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Dorothy Winovich interview, 15 October 2003

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Winovich15102003A-C
Tremont Oral History Project

Interview with Dorothy Winovich
Interviewed by Rich Garr
October 15, 2003
Fairview Park County Library

Categories
Community, Art, Lincoln High School

Rich Garr: Dorothy, could you spell your name for us?

Dorothy Winovich: Yes. My first name is D-O-R-O-T-H-Y. My last name is Winovich, W-I-N-O-V-I-C-H.

RG: Alright. Now in my list that I got from my teachers it said that you were organizing a class reunion and I want to know if that ever went through and how it went?

DW: Yes. I'm a Lincoln High School graduate of June 1955 and we have consistently held reunions every five years. Most of us went through elementary school, high school together, and there are about maybe twenty five of us that are still friends. We decided about three years ago that as we get to the countdown of our fiftieth reunion we would like to do something every year and what we decided to do was a grand reunion of anyone who ever went to Lincoln High School, a graduate or someone who attended; and of course spouses and guests were welcome. Umm, we were able to contact about 4,400 people representing graduating classes from 1926 up until the school was razed in 1976. Some students went on to Lincoln West and they attended because they had spent five years at Lincoln. Lincoln at one time was a six year school so most of us went there from seventh through twelfth grade and then it changed into a junior high before it was razed. Last year we had 742 people gather at the Avalon Event Center on September 21st of 2002 for the grand reunion. And at that time it was really exciting because being in a six year school we always knew at least kids from five years ahead of us, and then people behind us knew. So it was very successful from that standpoint.

RG: And what was the date of it?

DW: September 21st, 2002 . . . and we hope to do it again in the future.

RG: Do you think you might make it a five year thing or something?

DW: Well, we're trying to decide. We love doing it but it got a little overwhelming after awhile with everything. But now we have a handle on it so I think we probably will

plan one in another three years. Although our class will have one every year until our fiftieth and continue on.

RG: You have a close knit class?

DW: Yes, very. As I said many of us went through elementary school together and then we were basically four feeder schools into Lincoln High School. And then we went to six years together and, umm, many of us went to college together. In my group there were five of us who went to Kent State together also and three of us out of the five into teaching.

RG: And, so you were a major in teaching, education at Kent State?

DW: Yes, an education major and actually one of our goals was to come back to Cleveland. That was a very important thing for us. We just loved everything about our schools and our school system. So I came back to Cleveland, I started teaching at John Marshall. My two friends at that time, jobs were so tight, that they took jobs in suburbia, Brooklyn and Parma, because you just couldn't get a job in Cleveland.

RG: How would you compare living in Tremont to living in Westlake?

DW: Um, well I think the Tremont area--of course I think the past always looks much brighter--but it was very much a sense of neighborhood. I think that based upon, too, that we didn't have cars so everyone walked predominantly or used the bus. And cars were just becoming popular, um, and everything was really ().

TAPE MALFUNCTION, START NEW TAPE (SIDE B)

RG: I just had to switch the tape because it stopped for some reason. So, Dorothy was telling us about the neighborhood and there was no public transportation and everyone walked. So if you could just continue with that thought.

DW: Yes, um, okay the public transportation was very, very good. I maybe didn't explain that properly. But most people didn't have cars for quite awhile. That was something unique and I'm talking mainly about the forties and mostly the fifties, and then into the sixties things changed. The neighborhoods were pretty much self-contained for the needs of the community. There were stores. Almost every street had candy stores on them which gave you basics things like bread and things that you needed and school supplies. I think on my own street which was mainly Raleigh. I lived on West 11th and Starkweather, and then we moved up to Raleigh near Clark Ave. but there were at least three candy stores and there were many grocery stores. West 25th Street had A&P and of course most of us shopped at the West Side Market and the East Side Market which is now the sight where Jacobs Field is and Gund Arena. So we had everything we basically needed. There were movie theaters, my goodness--within our area there were three. We could walk to Southern Garden, The Marvel, there was The Jennings in the Tremont area. And so you just new everybody. And then of course there was this stability. Most of the kids with whom I went to elementary school, I think ninety percent of us stayed in the area and went on to high

school together and most of us lived in the community so there was that real sense you knew everybody.

RG: Sounds like it.

DW: Mmhhh

RG: So, I'm helping a guy right now write a book on the West Side Market.

