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Eddy Bugala interview, 22 February 2003

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Tremont Oral History Project

Interview with Eddy Bugala
Interview by Charles McCandlish
WEST TENTH STREET, CLEVELAND, OHIO
2/22/03 11AM.-12:30 PM.

START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A

Charles McCandlish-Eddy, can you spell your last name, Bugala?

Eddy Bugala-Bugala.

C.M.-Okay. I had it right. Can you spell it for me please?

E.B.-B-u-g-a-l-a

C.M.-Okay. When did your parents move to Tremont?

E.B.-Oh, I figured they came here about eighteen ninety-nine, and then they landed in Baltimore. Then, then my father and mother, well they actually came here by themselves. Because they met here in Cleveland.

C.M.-Oh, okay.

E.B.-So I'd say, I figured they came here about nineteen hundred.

C.M.-Okay. Around eighteen ninety-nine.

E.B.-No. It wouldn't be that because my first sister was born in about nineteen hundred too. So they got married after nineteen hundred. It's been around that time.

C.M.-And, where did they come from? What country?

E.B.-Poland.

C.M.-Poland?

E.B.-My father came from near Warsaw. My mother come from a town called Krosna. [Spelled by Bugala] K-r-o-s-n-o.

C.M.-Okay.

Bugala22022003A-B

E.B.-And, well, my father, he come here with the same idea that everybody has in these times. See what he could make for himself. They were pioneers. You could say, from, from Poland. Come and see what they could see over here and make of themselves. So. Well. Naturally, these people all coming over from Poland. Migrating here. They congregated over here. And they have a neighborhood. And well, like my mother says, they got together. And they're dancing. And well, my father took a liking to her. She to him. And well, they got married.

C.M.-[Laughter]

E.B.-[Laughter]

E.B.-And, I like, I say, my mom was renting from this Irish woman. And then, well she knew why they got married. And she, like most of them, were starting to move out of here. Originally, this neighborhood was more German and Irish people. That were in this area. And they were more wealthier people around here too. But as far as I know they were even planning on having, you may have heard this, but building a university here. That's where we have the names of our streets. University. College. Professor Avenue. Literary and so forth. But, then they turned around. They started when these, I should go, just go on ahead and just say polish people. Ukrainians started coming here. Slovaks. Russians. Greek. Lebanese. Serbian. Few Japanese. Chinese. In other words, when we grow up. Remember when they formed the League of Nations? Well, we used to kid around on the corner. If they wanna see the League of Nations, they should come over here in our neighborhood.

C.M.-[Laughter]

E.B.-Because we got practically every nationality here. Russian and you name it. That is why we come to church this way. We are one of the holiest neighborhoods out. We got sixteen churches in this neighborhood.

C.M. -I want to talk a little more about your parents. Did your parents come through Ellis Island?

E.B.-No, No. They came through Baltimore.

C.M.-Okay, through Baltimore?

E.B.-That's what mom said. That my dad came through Baltimore, and she did also

C.M.-What were their names and can you spell them for me please?

E.B.-My father's name is John. Surname Bugala. My mother name is Anna Mallong. [Spelled by Bugala] M-a-l-l-o-n-g.

C.M.-What languages did they speak?

Bugala22022003A-B

E.B.-Polish.

C.M.-Polish. Do you speak Polish?

E.B.-Oh, [Phrase in Polish possibly meaning, "I speak polish"]

C.M.-[Laughter] I don't.

E.B.-I just said, you want me to say I can speak Polish. No. I can speak Polish pretty fluently.

C.M.-And you learned that from your parents?

E.B.-From the parents and from the neighborhood.

C.M.-So it was important to speak Polish?

E.B.-Because in general we figured this whole block here. You take this storeowner. Then we had a store here. [Eddy Bugala pointed behind him to the corner.] He was Polish. That's Taravenis. We had Mrs. Kuris next store. She had about ten kids. Then we had Krusinski. Then we had Polanski, and well we could go down the line. The fact they were all Polish. And on the other side. There are couple of Polish and Ukrainian people. Russian. And all around the whole neighborhood, whoever you wanted they talk to the old timers, and when I was growing up, I'd be speaking to them like we are talking now. "Eddy I don't understand talking for the Polish."

C.M.-[Laughter] So the neighborhood was divided into blocks? Like each different, the Polish lived on one block--.

E.B.-Not necessarily. They lived. I'm just saying as an example here. They just happened, the majority coming in here where Polish. They were down the street here Ukrainian. Russian on one side or another. They didn't divide themselves. Slovak families were living in the neighborhood too. Matter of fact when it comes to being neighbors why in general, the whole area they didn't divide themselves. Whatever neighborhood, whatever block you lived in, whether you are Russian, Polish, Greek, why you were still a neighbor. There was no dividing what there was this polish group here. But although they did have their own, different clubs. Take the Polish. They had Polonia Hall. That was off of a, College Avenue, near Thurmond Avenue. And they had a couple of clubrooms. And upstairs they had a hall where you could dance. Dance, have dances and weddings and parties. Then a, and when beer was repealed and then put a bar in there, and then we had Polish Library Home. Up on Kennilworth, by Eleventh Street, the Polish library only got their own Polish Library Home. It is the Polish people. The library here didn't have Polish books for them. So they established a little library above the hall. One room where these Polish people could come in and read. And take books out. Polish books. So that's how you got the name Polish Library Home. And that's the same thing. It was built as a hall. Rent out for weddings and other affairs. And upstairs they had for dining. They had like the other ones, beer was repealed, and whiskey they put a little bar in their too to make a little money

Bugala22022003A-B

for the group. But as time went by and people grew up, then the freeway kind of knocked the neighborhood apart. All these people had their homes there. Sixteenth Street, Seventh Street, the Polish, Slovak whatever, they had to move out. They bought them out Clarence Court. Bought them out. They had to go. Where'd they go to? First, they started Brooklyn, Parma, and Brunswick, Lakewood. You name it. Wherever they went to. But otherwise, it was a pretty good community. And like I said we have sixteen different churches. We got, if you want me to name them.

