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Gary Huspaska interview, 15 October 2003

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Interview with Gary Huspaska

Interviewed by Cindy Sprinzl

October 15, 2003

10:10 AM

WestPark Library at W157th and Lorain, Cleveland Ohio

Cindy Sprinzl: Mr. Huspaska the time is 10:10 on Wednesday October 15, 2003. Were at Westpark library on 157th and Lorain and we're here for the Tremont Oral History project. Okay. Can you tell us, tell me your name.

Gary Huspaska: Gary F. Huspaska.

CS: Can you spell it for me?

GH: H-U-S-P-A-S-K-A.

CS: Okay. Um I hope you don't mind if I ask you, uh, what is your ethnic background- -

GH: Well, my Grandmother came from Slovakia, uh, my Grandfather was part Slovakian and Russian on my mothers side. My fathers side mother, grandmother on my mothers, fathers side was, uh, also Slovak and her husband was Bohemian. Mainly I picked up a Slovak background.

CS: Okay. Um, okay uh, where do you live now?

GH: West 191th Street (Complete address withheld).

CS: Okay um, okay um, where did you live when you lived in Tremont?

GH: I grew up, oh uh, 2084 west tenth street between Professor Avenue and University.

CS: Okay, um, when did you, when did you or your family move there, to Tremont?

GH: Uh, I was born there.

CS: You were born there. Okay you don't know when your parents moved there.

GH: My mother was born there.

CS: Oh, okay.

GH: She was married at 30, 35 died 2000, the year 2000 at 93, you, you have to do the math [laughter].

CS: Okay, okay, um

GH: They come over at my, uh, uh, her mother and father came over from the old country from Slovakia and when I don't know. If I had known this I would have brought a sheet my kids did for Holy Name and I've got all the backgrounds in there. I should have brought it.

CS: That's okay, um, okay so you don't, uh, you don't, um. Basically your family and you were always in the neighborhood and, um, so do you know where they came before that, or...

GH: The Countries, I mean the cities?

CS: Yeah

GH: Not really, I have it.

CS: Oh, okay you have it you just, okay. When you grew up in Tremont where did you play?

GH: [Noise of lawnmower in the background-Shut off tape recorder briefly] Well, Lincoln Park was at the corner of west fourteenth and Literary. Still exists as a park [lawnmower noise stops] Tremont schoolyard, which was an elementary school west tenth and University. There was an empty lot, played there.

CS: Okay. Um, do you have any, um, early childhood memories- -

GH: Tons.

CS: Okay, then can you tell us one, or tell me one?

GH: Ohhh, the big blizzard it was Thanksgiving.

CS: Hmm, Do you remember what year that was?

GH: I want to say maybe 1948, uh, approximately, I think I was about ten years old, ten to twelve, forty-eight, fifty. Shut the street down. Shut the whole neighborhood down for a week.

CS: Okay, that must have been fun.

GH: Yeah.

CS: For a young kid.

GH: Yeah it was good, [laughter] no school.

CS: Yeah, yup.

GH: Uh, the vendors up and down the street, horse and buggy, even though there's cars. Uh, not horse and buggy, horse and wagons--

CS: Uhuh.

GH: Sell produce and then there was, we used to laugh about it, called the paper rex man, and he'd come down buying old used stuff, rags and what he would yell was paper rags, but it would sound like paper rex.

CS: Okay.

GH: Once every two weeks milk delivery to the back door, coal delivery into the basement, most places has coal burning fireplaces--

CS: Uhuh.

GH: And stoves, the onset of television probably [deep breath out].

CS: What was that like um, that must have been one person in the neighborhood gets a television—

GH: Yup.

CS: Its—

GH: Yup, then a couple more, a couple more [breathe in]. Our first one was rounded, uh before television listened to radio.

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: My grandmother owned all the property that we lived at.

CS: Okay.

GH: She had it, ah, she had a eight, uh, eight apartment complex building, uh that's gone now, that was torn down. When I was first born I lived in one of those apartment complexes, in fact, you had to go downstairs to take a common shower [breathing in] and there was bathrooms on each floor that four apartments used. Uh, my uncle, one of my mothers brothers lived with his mother, my grandmother in a two family house next door and he got married and moved out and we moved into there, into a ground floor apartment. We stayed there until, uhh...I got drafted in sixty-one [sniff-sniff] and my mother and sister moved out of there and they sold it when my grandmother died. They sold all the property and my mother moved down the street with my sister in an apartment at west tenth but near, nearer Professor, I think it was 1962. Also on this property there was another single family

home in the rear and on the other side on the same lot there was another two family home. So my grandmother was wealthy in property, but that's all [sniff]. When they first came over from the old country they had a bar [sniff] her and her husband owned a bar [coughing] excuse me, ahh, kind of a roadhouse type thing.

CS: Do you remember the name of it?