DW: Mmhhh

RG: But you went to East Side Market sometimes. Was it a longer walk? What was the difference? Why would you go there instead of the West Side Market?

DW: Well, basically most of the families wanted fresh meat, fresh vegetables, everything. So now, I may have the dates incorrect, but West Side Market I believe was open Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. The East Side was Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday so we would travel on the bus usually and that's where my mother would do the shopping mainly. And then later on I predominantly went to the West Side Market only at that time I was driving, in high school and in college. When I came home on weekends it was just easier. But I think everyone was just spoiled with always wanting everything fresh and the market was just a wonderful experience with all the different nationalities and everyone got to know everyone very personally. So it was just wonderful. It was really a social occasion.

RG: You mean you got to know

DW: The vendors and the people there, mmhhh, and the people there also.

RG: Ummm . . . could you give me maybe your favorite, most memorable times in Tremont or maybe a certain memory that you have most vividly?

DW: I think that everything was just to me very, very wonderful. Our schools were excellent. The activities that were offered were just outstanding and really made us well rounded individuals. In the summer we had what we called the playgrounds and all the schools such as the elementary schools: Buren, Scranton, a variety were open from twelve until nine usually and at the playground, of course in addition to the swings and everything else, they had arts and crafts. They had music. They had sports. We played other teams in softball. They had baseball, they had it for a variety of groups. So that was a wonderful experience. Then the movies, that was a big part in our lives because we're talking basically before TV. Or TV was just coming in.

RG: All those theaters.

DW: Yea, all the theaters and of course, this is shocking: for a quarter we could go to The Southern on a Sunday--which was a big thing as we were growing up--and you saw two

movies for a dime, that was the ticket. You had your cartoons, the previews, always some type of a serial that went on. You could do this on Saturdays also at The Garden, and the theaters changed. Umm, there was a Sunday, Monday, Tuesday. Then there was a Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday and Saturday. So you had three different movies that coming in, and usually two movies each time. And as a child we payed a dime, and we were usually given a quarter--which took care of your popcorn and your candy. So it tells you how wonderful that was. So I think just the total experience. West 25th Street, for us, was very important because it had all kinds of stores. And it had Woolworths, which we all loved growing up. So I think just the total atmosphere of the entire community, just liked everything. Um, one of the things that we all talk about is the churches in the community and church bells always ringing. And one of the things I found hard after I moved out of Tremont was the lack of church bells. And in the Tremont area you could hear bells at five, at six, noon, six, and midnight and then of course you knew if it were a joyous occasion like a wedding or if it were a funeral. So, that was, we all laugh about that now but we all took that for granted and now it seems it's sterile, you know there's no sound (laughter) and it's just lovely. And that was it but I think there was just not anything about the area—our libraries were wonderful. I went back to visit the Scranton library. I don't think that's the name of it. It's on the corner of Scranton and Clark Avenue, and just a wonderful book selection and too they had story hour for children and that wonderful foreign section. Also in the Tremont area the Jefferson library because so many immigrants came into that area. I still think today they even have a wonderful library for immigrants.

RG: You talked about how a lot of the kids you grew up with, and went to high school with, they turned out pretty well-rounded. Did you feel that . . . did you feel that there was a focus on the arts back then?

DW: Yes, I did. I believe, well just by our curriculum. We were all exposed to art, music, literature and all encouraged in our basic academics to always take on an additional subject of something in arts. If you couldn't take the double period art they also had a one period class so that nobody was left behind because often, as you know, in an academic program you're so tight on the academics that it's very difficult. So yes, I believe it was very well stressed and encouraged. Our teachers also encouraged, even if you weren't in an art class, if they knew that you liked art or music, they encouraged you to take part in programs. So they always were very flexible bringing you in. I was not in the choir because I couldn't work it in but my friends who were in the choir. They still talk about the memories and there was a tradition at Lincoln that the last Friday before closing for winter break, or in those days we called it Christmas break, all the graduates came back and there was a Christmas tree in the main hall in the well and everyone would sing Christmas carols. So it always brought back all the graduates. And, I think too, there are some very strong roots. There's an old sports group of men and they still meet every two years—all the athletes—and they have that same kind of tradition and custom of always wanting to keep together.

RG: At Lincoln High School?

DW: Mmhmm. And that included the faculty as well as all those who participated in any sport.