C.M.-Oh, no that's okay. Talk more about the inner belt construction project. What are some of your memories about them?

E.B.-About them building it?

C.M.-Yeah.

E.B.-They wrecked the city. This part of Cleveland. Like I just got through telling you. They took all the people out of the neighborhood. You take St. John Cantius. They build a school. The schools standing there. And last year, the pastor had to close the school because they only have forty children. And before they had a high school there and a regular attendance. Before the freeway came in. St. Augustines. They had a big school, up to eighth grade. They had to shut down. You take Our Lady of Mercy school they had to shut down, and that's because of your freeway coming through here. And now they want to turn around and more, that got me puzzled. They're talking about taking West Fourteenth Street apart, and enlarging the freeway. What are they gonna do now with the churches there. That's supposed to be historical site. They gonna take and knock all those churches down. The churches I'm talking about are Zion's Church. There's Pilgrim Church. There's the Baptist Church that was Episcopalian originally. Then there's St. Augustines. And there's St. Mary's Church. That St. Mary's Church is now a Korean Catholic Church. Then you go up to Fairfield; there's a Greek Church. And you come on this side on the street. You got well, what used to be a museum. And then the Ukrainian National Home. I don't know what's in there now. A restaurant or what. But then there's a couple of homes there. And you got Grace Hospital. Then you got Pelton Apartments, and now it's a nursing home. And then you got Lincoln Park. What are they gonna do, knock that all out? Take this away from us people? Its nuts. Meanwhile, for me I don't care. In way because I don't that much years left. Okay, but how about all these other people that have youngsters in here. What are they gonna do with them; tell them to get the hell out, like they did with everybody else? Now the other thing that was unfair was when they took these homes. Take down Clarence Court. The people, older folks like myself at that time, another time, I was the one who grew up in that time. They were fathers of fellas I went to school with. They were all set to retire, and to live there. And they come there. We're taking your home and giving you five or six thousand dollars. Go buy another home. They have to mortgage a house in Parma or Brooklyn or something. And they don't give them an equal exchange of property. Even one of my friends, when they figured on putting the Jennings Freeway in. He was living on Redman Avenue. He just got established. Married. Got, got about four kids. They took his home, gave him about fifteen thousand and told him go buy a new house. He had to mortgage a new house he bought

Bugala22022003A-B

for about eight thousand dollars more. That's not fair with the freeway coming through like that. They're not being fair with the people who have been established. Looking forward to live their lives out over here. Well, they don't give a damn about us. When they went to build Shaker Heights, they wanted to put the freeway in over there. They said oh, no, you can't do it over there because of all the wealthy people. But now they are in Pepper Pike. So they don't care.

C.M.-What was it like when some of the bridges were out? The Abbey Road Bridge?

E.B.-When that was out?

C.M.-The Clark Road Bridge?

E.B.-That just went out recently. That was a couple years back. The Clark Bridge. You always went from here to Fifty-Fifth Street. That was our mile bridge. The only reason why they took that down is from the steel mills turnaround all the corrosion was too expensive to rebuild it. All the steam, whatever, sulfur did that damage to it. When it came to the Abbey Bridge, it was an old bridge. It had to be. They had to rebuild it. When they got a grant for it. They knocked the bridge down. And for I don't know how many years, anybody who wanted to go down to the market. Well then, they established a route with the Starkweather and Professor bus. They come down here and go up to Twenty-Fifth Street. And Wade Avenue and go up Barber Avenue now. And then go to the market. And then come back. Otherwise, you'd have to downtown take a bus from downtown and then go to Twenty-Fifth Street market. If you want. The market down at, the Sheriff Street Market, they didn't care for that so much. They wanted to go to the one Twenty-Fifth Street. But when it comes to Abbey Bridge. When it was there. They had what we used to call a dinky. That was an all-city transit system. You went to the bridge and they would take you across. At that time if you wanted on a bus, the fare was a penny or two cents. A nickel. [Laugh]

C.M.-[Laugh]

E.B.-We joke about them when we go to League Park. We turnaround and get free tickets to the ballgame. We'd walk all the way to League Park just to save those four pennies. So that we could by a Popsicle. We would get a Popsicle out of it. [Laugh]

C.M.-[Laugh]

E.B.-When it comes to Abbey Bridge that was standing then too. Actually it was over five or eight years ago since they put that, maybe a little more. It was empty vacant then. They ignored. But it was from the government. Gave a loan. There was some other bridge on the eastside. An older bridge that they were supposed to rebuild too. And whoever complained to then that they're not. The city of Cleveland. Whoever was mayor at the time was telling, you take and build the bridges, or the money we gave you, you have to return with interest. It was a couple million bucks. Well, you see, they put the bridge up there and they got another one on the eastside. They built that up too. And they were given either--, you build or return the money.

Bugala22022003A-B

C.M.-Can you tell me a little bit more about League Park?

