating, setting a table, mattress-making, beef stew or goulash. And when my mother was in college [REDACTED] had a restaurant in Poland, and as soon as the girls were able to carry a cup of coffee at the table they had to work in the restaurant. So they learned cooking and food preparation. [REDACTED] As a result, when people like Mrs. Dobiesz and some others came to Detroit, the word was to go see Mrs. Stanczyk. You want to learn how to make paczki, she'll teach you how to make paczki. And you know what paczki are?

MK: Sure

BS: One of the essential ingredients for good paczki is good medicinal grain alcohol. That's right. And the reason—in those days—you fried paczki in lard, not in Crisco. Lard absorbs moisture, absorbs water. And you put in, before the lard is hot, you put some alcohol into it. And that will absorb the water, and evaporate salt. And your paczki and your chrusciki comes out very crisp. There's no moisture in it. So during prohibition, every fall, we would go through this. My mother would say to my father, "Now, you've got to get me some alcohol. I don't want cognac. I don't want whiskey. It's got to be alcohol. It's got to be wood-grain alcohol." And the test was they'd pour it in a little saucer and set flame to it, and look for the flame to be blue. If it was yellow, it was no good.

MK: That's great.

BS: So Mrs. Dobiesz was one of those ladies who'd come to my mother occasionally: "Mrs. Stanczyk, maybe next week we could fix some babki or some paczki." [laughs]

MK: And would—where was their restaurant at in Poland? What town was it, do you know?

BS: Skierniewice.

MK: Skierniewice, ok, yeah I know where that is.

BS: That's near Lodz, near Lodz, west of Warsaw. Skierniewice and then Sanniki, Chopin's mother had a finishing school for boys in Sanniki, across the street from the church. And when that church was built, I don't remember when, one of our relatives, Kosajda, was the cabinet maker who put in—who built the confessionals, and the altars, and so forth.

MK: So, did you see Mrs. Dobiesz very often? I mean personally or did you?

BS: Yes. [laughs] We had an uncle, my mother's brother, who had—Kaczynski, and after, well after Adam was crippled, they used to run around. Kaczynski died in July of '55, and Adam Dobiesz died in August or September.

MK: Wow.

BS: A couple months later.

MK: So did she ever have any other husband, or any other male friends or did she--?

BS: No. Well that I don't know. She did not remarry—she did remarry! In fact I tied the knot for them. She married a jeweler. His name was Adam, I can't think of his last name. I tied the knot for them about—

MK: When was that?

BS: I was just going to tell you, in the early 1960s. I got a call one afternoon, and the next morning she came in with this gentleman. He was a jeweler, apparently he had rented space from her, in her store, he was a watch repairman, and he had a summer home near Lexington, Michigan. I don't know when he died.

MK: So she didn't take his name, or did she take his name, or do you know?

BS: It might come to me.

MK: Yeah. If it does it'd be great. So, they were married in a civil ceremony?

BS: Civil ceremony, yeah. As I say, I placed the date because of the clerks I had working for me.

MK: [laughs]

BS: That clerk retired in 1963 so it was somewhere around there, and I remember we went to Stouffer's for a breakfast-lunch. Breakfast, wedding breakfast.

MK: Can you describe her, I mean personality-wise? What was she like—what was Mrs. Dobiesz like?

BS: She was a small woman, she was on the petite side. Always had a big smile, kind of mousy-brown hair, and apparently she was very successful in what she did. She was a real artist. People just loved—women just loved to come and get hats from her because she knew how to put a hat on a lady that did her good.

MK: Do you know what—whether she was religious in any way? Did she—what you know was her kind of tie to Poland, to Catholicism? You know, was there?

BS: I really don't know. There was a club in Detroit called **Wyrazystow**. It was a social club.

MK: Do you know how to spell it?

BS: Oh Christ I can't remember. Wrywe, with a W. W-Y-R something.

MK: **Wyrazystow**.

BS: **Wyrazystow**, yeah. They were a happy-go-lucky crowd. They had parties at the Scarab Club. And masquerade parties. They decorated Dom Polski, nobody else did, but they did. I don't know what the decorations were. Whatever they were, they were a happy group. And Dobiesz was, Mr. Dobiesz was in that group, I think both of them were. And my uncle Tarczynski was in that group. The gentlemen worked casinos, the parties, and the dinner parties. So when he **called in the Polish community, he got short**.

MK: And what about her husband, Adam? What was he like?

BS: Well he was kind of tall, slender, gaunt, long hooked nose. Very talented. Spoke several languages. Polish, English, not good English, but he spoke Russian, and