RG: Huh. I didn't know that art, it had such an art background. I thought now there are all these galleries and all of a sudden it's turning into an art neighborhood but it sounds like it's always been pretty strong culturally.

DW: Mmhm. Yes I think, the school was, and the churches I think always tried to bring forth their own ethnic artwork. I think also they produced their own dance groups. There were many, almost all the foreign churches had dance groups. And much of the artwork, the iconography in the churches, are very well known. So I think it just kind of what flowed out from that. We always said that that area was a gold mine and people used to laugh at us. But I understand that there were more churches, and probably still are, per square mile in that Tremont area than anywhere in the world. As you go through you could walk maybe one block or two and there is a church there or three or four on the corner. I also think the churches in many ways are to be credited with keeping the Tremont area alive because in the sixties when 71 came through it dislocated ten thousand families, and I was amazed because when I read that statistic so many of the houses were double houses or there were two or three houses on the lot. And the neighborhood had started to change because many of the owners were passing away and families were moving out so it was starting to change slightly but when 71 came through it really dislocated so many families. But some of the churches; such as Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, Saint Theodosius Russian Orthodox Church, Saint George Antiochian Pilgrim Church, Saint Augustine, there's a Zion church, Saint Michael's, they all stayed. And that kept bringing the people back to the community and I think that was important because there was a period in the sixties and seventies there was only one way to get into that neighborhood. They had closed the Abbey bridge to have it redone. You couldn't get off on 71 or 90. The Clark Avenue bridge was demolished. So there was only one way to get in so it was like landlocked and yet people went back there so I think that was very inspirational.

RG: So the churches kept people going, kept the community together?

DW: Yes and also kind of in revise too in many ways too took on a new mission of meeting the needs of the community, welcoming everyone.

RG: When you talk about the dance groups that the churches sponsored, what kind of dance? Lessons, or . . . ?

DW: Well they gave lessons if anyone wanted them but they also had, such as Saint John Cantius, they had the Polish, I think they still have a Polish mass to meet the needs of some of the people. They had Russian groups at Saint Theodosius. Antiochian had the Lebanese, Syrian dancers so it kept bringing people back. There was a Ukrainian church Saint Vladimir's, which sold, but they had a wonderful dance group and they're located now in Parma and they're still very well known. So it brought people back.

RG: What about fine arts, like painting or photography, were there any classes in specifically painting?

DW: At Lincoln, yes, the art program was very, very good. Mr. Anthony Eterovich was one of the teachers and he's a graduate of Lincoln and he also teaches at the Institute now. He went back to teach at Lincoln. He was outstanding. They produced many fine artists and painting was part of it, umm, the whole spectrum. As a matter of fact I think he produced Katherine Jablonski, who worked with American Greetings. And she does the "Kathy cards," which I think American Greeting gave her the permission to put her name on—which is Kinka. Maxi Masterfield who is a very well known artist and I know she's had . . . the last I heard an exhibit at Dobama Theater in Cleveland Heights. Oh, Kafari. Joe Kafari, who's with American Greetings, Beverly Summerfield. So there were many who went on to the fine arts and became wonderful artists.

RG: And they all came out of Lincoln High School?

DW: Mmhmm, yes.

RG: Can you tell me a little bit about the, how the steel mills affected Tremont? There's the industrial side, and then there's the whole art side.

DW: Oh, yes, well my father was an engineer at Republic Steel in the main power plant. He was a stationary engineer. And one of the reasons we stayed in the area was because he did not drive so we lived on Mary Avenue, which is right below Saint Theodosius which is no longer there. Then we moved to West 11th adjacent to Starkweather, and then we moved to Raleigh. So we stayed in the area. Well, the steel mills of course were the employment for many, many of the people in our community. Those Republic Steel and J and L basically were the closest at that time before names were changed. The steel mills were so much a part of our lives because I know my father just if there was a sound could tell if something was wrong with a certain thing. And we all used to love to joke about—there was, oh, I don't know if you want to say dirt, but it was kind of dirty sometimes with dust.

RG: Smog?

DW: It wasn't, it was really like little tiny particles and we used to lay on it, people who didn't know about it if you would drive across the Clark Avenue bridge you would have little tiny dots all over your car when you were driving because it was just the fog from the pollution and it was just like that. And they did work on improving that of course but yea, the mills were very important and for most of us there's a real beauty about the mills. I mean I still just really love going there. Unfortunately you can't see much now but that was a very important part of our lives. It was the employment for many of the people.