E.B.-League Park? That's where they used to have the ball club. American League ball play. That was over on the eastside. And we would go over there just because you get a free ticket. In those days, when you got something free you went for it. And we'd hike up there most of the time. After a while they built the stadium up. The stadium, you didn't have to go that far. And then people were. We used to get free tickets. As a matter of fact, from recreation. They turn around, and they would give free tickets. Even before that there was knowing--. Balla Vernon Milk that was up on Carnegie. One of the bigger dairies Cleveland. And they used to give free tickets to all the people to go to the ballgame. We used to go to the stadium to the ballgame, but then like everything else they go up in the price. People go now and the price is ridiculous. Forty dollars to go see a ballgame! Paying these ballplayers millions of dollars. They're nuts! And in the old days, the ball player got paid ten thousand dollars. The highest paid I think was Babe Ruth. Was close to one hundred thousand bucks. And then he was in his prime.

C.M.-Where did you play when you were a child?

E.B.-Right here! On top the hill and down the hill. See originally, you take from Fruit Avenue and Tenth Street. This was farmland. Now when my folks, build. As a matter of fact, my uncle, was a contractor, my mother's brother. When he came here with her and another sister. Well he was a carpenter at home. He saw opportunity to build homes. So he was building houses around here. And this tract of land from Fruit Avenue, if you go, see the new houses. You go back from this house one, two, three, fourth house. That's, these are all the newer homes. This section here. Then you go on that side of Fruit Avenue. Its new sections. Then you go on Auburn. There's about four homes standing there. Three homes now. There was four. What occurred was there were sinking in. And we have to move it. So they moved it here to Branch Avenue and Twelfth Street. From Auburn they went up to Eleventh Street. Then up to Branch. And now the freeway is through there. They took that away too. But they moved the house. It was a real nice home. But it was sinking in. And rather than lose a beautiful home they moved it over there. When it comes to playing, well, like I say, this is farmland. Then they build these homes in here. Then down the hill, the farmers, there was only one farmer, when we were kids. They called it Headlow Farm. He was the last one, way down near, near Clark Field. He was the last one that quit farming in there. And we played down and then we had a creek coming from Eleventh Street. All the waste would go through there. Then some city official got a bright idea, let's cover the sewer. Cover the creek up with sewers. But they never thought of putting drainage in there. Oh we had, I got ahead of myself. We even had marshes after the farmer quit. Cattails, as they called them. The marshes, we used to play down there. We played like we were Tarzan in the jungle. And we played baseball down there. They had hardball. Clark Field had three hardball diamonds. And then we played on top of the hill. Baseball or down the hill. That was our play area. As a matter of fact, well when we grew up, they had things filled up. That one section near Clyde Square, we wanted our own football field. So we all got together. We got a sickle, scythe, and you got lawnmowers, not power mowers, hand mowers. We went down there all together a whole group of us guys. Then a group from Clyde Court, they saw us guys

Bugala22022003A-B

working. "Say what are you guys doing." "We want to build a football field. The city doesn't want to give us a damn thing. So we're gonna make our own." So we made a football field. So these guys turn around and say can we come play and help you guys. The more help you got we liked it. So we built a whole field there. So what do we do for markers and lining? In those days, everybody used to paint their basements with lime. So hey, your father's got some lime left over. You got some left over. Bring it down here. And we made our own. Own boundaries. Ten yards and all. Well we didn't have no official field goal. We had a couple of garbage cans. [Laughter] Well that was good enough.

C.M.-Okay.

E.B.-We used to go to Lincoln Park. Then they started putting in a little more playground equipment and then parallels bars and high bar. Well, we were like all young guys, let's go. And then they had swings and teeter-totters there. And then they had a bandstand, which they used to have bands come and play music there. But then like everything else, it goes to heck and when they stopped having the bands come in, they showed movies for a while. Then they cut that out. Maybe because they had to take the bandstand down because it was falling apart after many years. And they did without it. And then oh I'd say oh, back in fifties. They got, we were always asking for a swimming pool to be put in the back of the bathhouse. As they called it then, Lincoln bath house. That actually was a bathhouse. And then when Franklin D. Roosevelt took over, to work for the people. That's when they took all the bathhouses. St. Clair. Woodland. Clark. And converted then all into what recreation centers. And that was because there were people that were out of work at that time and was right after the Depression when Roosevelt took over. And the WPA. There were many talented people who they were teaching the kids how to tap-dance, ballet, drama, woodcraft, art craft, crafts and you name it. They had certain days they came certain hours. And the program was scheduled. And that's how they started the recreation centers. With Franklin D. Roosevelt. Then after the years went by, they automatically kept them as recreation centers. Originally it was bathhouses because when the people come here like my mother and father, most of these homes didn't have a bath in them. They had an outhouse in the backyard where you did your business. And then you had the honeydew collectors come clean them out. They didn't have no---. If you wanted to take a bath, why mom had a big kettle over there. Put in the hot water. Dad takes a bath first then she got a couple of little ones shame to waste it. Wash the two kids in it. Then you, you're next you get fresh water. So they got the idea to have a bathhouse so. Well for example, I am talking about the one on Starkweather. They had it split up and one side they had the entrance. They had women. Then they had a divider in between. Then this side was for women. Rather for men. Men on this side. Women on that side. And so, they had, on they had, on the main floor they had showers for the women. And downstairs, they had about four stalls. For usually, leave the little girls down there. They had partitions down there. For privacy so if they brought their children. Downstairs for the little kids. Then they the same thing where the men are. They had stalls up there. Partitioned off. And they had about six stalls. Large room where men when in. Then they had, like I was saying for the kids. They four showers in the back room. So the women had their own privacy if the youngsters come by they could take a shower over there. And then upstairs they had a dispensary. As they called it then. Today they call them clinics. It was for mothers to be in, ---

Bugala22022003A-B

to give treatments to the kids and they had a doctor and nurse upstairs. They had an office and an examining room for them. And then like I said, that was the same thing in St. Clair. Same thing in Woodland. Clark Avenue. They call it Clark Recreation now. And they had a bathhouse at Edgewater Park. Many people in the summertime go and change their clothes in there too. It was a nice, beautiful building. In time they knocked that down to.