RG: It sounds like that had almost as much of an effect on keeping the community together, the steel mills, as did the churches.

DW: Sure and a little people moved in there because of course being an industrial area in Tremont they could walk right down the hill to the mills. They didn't have to have transportation or cars so it was a very important place for living as well as employment close to home.

RG: Do you think you could describe to me one of your least favorite memories of Tremont? Something that you really look back on . . . and you are like, “oh geez, I didn’t like that?”

DW: I think the only thing I disliked is when I saw the neighborhood breaking down and it started with 71. West 14th Street was originally supposed to be comparable to Euclid Avenue. And as we were growing up there were mansions on West 14th Street and we used to just love going past them and they were just beautiful . . . they were very similar to the ones on Euclid Avenue. Then when 71 started to come through, and the neighborhood was changing, two of them kind of became boarding houses and then they were razed for 71. And then we saw how things were starting to just change. People were not, umm, I think as proud. Some people were moving in, it was just like, and ‘we’ll live here for a little bit, because we can afford the rent, and then we’re moving out.’ So there was not that feeling of stability. I think that’s the only thing that really bothered many of us.

RG: When Carl Stokes was elected mayor in 1976 did that divide the community at all; or what was the general feeling in Tremont?

DW: No I don’t think so. I know I was living in Tremont, I was living till 69 in the area. And I remember I voted for him because we really felt that he was offering much that our community needed and our city needed. And I was teaching at John Marshall at that time too so we as a faculty, well I shouldn’t speak for a faculty, but many of us just felt that he was going to bring back something we needed in the community. And I felt he did do that.

RG: Oh you said that you moved three times.

DW: Yes, uhmm.

RG: What was the reason for your moves?

DW: Well I think the first time the street where we lived, umm, my parents--I don’t remember because I was just an infant--felt that with a growing family it was too small for them. I think they were living with my grandfather so we moved to Starkweather and again my grandfather came to live with us. And I think we stayed there for about six years and again it was kind of like it wasn’t large enough for us, so that’s why we moved again . . . but staying in the area again. The only reason was that some of the places are a little bit smaller and I think that’s the only reason we moved.

RG: And you finally moved out to Westlake because of . . . ?

DW: Well in 1969 when my father died everyone else in my family had already passed away other than my brother who had moved. We had property that was something I couldn’t take care of so I went to an apartment. And that’s the only reason I moved. Other than that I think we would have stayed there. But we also felt that the neighborhood was kind of changing and only changing in that people were not taking the pride that they once

had. But you could also tell the people who had been there for many years because their yards were meticulous. That's another thing. All the yard had flowers. All the yards had hedges. Everything was very clean even if it was very modest, which of course it was. Everything you could just tell how spotless it was. And we always laugh the way things come back because every yard had lilacs or in the Spring had iris and daffodils and lilacs and hydrangeas and the rose of sharon and honeysuckle and hollyhocks. I mean it was just every yard had this. And then for awhile we didn't see that and now we're seeing it again so there was a great pride in that, and that's what's kind of sad to see all of that kind of going by the wayside.

RG: Alright, uh, I'm going to ask you more art questions since that's my area of interest. How do you believe that art in the neighborhood preserves its culture?

DW: I think first it gives it a historical perspective of the people who have been there and I think history is very important. I think if we do not know history we really don't know the present. We don't know what's going to happen ahead of us. So I think of course it is very important. Whether it represents the community and the history or it's bringing in something new. One thing I forgot to mention too is that the Merrick House, which is still there, was a very important thing for us because it offered social activities. We had clubs which we met there once a week and we had an advisor and it was just a very positive growing experience. They had art classes, which I attended, and I remember my teacher was Mr. Gaul. And they had dances and canteens. If that word is used any more, I don't know.

RG: What is a canteen?

DW: A canteen, its just music. Usually just records, like a sock hop kind of thing or something.

RG: So it was a dance?