C.M.-I'd like to ask a couple more questions about your parents. Where did your parents work?

E.B.-My mother. She did work at home most of the time. But then my dad, unfortunately, he died when he was fifty years old. At that time they didn't have medication like they had today. He got pneumonia and he thought he was better and he went out. He got worse and pluralsey set in. He died. He was fifty years old. I was five and a half years old then when he died. He used to work for a Ferry Cap. Ferry Cap used to be over there on Scranton Road. Ferry Cap and Screw Company. And mom would after dad passed away. Well my sisters, the one, she quit school, and got a job working at Higbees. To help support the family. Mom turned around and you have to have money to pay the mortgage off, and then you didn't have welfare like you do today. Matter of fact, she went to the Merrick House, asked them just to give her a hand for three months. They says, "Mrs. Bugala sell your house and then we'll give you help". My mother turned to them and said, "I have nine children. Who's gonna take and rent a home to a woman with nine children?" "Well that's all we can do." My mother got mad and she told them to "kiss my you know what". She said I'll take care of my kids. And she did. My brothers, one of my brothers, two of them, the little older ones and the rest of us managed to go to school. But in our own way, we always had jobs. We used to go down Fourteenth Street, where Mr. Smith was, the Provision Building. And Kili the mover had a son. And that. But we would go up to him and ask, "Can I cut the grass for you Mr. Kili, Mr. Smith?" There was a Dr. Smith. No relation to the Smith---. We'll cut your grass for you my brother and I. I was seven or eight years old then. My brother and I he's ten years old. We went cutting grass and we'd come home with fifty cents or a dollar, you know. That's for us. Mom would say here's a nickel, your good boys, go get some ice cream. Now that's the way we had it then. Mom, what she did was she took in. She did house work. And she also took in laundry. And we had to help her when it came to, she didn't have a washing machine, there was the old scrubber. Then we boys found one washing machine for her. But I remember it had big three pans on it. It would go up and down like that. So mom had that until she could get a better one. We always had to help her when it came to ironing clothes. My sisters turned around. That's Sophia and Amelia. They were the ones that had to help iron clothes. Especially shirts and better stuff. When it came to flat stuff, towels, and you name it, napkins, or whatever. "You do this." And Eddy after he's done, she put the ironing board in the kitchen, newspapers on the floor. Bed sheets and that. You had to iron them too. "Watch you don't burn it." We had to iron too. Cause the girls say hey, what the heck, those two guys sitting over there, are doing nothing. Make them do some of the ironing. And that's how we got along. We managed to make our own living. Everyone pitched in to help out.

C.M.-What church did you go to when you were growing up?

E.B.-St. John Cantius.

Bugala22022003A-B

C.M.-What language was church service spoken in?

E.B.-That was a Polish church. In fact, when they founded that church, I could give you a little history if you want. When they founded St. John's church, it was a barn, a car barn or CTS car barn. And CTS is moving out. To better quarters. So these people got together and they bought this barn. And they built a little church. And then they had classrooms. Until they could get more money built. After several years they got enough money going. Built up the congregation. Then they built what we call the new church. And that church is still standing. I don't recall the year they built it. It could be in the late twenties. But they built that church with my uncle the contractor. He had his fingers in that, cause then they had a lot of nuns then. They needed a home for them. So my uncle donated the home for them. There's a red brick building next to that church. Now, they had the upstairs was the church. And downstairs was classrooms. The basement was for first and second graders way up to the eighth grade. And then as years went on, they got a little richer. And then they built a church that standing there on corner of Professor and College. That's a big large church there. Then, like I say, they had a big congregation. They had about four different masses on a Sunday. If you went there you had to be there on time, or otherwise you were standing in the aisles or in the back of the church. That's the kind of congregation they had at that time. Today if you go in there, their lucky if they get one hundred people. And they only have one mass in Polish and one in English. Sunday and Saturday they have mass. Well the same thing happened at Our Lady of Mercy Church. Our Lady of Mercy Church they bought the church when they came here from another group. They had to go to St. Lundlens. That's off of Woodland Avenue and Twenty Fourth Street. Slovak people. Then they figured why should we be traveling over there, over the bridge to Woodland Avenue to go to church service. They knew it was Slovak to they talked with the bishop. And they bought this place up on Eleventh Street. They built the church there and they got the church over there. It was a wooden one and now they got a new one too. The priest home was built in about the fourties, fourty five, about the fifties. The new church but he same thing. You go there to church. They only had one mass on Sunday or one on Saturday. You go down on Sunday, unless it's a holiday you see, say sixty people in there. He's doing good. And St. Augustines, same way. All the people were moved out.

C.M.-Where did you grocery shop when you were growing up?

E.B.-When it comes to grocery shop, let's put it this way, we had grocery stores on practically every street corner. My mother always used to go over here to Mr. Teravisa and Moleski. And because one check exchanged hands, they sold it. The woman, the last one that got this place, couldn't make a go so she just converted it into living quarters. The store she blocked it out. We had a store here. You go up the corner. There's another thing you probably don't know about, there was a German Hall over around the corner. By the corner of Jefferson, Starkweather and Tenth. The Heights Manacker Hall. Now that burned down in the year 43 or 44. It burned down and they had to take it down. Polish fellow by the name of Maiser. He had a grocery store there. And then there was a hardware store. And Mr. Koontz had the hardware store. Excuse me. There was a Jewish family. Mr. and Mrs. Brickman. They sold wallpaper and paints. Well that's when

Bugala22022003A-B

the building had to be raised. Everybody had to quit the business. And then when you come to grocery stores. You go up to Jefferson and Tremont. There's a grocery store there and one across the street. You go over there on Fruit. You have two grocery stores. Going on Starkweather and Eleventh Street. You have a grocery store that is still standing. Even though it is not a grocery store any more. And then another one on this end. Well on almost every other block, there was a family store. And then we also had before supermarkets come in. You take on Starkweather and Professor there was a Fisher store. Then you go down where the Lincoln Heights Bank is there was a Fisher store there. Then you go on Fourteenth Street here and we had a drug store there. Two nice Jewish fellas had it and they were there for over fifty years. Then we had a Fisher store. One with like a bakery first, then we had a Fisher store, then they expanded the building there and we got a Kroger store there. And then we also had a meat market. And then on this side, we had an A&P store. Then if didn't anything to your satisfaction there, you went up to Twenty-Fifth Street, they had an A&P and Fishers over there. And we also had a man had a meat market over there. And I forget his name a Polish fella, in between University and Fairfield. He was well known for his meats.

C.M. - Okay I want bring it up to a little more recently. What was Tremont like when Carl Stokes was elected Mayor of Cleveland, 1967?

E.B.-Well it--It didn't change that much. Well like I said when your freeway come in. people started going out. The only thing we did start to get more colored people with the projects. Well otherwise why went on living like always. There was no big changes here. He never contributed anything to us people.

C.M.-You spoke favorably of Franklin D. Roosevelt. What other changes in the New Deal affected Tremont?

E.B.-Well when he came why well one of the main changes he made was he had made work for the people. You take people that weren't working and that was all over the country. That was your WPA workers progressives. He turned around when they built. When it comes to streets, they didn't have tar roads. And they had guys come working put the bricks in. On West Fourteenth Street. Wherever they put new streets in. When it come like I said to recreation, he was the one who established the recreation centers and all these unemployed people that are more or less specialists in certain trade/field. Everybody when it came to Roosevelt everybody's proud of that and the changes that he made were naturally. When they repelled liquor why then every other corner got a beer joint. They all start coming up. Well old man Hutchka he cannot that he sold kids beer before they made Prohibition. He was one of the oldest bar owners on the corner. He even had the old swinging doors and then you wanna get a can of beer you took a can over there one of these cans for beer and he'd fill it up. Take it home no bottle just a can. And when it comes to bars. Well, you take well, you probably heard of Dempsey's Oasis. Dempsey first started. There was a fella the name of Giblonski that owned the building couple on the other side of the bathhouse recreation center. There was a movie theatre there at one time called the Royal Theatre. He started a beer joint there and where he had his place established now. Well his son sold it now but, when he opened up, there was a man by the name of Hot Dog John. He sold

Bugala22022003A-B

hot dogs and more or less hamburgers and cakes and pies. And he had the place there and when Dempsey took over, old Hot Dog John had to move on. He went over on Fourteenth Street there and he come back on Starkweather. He was there for at least fifty years, until he retired and went back to Greece. He was a Greek. He went back to Greece. And as a matter of fact, a young lady that bought the business from him, they went to visit him one time. They were Greek too and a couple of nice people and they turned around and they stopped in to see me and they say we saw Bill and he said to say hello to ya and "Eddy, you should see what he's got there. A palace, we come see him, in a beautiful place, whenever he wants anything clap your hands," [Eddy Bugala his claps twice] and a servant comes, "Yes sir what do you want?" He was living like a king over there. But the he made his money over here.

E.B.-When it comes to changes, why the only changes they made were to the recreation center. [Tape stopped to change side]

TAPE 1, SIDE B

E.B.-We got together the whole family and had Christmas Eve dinner. Her brother used to come here with his family. It was so hard for momma when dad passed away. So we just had, we'd get together and as we grew up my brothers got married, they still came here for Christmas Eve. Then when mom passed away, why I thought that's the end of it. I well because grandma's not here. They're not gonna come here but I turn around and three or four of the girls come over and nieces. This was about three months before December. Before Christmas Eve. "Uncle Eddy we come here to ask ya is it okay if we continue caring on with what grandma did." This Christmas Eve gathering. Well I said if you kids want to why not. Glad to hear it. They said the only other reason we want is we want our children to see the togetherness and see their own cousins. Cause we always had a Christmas tree, Santa Claus, and presents everybody brought a present for the kids. And I don't even know who to by one for. And we still get together. I think this Christmas Eve their was about forty-four of them showed up. Forty-five plus a couple friends. It's a house full. [Feedback] One of my brothers was killed in a train accident. That one has two children. And another brother that was two years older than me he drowned. In Lake Erie. But that's something that happens to all sorts it's one of those tragic things. But all the rest of um grew up and had children.

C.M. - What are some of your memories of Tremont during World War II?