DW: Yes, uhhuh. And everyone could just come. They would have age groups like junior high or senior high and they had sports. They had competition of sports: basketball mainly because of the facility. So, again, the art classes were very important there. But I do think the art. In preserving, such as: it's so wonderful to still see so many buildings that are being used and utilized. Even in perhaps a different way from what they were intended rather than just going and bulldoze it down and build a structure that is very plain that doesn't add to the total perspective of the community. So I think the architecture--keeping the architecture in--that's so important.

RG: Was the Merrick House a certain ethnicity, or . . . ?

DW: No it was open to everyone. I believe, now I'm not sure, it's always been there to provide services that maybe were needed, so many times in the winter there might not be, like if the school could only stay open till six o'clock, which is basically what happened, during the day they had things for younger children as well as families. I think they taught, even like, people could come in and learn English as a second language if they chose to.

Learn their citizenship to prepare for their test. Then in the evenings they had the activities and on the weekends. And they also provided, there was a camp which is now in Hinckley and I don't believe it's a camp anymore. But they would provide the outdoor experience, too, for students in the community.

RG: And who sponsored Merrick House? Was it a city organization?

DW: I think it was a city organization. I think it went under the community chest for awhile but I'm not accurate on that. I really can't recall.

RG: I can look that up. Do you ever visit Tremont now and visit some of the galleries or restaurants?

DW: Oh yes, yes. We make it a point, my friends and I. Most of us came from the Lincoln area, to go to every new restaurant that opens

RG: [laughter]

DW: . . . and then we reminisce as to what was this building. My college roommate lived two doors away from what is now Sage and we remember it when it was a Russian import store and a photography store. We always used to laugh about that these were wonderful buildings. And of course Lemko Hall was the social center and there were also dances there and weddings and many of the people went down, they had a pool and a variety of things. And of course Civilizations, which used to be Cravings, so we were there and we go down quite often to visit anything and everything. When the bathhouse was being converted into the Bathhouse town homes and lofts across from Lincoln Park we visited from stage one. Umm, you know, with the floors being what we remember as basketball floors things like that. So yes, we go down to . . . and the exhibits. We don't go too much when there are big crowds like festivals. We kind of like to do things when it's quieter. You can experience it more. But yes, we go there and a lot of our family parties we go down to the restaurants and hold our parties there. And of course we always go back and look at our old houses and see what they're like--what's happening to them. And most of them are still there.

RG: Is the bathhouse . . . that's now a townhouse?

DW: Yes, it's on Starkweather between West 11th and West 14th Street.

RG: It's a beautiful building.

DW: Yes, it was a bathhouse and originally what it was, built for the people who came to bathe because they didn't have facilities. They didn't even have the facilities to bathe and then it expanded also to meet the needs and then they sponsored activities and sports and things like that for people so it's wonderful that it's been preserved.

RG: Ahh, would you ever consider moving back to Tremont?

DW: Many of us have discussed that and in a way we'd like to. The only thing that holds us back now is that most of us are older and we don't want a full home. And I think that's it. We think it's a very vibrant area and we think the people there are doing a wonderful job in bringing that sense of community. So yes and no. It's like, for me at this point--I could only speak for myself--a move is traumatic no matter which way or where I would go. But yes, we do consider it.

RG: When you first moved into an apartment . . . where was the apartment?

DW: On Edgewater Drive in Lakewood.

RG: And then did you go to Westlake because you wanted to just sort of get out?

DW: I just went to Westlake because at that time condominiums were becoming popular and I just thought it would be better to own something than to be constantly renting. Also I had the good fortune--as many of us did at John Marshall--the parent of one of our students, we had several students and his son taught there also, was in real estate and he kind of had a handle on what was going on and he helped a lot of us.

RG: So it was almost like an investment. Just a smart move.

DW: Yes and they had the condominiums and most of us because we, I'm speaking mainly for women, although many of the men moved out there with their families too, it was just kind of something that was happening. At that time I think a lot of us who lived in Cleveland would have liked to stay there but they just weren't offering the kind of, umm . . . place to live that we could really live comfortably. Such as either apartment living, we didn't feel like there was a transition there.

RG: Was it, would you say, was it becoming not as safe? Or just not as comfortable?