E.B.-World War II, then they had what they called air raid warnings. So that we'd be prepared in case of attack. We'd meet over in back of the Lincoln Recreation Center. As the call it now, the bathhouse. We'd meet there and I'd say there's about close to a hundred guys that signed up, from the neighborhood. Then we had are little uniforms, you had your helmet, like in every war. When they had the gas explosion downtown me and one of my buddies, we went down there. We took are helmets with us to see if we could give um some help for saving it. We did help move some people out. One woman was walking down, "I want my man" and she's a black woman her skin was hanging down, she was burnt so badly. She turned around we approached her, gently pardon me ma'am, but we're going to find your man for you, because we heard her

Bugala22022003A-B

say, “my man” and we said, “were going to find your man. My word.” So we took her to a tent to help her out. She didn’t want to go at first but we talked her into it. “Come along with us,” and so we got her to the tent and they were giving her first aid and that and helping out and we. Helped around the rubble looking for other people. Well when it comes to, otherwise, most of the time we had um, naturally all the guys went into the service, so the neighborhood was the same like always. Worried about their boys and daughters that were in the service coming back and that. But there was, otherwise the change was no different. Besides what, you had your rations. [Laugh] You had to worry about that.

C.M.-What were some of the social places you visited while you were growing up?

E.B.-What do you mean for activities around here? Well we used to go down to Our Lady of Mercy Hall. They used to have, the group used to have dances down there. The church, and naturally, the have the fellows. Their parents belonged to the church. Well we, like any young guy wanted to go, to a dance, have a good time, with the girls and that so we’d go down there and dance there. Then take, when it came like, for the bathhouse, it converted to a recreation center. We went there played, played games there. They had basketball court in the backyard, volleyball court and handball you could play. Then soccer wasn’t that popular then. Well we’d go over there and then when we were youngsters then why, like I said, we had these instructors come there. For a while I was taking piano lessons but my brother happened to be a very good piano player. So naturally, I’m up there, “you don’t do it that way.” [Pounds fingers on table suggesting hitting piano keys] “Leo, leave me be!” After a while I got disgusted and I said forget it. He could play. Why you name a tune and you could whistle it while he was up there playing it for you. A couple of friends of my brothers coming, and they were real good educated piano players. So he would be playing, “Well Leo you don’t do it this way”. Showing him different cords and how to play that. But so I gave up on the piano. Well at least I learned how to play “Mother, mother, may I go” [Pounds fingers on table suggesting hitting piano keys]. Well otherwise, I never had, we went roller-skating. That was one of our big things, going roller-skating. There was a rollerade, down there off of Denison. That used to be, a equestrian, where they had horse shows and that. Two brothers took over the place. And they opened a big roller rink. A rollerade there. From there why, we went to a Euclid Gardens and we had Puritas Springs. Wherever there was a roller rink we went skating. Otherwise, we’d go dancing. And otherwise, when it comes to baseball some guys played on a ball team. We played softball most of the time. Hardball. They couldn’t afford to buy no hardball, gloves and that. So we played softball.

C.M.-Where did teenagers go on dates?

E.B.-Pardon?

C.M.-Where did teenagers go on dates?

C.M.-When they were courting?

Bugala22022003A-B

E.B.-We didn't court very much then.

C.M.-No?

E.B.-[Laugh] All they did was go in the park and maybe go to the movie show. That's mainly, they go to the movies and then what. You had the Jennings Theater then was up on Fourteenth and Fairfield. That was taken away by the freeway also. And, then we had the one I mentioned Royal Theater. That was a small one by the bathhouse. And then we had on Twenty Fifth Street, the Marvel Theater. You had Garden Theater by Clark Avenue. And Southern Theater. So take your choice. Whichever one had the better feature, you went to. Otherwise, you just walked in the park with the girls. You didn't have money those days to do stuff, like that. And it was really expensive then. You'd go to a movie it was fifteen, twenty cents. And popcorn cost you a nickel there or a dime. You couldn't afford it. Then as we grew up, I actually worked in the recreation center. Then we had a canteen for the kids. I ran it. They come in. Well we established it on a Tuesday. But they had to be teenagers up to eighteen years old. Eighteen already, I said something to my, I frowned on them there were a little more far advanced. They should be already going with the older people. They come in there and they think that ah. I told them they want to have a canteen, they want to come dancing and that. They would have to come dressed up. Why! You kids come in your jeans and you get mad at this guy for playing around with your girlfriend. Then you're going to have a battle. You come dressed up, you're not gonna fight.

C.M.-(Laugh) Yeah, that's right.

E.B.- That was a strict rule. We had a jeans night. Every so often, you know. You come in your jeans and, um and one of my friends, used to play for Stan Canton. As a matter fact, his father had the grocery store. Originally here. He was a drummer for it. So one day I was sitting out there at the center, on the steps there. And he was going by. "Eddy! I want to give you a go. Ask you a question". I said, "well ask me Ray. If I can't answer it, forget it." "Are you Italian?" No. "He says do you people get a free orchestra here once a week or what?" "Free orchestra? What are you kidding?" "The unions have so much money. They don't want to pay income tax. So they are looking for groups or centers where they can say you got an orchestra." You got maybe four musicians. Well come along too. They don't want to work that night. So you come along to the recreation center say from seven o'clock till eleven o'clock and they play music for us free. The orchestra. And he says that they're doing that. He says I don't know if you could get here but talk to Nagy, the commissioner. Tell 'em that if he wants our orchestra at all his centers free. Certain times there send a band. And they send a band over there, a name band, a polka band. So hey I had Eddie Abbot over and Al Yankovik. A couple of other guys came over. They played. Not the whole band itself. So the guys would say you're not working that day and make a few bucks and I'll go with your band and play. So we'd get the orchestra once a month. And we were doing pretty good cause they liked our kids were dancing so they said they'd come twice a month. And it was on a Friday they'd come. Well, that's when our kids would come in. And they'd have their canteen and then twice a month they'd have a nice dance with an orchestra playing for them. And otherwise, like I said, the activities we had you had basketball. You had clubs. And you had one room, with pottery, clay. Making stuff out of

Bugala22022003A-B

clay. Another one was cartoon man. He come and show you how to make cartoons. Another one with woodcraft and arts and crafts and that and drama. Dancing, ballerina and ballet instructors too. Tap dancing instructors. Whoever wanted to take lessons. Was open to boys or girls. It wasn't just girls only.