DW: I never felt unsafe and I lived there until 69 and as I said I still go down there. Never felt any problem at all. Growing up, we were talking about this, it's interesting. We could not remember where the police station was. We could not remember. We really couldn't remember seeing policemen on patrols. Now I knew a couple of policemen only because they were my brothers friends. But I don't remember ever seeing a policeman come to any situation. So I felt safe. I'm not saying there were not problems, but I didn't know of any of them. And most of the time that I lived there I did not have a car so I took two buses and the rapid home from John Marshall and many times I would come home 8, 9 o'clock and I would walk home from West 14th to my house or from West 25th or Scranton. So, I never felt unsafe then. And I think now I think it's just everybody is careful because maybe we know more but I never felt unsafe.

RG: Ok. Ahh . . . it sounds like you had a good relationship with all your neighbors in Tremont. Do you hang out with your neighbors in Westlake at all?

DW: I don't know them as well.

RG: It's just not the same community type?

DW: Well I think when I first moved there it was. I live in a condominium, a town home, and so I think any time it's a new development everyone gets to know one another. But then working, going home early and late, and then perhaps going to graduate school or picking up hours I never got to know as many. I do have several very good friends who still live there. Um, sadly also, as we're growing older several of my neighbors have passed away. So I don't know them in the same kind of relationship. But then again growing up in Tremont we went to school together.

RG: Yea.

DW: So that was a very close bonding relationship.

RG: Did you ever get married?

DW: No, HmmMm.

RG: Alright, getting back to art. What do you think the art scene is doing now that it has or hasn't done in the past in Tremont? How does it differ? There were more theaters it sounds like, and dancing; and now there is sort of a lot of galleries.

DW: Yes, I think it's wonderful. I just hope they're not starving artists [laughter] starving in their galleries. I think it's wonderful. I think it does a lot. It gives the community another avenue. I think many of the buildings are just wonderful for having studios because of the light, the space, and so on. So I think its wonderful bringing it back and the preservation. And, you know, I think it's very good because when the people go into the area there's much for them to do.

RG: Ah, do you have a certain style of art that you really like? Or, um, a certain artist that you really like?

DW: . . . well . . .

RG: Whether he's local or . . . ?

DW: Ah, yes, I can't really say I like a certain period. I think I like all periods just like I like basically all music. I think each adds something. Ahh, I think perhaps I lean towards certain things maybe more traditional, but then again I can't say I dislike any art.

RG: You don't get mad at abstract art or anything like that?

DW: No, no not at all.

RG: Do you like that, uh, do you know *Portal*? The statue that Isamu Nagucci did in front of the Justice Center?

DW: Mmhmm, yes, mmhmm.

RG: A lot of Clevelanders got mad about that because they just say, “well that’s a bunch of bent pipes, what is that?”

DW: Yes [laughter]. Well I guess. . .

RG: And the *Free Stamp* too.

DW: Yes the *Free Stamp*.

RG: What do you think about some of Cleveland’s public art?

DW: Well, I think sometimes maybe, well I’m not too keen on those, but I can accept the *Portal* I think a little bit more than the *Free Stamp*. But again then that’s also amusing I think too--and interesting. And it opens up thought and it opens up discussion, and I think that helps to enlighten and educate all of us as to things that take place. So yeah, I think they’re more amusing. Then again, as I said, I kind of tend to lean toward a little bit more traditional. But then again, I don’t know what I would have put there. I mean I have no comment as to what should be there.

RG: Did you see the new Jim Dine statue they put on the Federal Building? It’s a, it’s a Venus.

DW: No I have not seen that yet.

RG: Okay. There’s a big, new public piece of art on the. . .

DW: Okay and there’s some discussion on it?

RG: There was. For the most part it seems like people like it but then there are people who are talking about how it a beheaded woman. So she just doesn’t have a head, and so

DW: Yes, I’m really not familiar. I’m sorry I can’t, you know, comment on that.

RG: That’s alright. Oh can you tell me a little bit about the guy who made these posters?

DW: Oh, Jim Ptacek! Yes, umm he . . . I just think he’s a wonderful person, um, I first became aware of him . . .

RG: Oh, can you spell his name? I’m sorry.

DW: Oh yes. I want to be sure it's correct. It's um, his last name is spelled p, capital P-T-A-C-E-K and his first name is James. And I became familiar--I was at a Russian festival, Saint Theodosius--and he was one of the individuals and he had posters up. The Tremont area, and also pictures, photographs of the churches and we all liked his work so much and he's very well-known in the Cleveland area for his work. He's done many photos and graphics for the area as well as actually throughout the United States. So, um, he had a studio on Pearl Road and when we met him we bought this first poster, which was a collage of the churches in the Tremont area, and some of the establishments and Tremont's school. And then we talked to him about doing a poster of Lincoln High School, which he did. And then working with one of the young men in my class he was able to come up with a collage of Lincoln. So he's just been very, very helpful. He did one, I think, for Cathedral Latin too. And he's done it for other schools now and I think everybody just loves that, which I think kind of says a lot. Because there is no one I talked to who went to any of the Cleveland schools or anyone who did not love their school. There was never any negative criticism. Ah, I think that's a very important fact because so often now the schools are criticized and as a teacher and a counselor in the Cleveland schools, um, I do not believe the media always give a true picture of what truly is going on.

RG: Mmhmm Well, do feel that the schools, you're saying that the schools are better right now than they actually are portrayed as?

DW: I think there are many more demands, in all schools. I think there are many more situations that make it difficult, but there are problems of course. But I think sometimes the negative is publicized much more than it should be. And, um, as a counselor I The students that I had were just wonderful and we had many students. One year I had the only Hispanic commended student and he was not even given any publicity and he was the only one who received the award in the entire northeastern United States.

RG: This was at John Marshall?

DW: Yes, and then we had one student who was listed as, and this was the nineties, she was in the class of 92, and she was one of twenty-five, through Ebony Magazine, as the most outstanding students in the world, and nothing was said. And she's an engineer now. She was just a wonderful student. And another young man who won a Coca-cola scholarship out of 92,000 applicants, and nothing was mentioned. So I think some of the positives are not

RG: Nothing was mentioned in *The Plain Dealer* or the news or anything?

DW: No, no. So sometimes people say well there was not contact. [laughter] Well, there was contact so

RG: And what year was that? About when did you stop teaching?

DW: I retired in 90 and then I subbed on and off. And this class specifically that I'm talking about, well there were several in there, but these are two that kind of stick in my craw to this day—that they did not receive. Not that they wanted, because they were very humble, but that would have really been something . . . and then the Hispanic national scholar in 88, the class of 88, and he was not. You know taking the PSAT with the national merit, and then the national achievement and then he was with the Hispanic. And they all went on to college and did very, very well.

RG: When Lincoln High School was razed . . . the people that were in the middle of their time there. They went to Lincoln West?

DW: Yes, Lincoln West.

RG: And where is Lincoln West?

DW: Lincoln West is, um, Myer Avenue. And it's one block south of West 25th Street. So it's probably between West 28th and maybe 30th or 32nd, bounded on the east and west side. And on the south it's Myer and on the north it's Clark Avenue. And so West High was closed also and razed. And that's where Gallagher Intermediate School is now. I think they still call it an intermediate school. And then when Lincoln had students they transferred those who were to graduate from Lincoln to Lincoln West. And then Lincoln was a junior high for awhile, seventh, eighth, and ninth grade, before it was razed.

RG: Ok. How do you remember Lincoln Park? Was it much different than it is now?

DW: Oh, well it was a very active social center. Many of the people met there. In the evenings you could see many people walking with their children or a lot of the people just sitting on the park benches. There was also a swimming pool in the summer.

RG: And when did they put that in?

DW: That swimming pool, it was a wading pool when I was a child. And then there was a swimming pool that I think went in during the late fifties and into the sixties. I think that's when the pool went in and so it was kind of a social center. Then I do believe for awhile there might have been some problems, with, you know . . . groups meeting that shouldn't.

RG: Like gangs?

DW: I don't know if there were gangs. I never knew of gangs but people do say those things happen and they probably did. But it was maybe felt to be as safe and yet I know many times I walked from my friends home--which was right on West 11th--home and we felt safe. So I'm not sure [laughter].

RG: Did you say you have some brothers or sisters? How many kids in the family?

DW: Okay, I have one brother who's deceased and he lived in the Tremont area with his wife and two children until maybe the seventies or maybe about 73. And, again, they only moved because where they were living it was too small for them with their children. They had three children at that time. My sister-in-law was Saint John Cantius Church and she still goes back occasionally, not as much as she would like to because she lives out in Middleburg Heights now. But I think everybody liked it very much.

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RG: () . . . continue on the other side of the tape.