C.M.-Okay, I have a couple more questions. These are more about you. Did you marry?

E.B.-No, I love all the women.

C.M.-(Laugh) Have you lived out your whole life in Tremont?

E.B. - Well I told you, I was born on Starkweather. When my uncle built this house I was only about, my mother always said six months old. Well I always my mother it has to be eight months or so. We come here about March and I was born in September so. But I won't argue with her. She says six months. I say okay mom six months.

C.M.- Did your siblings stay in the area or did they move out?

E.B.-Pardon

C.M.-Did your siblings stay in Tremont or did they move out?

E.B.-Well, you take ah, how do I put it, you take my brother Walter, he opened up an insurance agency. He had it up on West Fourteenth Street you know where the Lebonese church is? Maybe you don't know. It's right on the corner of Starkweather and fourteen. There used to be a gas station there. Now there's a school there and a church there. He was right next door to it. He had his home there. And my brother Stanley, and my sister, they lived right here on the corner. My sister, Amelia, well she got married. She moved out. Well her husband was from the eastside. Naturally his folks were there. So she went with him on the eastside. You take, my oldest sister she married, she was the first one to get married. Well, her husband was in East Cleveland and hop scotching here and there. He got a job working in Columbus. So they moved down to Columbus. So from Columbus they went to Chillicothe. Chillicothe back to Columbus. Then they stayed in Columbus. And then take my brother Frank, he lived on West Seventh Street. And Sophie, well Sophie married John Hunt. Well he was a college professor when she married him. But after a while, times where getting better he got into a better business. He worked for Ford at one time and a few other different companies. But that took him, all over the eastern part on the country. He was in New York, Connecticut. He was up in Canada. Then back in Pennsylvania. Then New Jersey. Then they finally moved down to Florida. They lived in Florida for a number of years then they bought and moved up to South Carolina. He died in South Carolina. Then my sister, no children, "Eddy, what am I gonna do? I don't have anybody here. And everybody's, well, we're the last two left anyways from the family." No, well my sister, my sister Celia was still here at that time. She tells me "what am I gonna do?" I says, "Sophie, home is here. There's a bedroom there and there's a bedroom here". My room is mine. You know. (Laughter) "You wanna come with me. Come on. It will be up to you and if you

Bugala22022003A-B

want to be private, on your own, well you can go rent a place somewhere. Otherwise, you're welcome to stay with me." Which she choose to stay with me until she died. Well she stayed with me. Well she died three years ago two. Two years ago. But she was with me from nineteen ninety one, nineteen ninety two, ninety one, ninety two. When she sold her house down in South Carolina and came here.

C.M.-You talked to me before about people who immigrated here and went back, to their native land. Is that just a--.

E.B.-The majority of them that came here stayed here. You take for example, even my mother. Now her family was a large family there. And from what I know and what I have been told, they had pretty large amount of property there but there was about ten in the family. But my mom would share this or that because she was established here and that. When the folks passed away, they willed her an acre of land over there. And her acre of land. And also another sister that was here. So my mother's brother, said what are you gonna do Anna? My mother said hey, if I ever go back to Poland, it's just to say hello and come back home. I'm staying here in America. And he said what are you going to do with the property? She says, well right now I am thinking it over. So like she said, she's not gonna go back there. She still got brothers and sister there. So she talked to one of her Polish lawyer friends. "What can I do?" He says, "Mrs. Bugala if you don't want it put a quit claim on it. Then mail it in there. It's legal over there too. And give it back to the family too. To do what they please with it." It was divided up or what. Take it between themselves. So she said that was a good idea. So she did that. In the meantime, her sister wondered naturally what to do with that. She's talking with mom, and I guess mom was her big sister. So she says what are you going to do. So mom told her, "you're never going to go back there. You don't want to go back. Even if you do it will be just to say hello and come back. Go see the same lawyer. And put a quitclaim to that." And in the meantime, her brother turned around the contractor, "oh, no, no, one of these days, I'm gonna go back there and see what we got there." And he never did. And he was the one that had the money. [Laugh]. He was well to do. My mom turns around and says, "Stanley, who are you kidding? Even if you go back, you're not gonna stay there. What don't you do like I did and put a quitclaim to it? And leave your brothers and sisters to divide it up between them." He never did. He passed away and never went to Poland either. Well maybe he's up there looking at it.

C.M.-Did you ever go back to Poland?

E.B.-No, I missed out on the opportunity. They had a church group going but that time of the year, my buddy and I went to a bowling convention that was, I was a little bit of a bowler and go to the tournaments. So we're going to the convention in a Reno. And he's having a vacation. He's working at, he's making milk and that so I says I want three of us to go together. We went bowling his wife came along just for the trip. So he turned around and we could make this a two week vacation. Let's go talk to the travel agent. See what we can do. We don't have to stay just in Reno maybe we could find something different. So we talked to her and well she says well, "I could give you a boat trip?" I says, "no forget that, I don't want to go on a boat." So she was looking on the thing, she says, "how about going to Hawaii." So I was thinking oh cripe, that

Bugala22022003A-B

probably a couple thousand bucks. At that time, it wasn't but I'm thinking bigger figures, I'm thinking of my friend because he's got six kids. [Laughter]. I don't have none. So John why. She said, "No, no, no, no, no, just a minute, you wanna go to Hawaii. One week, six hundred and fifty dollars." Airfare and that also includes the trip going to Reno. The two weeks. It was six hundred and fifty dollars. You go to Reno, that's paid, you're hotel room over there was paid and you go to Hawaii, and you're airfare and hotel. That's all paid for. Six hundred fifty dollars. That was then. So coming back to where I missed out on it. I come back home and sister said that they threw the church group; they had made arrangements to go. So I come home she says, "Eddy you want to go to Poland." I says, "yeah well when", she says, "two weeks from now." I says, "You shoulda told be that before I went on the trip." I have to get a vaccination, I gotta get a passport. I says, "You don't just do that in two weeks." In two weeks time I don't have the time to get everything set up. So I said, "No we'll have to forget that and go some other time." So that's what I missed out on going to Poland. I did go to Hawaii though. [Laughter]. If she would have mentioned that before I went on the trip I would had made arrangements to go. I, I had the time. I coulda gone on the trip. After two weeks there, because I had a five week vacation.

C.M.-Do you still eat Polish foods?

E.B.-Pardon?

C.M.-Do you eat Polish traditional foods?

E.B.-In general why we eat perogi, parcuse, that sauerkraut to you. Perogi, that's like your potatoes and your dumplings. You probably heard perogi, everybody talks perogi. We eat perogi we have soup, well most all the stuff is well everything isn't polish tradition. Every once and a while you have steak or pork chop. But other wise why, home cooking in general. Now right now why, I have a women staying with me, a housekeeper. She does the cooking. Unless less I want something different that I want then I tell her, "cook that, I want to make this." But no in general I, the food that we eat why it's, ---um-- Well they call stewgelena, more or less is a, like a jello, a gelatin. You make that and then you put some kielbasa in their or pork and you have it like that, it's really real nice gelatin.

C.M.-Why did you stay in Tremont?

E.B. - Well, could you ask for a better place? What did happen, there is nothing wrong with Tremont here. Oh, you have some rowdies which you have every place else. As a matter a fact. I laugh. We're in Parma this one time, this is about ten years back, and these youngsters are growing up. They don't realize that momma and pop, and grandma and grandpa came from here. And they got the paper and maybe they heard some bad doing over here in the neighborhood. "Oh you gotta bad neighborhood you don't wanna live there." I said, "Wait a minute boys, sit down." [Bugala thumps on chair] I said in the mean time I was looking through the Parma paper. Where they show robberies at this place or a robbery at this one. At Parma, people that were robbed throughout the week. They had people's names in their. I said well, "sit down boys." I said, "I was born on the south side, they called it, I said, and we are ups and downs and we had

Bugala22022003A-B

are corner games but we never had big battles like you hear else where. We always see one another but we got into no big fights. We'd play ball with them and baseball or that or other games but we never had what you call gang battles." I says, "When it comes for robberies, you'll find that any place." I said, "When you say our neighborhoods bad, read your paper you dumb kids." I said, "Ask your mother where she come from, your mother come from Thurmond Avenue." I says, "Your grandma she comes from West Fifth Street. Or Sixth Street. And then the other one she come from Literary Road." I said don't tell me this is a bad neighborhood this is, all you people who are over here in Parma are the south side people. You're all over here now. I said oh nakos.

C.M.-Thank you very much.

E.B.-One more thing I got to say why do they call this Tremont area? This was Lincoln Heights.

C.M. -Lincoln Heights?

E.B.-Well to confirm that a Polish group established a bank up on professor. It's Third Federal now. If you look on there thing on the building its Lincoln Heights Savings and Loan. There was about four Polish guys that come in migrate here. As a matter of fact one was the funeral director his name was Myefski, there was a Ratsanofski, Jumba, Byakofski was a baker, Ratsanofski I don't recall what business he was in. These guys were the one's that established the bank. That put the money together. And it was called Lincoln Heights Bank. You got Lincoln Park. You got Lincoln Bathhouse. Lincoln high school. Now they got it some kinda Puerto Rican name to it, I don't know. They knocked the original high school down and made it Lincoln West high on Myers. But originally it was Lincoln high school. This was all Lincoln area, at one time, all of a sudden it's Tremont. Not that I object to its Tremont just what I'm trying to figure out is whoever got the idea to call it Tremont. Not necessarily, their looking at Tremont School, they figure lets call it Tremont because there is a school there. This was always Lincoln. But as far as that goes even Lincoln Park. Now people say, "The city put the park there." The city didn't put the park there. That park was willed to the city of Cleveland with one understanding. That park is to be used as a leisure park. For the people of this area. And if the city does not maintain it. It reverts back to the Pelton family. Because they were the one that willed it. To the city of Cleveland with the understanding that it's to be a leisure park. And that's what it's been ever since. As a matter of fact when they went to put the swimming pool in their. They had to go to the lawyers that were representing this Pelton estate and get permission to put the pool there. If he would have said no we wouldn't have the pool there.

C.M.-Thank you very much.

E.B. - I hope I didn't bore you too much with--.

C.M.-No, not at all--.

[Interview Ends]

Bugala22022003A-B