DW: My brother's friends too all went to school together and they were in sports together. And so they were in organized sports with the school and then they were in organized with the muni, they started in the sandlot baseball and softball. And then they went into the muni baseball leagues. Cleveland has always had wonderful teams and the tournaments they've had. I think that's why this old sports group that gets together for a banquet every two years, they're so close: because so many of them were in athletics their entire lives until they could no longer play. And then some went into coaching and assisting. So they liked it very much.

RG: Did you ever go down to Cleveland stadium to catch a Browns game or an Indians game growing up?

DW: Yes, oh yes, yes, and that was another thing. The schoolyards always took groups down to an Indians game. Umm, and that was kind of a thing that everybody looked forward to and at the time also the schools, if you were an honor student in the Cleveland public schools, you usually received perhaps maybe four to six free baseball tickets also. So at the end of the year they gave you that, so that was very nice also.

RG: So sports also played a big part in the community?

DW: Oh yes very much. And at that time there was a very strong intramural program in the school and then there was the interscholastic. At that time there were summer tournaments for girls, and of course for boys, and they had it in districts and then there was a city playoff. For sports, volleyball was a really interscholastic sport--as well as basketball. In those days it was called "Daisy-May Basketball" based after the Lil' Abner character because it was still in its developmental stages.

RG: Was that only for girls?

DW: Yes, the girls just the competition. But of course the boys had, you know, all the major sports as well as the minor sports.

RG: Did the boys call it Daisy-May Basketball too?

DW: Mmhhh, yeah, yeah they did. And you know, at that time, you know it was like when we look back and we judge on today's standards on something 40 or 50 years ago it seems so you know, "we did that, how silly," but in those days it was very serious.
[laughter]

RG: You said your family is of Polish descent?

DW: Ah, no my sister-in-law is Polish. My father was Serbian. He immigrated here when he was eleven with his father--his mother had died--and his brother. And they lived in Youngstown and then came to Cleveland. Ahh, my mother was born in Pennsylvania and her father died when she was an infant so her mother took her and her brother back to Slovakia, it was Czechoslovakia at that time, so she was of Slovak and Russian. And then they came back when she was eleven to live in the Tremont area and that's where my mother and father met—in the Tremont area.

RG: Did you find that, that it was sort of cliquey between ethnicities? I know that all the churches . . . there were a lot of ethnic churches, so . . .

DW: Well, we were probably the only Serbians in the area because of my dad working at Republic Steel and he wanted to be close. Most of my friends are all different nationalities and even though they were all close with their churches everybody mixed. Everybody mixed. I mean you just mixed. You think of being unique, I mean we all went, perhaps on Sunday, to church our separate ways. I couldn't always go to our church because it was on 36th and Paine so I either went to Saint Theodosius or I went to Saint Michael's Roman Catholic Church because it was close to me. So everybody mixed and everybody seemed to welcome everyone.

RG: So there wasn't like there were the Italian kids and you don't want to walk down there because they'll make fun of you or anything?

DW: No, no, never, no, no.

RG: That's good. I always thought that there were just so many different ethnicities that there would be these, not gangs, but like groups. And maybe there'd be some tension between some of the ethnic groups.

DW: Okay, I never knew of any but I know some of the reading I've done they've said that. In the twenties and thirties, of course depression and so on, it was of course a very difficult era. And I know at that time too, because of the depression and because there were labor unions coming in, it was some difficult times but I don't know of any gangs or any group not liking another group. And I think because we all went to school together and knew one another, we actually enjoyed it because you learned about other people. And you know we went to different churches for different programs because we liked seeing it and being part of it.

RG: That's neat. Alright, well I think I asked all the questions I wanted to ask . . . and if you have any last thing you want to add

DW: Well I think most of us just, as I said, we still all go back. We're going to have a reunion and we're thinking we did go to Annunciation for one year because we wanted to go back to the area and we had Lolly the Trolley and go through the tour. And as a matter of fact the guide was so interested, um, with writing down things that we were telling because they didn't know as much as we did for the tour. So we will go back and we constantly go back. It really truly was a sense of neighborhood and I just think all of us, there's so much nostalgia And of course as I said probably things always seem better in the past but it really was a wonderful, wonderful area.

RG: Alright, I'm going to cut the recorder off then.

DW: Okay thank you for inviting me to be on the interview.

RG: Oh thank you, it was a good interview.

END OF INTERVIEW