GH: No. West third [clicking] and Jefferson I believe I think its still standing it still might be a restaurant of some sorts [sniff].

CS: Okay.

GH: They had that for a few years then they got elderly and they sold it. I knew nothing about that.

CS: Okay, you weren't able to go in there and- -

GH: No, no I was born in 1938 so...my mother was born in 1902, 1903.

CS: Okay, um okay, um do you remember any specific story or song from your youth that might have been ethnically based like your grandmother might have taught to you or something like that?

GH: Oh, the whole neighborhood was divided into ethnic pockets and we belonged to an, Our Lady of Mercy Church on west eleventh and Literary, and it was a Slovak Church, and the masses were said in English, and the sermons were said, ahh, Latin yeah, sorry not English, Latin- -

CS: Okay,

GH: And the sermons were said in Slovak in English and Slovak it always took longer then and I remember that and all the songs were, ah, Slovak language songs. I sang in the choir and learned some of them, but back then if you spoke the language of your native country, ahh, you were labeled a D.P.

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: Which was called displaced person

CS: Yeah.

GH: And it wasn't cool to grow up knowing the language you hid it. I never learned the language and I'm sorry for it, now my mother spoke it fluently.

CS: Yeah.

GH: Ahh, but I remember the Slovak songs my grandmother used to sing, couldn't remember them now.

CS: Hmmm.

GH: But all the Churches had their own ethnic, Saint John Cantius was Polish, Greek Church on the corner of west fourteenth and Professor was Greek, ah, Saint Augustine on west fourteenth was Polish, also Saint Theodosius down on west seventh was orthodox Russian, ah, but as far as songs go that was...I probably grew up on You are my Sunshine [sniff].

CS: [laughing] Okay.

GH: As a little kid.

CS: Um, so where did your parents work?

GH: My father drove a, work for my father, originally worked for a factory called Warner and Swazzie, then he went on strike. I don't know exactly, but they went on strike, uhh, the year my sister was born, that would have been [clicking] 1948. And then he went to, off for a while then he went to work, he was, for Pure Oil Corporation, which was a gas, gasoline distributor, drove a gas truck until his death in sixty-one.

CS: So your mom stayed in the home then?

GH: Mom was, stayed in the home until...I'm thinking when I started High School. Maybe, 1952 or fifty-one, then she became a school crossing guard on the corner of Literary and west eleventh--

CS: She--

GH: She stayed with that until she was I think sixty-five maybe, then she got a job with the Welfare Department down in the neighborhood at that time there was a lot of people on welfare.

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: She stayed there until she was about seventy-eight years old.

CS: Wow.

GH: Then she retired [sniff] she was a fixture in the neighborhood.

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: Her name was Marie Tompko, maiden name was Marie Tompko [sniff].

CS: Did, um, all the kids walk to school then, they didn't ride buses then?

GH: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah everybody walked until you turned sixteen, fortunate enough to talk your father into a car- -

CS: Okay, [laughing]

GH: Then you drove the car, I went to Tremont Elementary School which is about three blocks and then Lincoln High School which was probably about a half hour walk or better [sniff] that was located at Scranton and Castle Avenue.

CS: Is it still there, do you know?

GH: It was torn down, I think about 1966 maybe, or sixty-seven, and they erected ahh, elementary school in the same spot and they combined Lincoln with Lincoln West High School making it Lincoln West, which exists now on thirty-five and Fulton something like that.

CS: Okay. Um, did you, do you know if your neighbors worked with your dad in the same factory?

GH: No they didn't

CS: Okay.

GH: They all had different- -

CS: different kind of occupations

GH: Different kinds of occupations. Steel mills, a lot in the steel mills.

CS: Well I guess your neighbors were basically your family then- -

GH: Ahh...

CS: most of them- -

GH: Not really, no all the rest of them, there was one sister, my fathers parents died. I never knew my fathers parents, and he only had one brother. The two brothers which I saw rarely, most of the time was spent around my mothers side. On my mothers side there was seven brothers and one sister, and there was only one brother who lived in the house behind us with his wife and daughter, the rest had moved out to various parts [sniff].

CS: So, um...

GH: Oh, my uncle lived with my grandmother until, I said like I forget what year it was but he married and moved out.

CS: Uh, uh, um, did your parents socialize with the neighbors or did you?

GH: Oh yeah, Oh, yeah, had a lot of parties and it was good it was a good neighborhood.

CS: Uh-huh a lot of neighborhood events or festivals and things like that or...

GH: Um, no the Churches used to have dances and parties and stuff like that [sniff] but not no street parties or anything like that [sniff].

CS: Okay.

GH: Just, a Christmas was a big event- -

CS: In the neighborhood?

GH: In the neighborhood, yeah, everybody celebrated- -

CS: Okay, you went to just like a party or...

GH: No just visiting each others house- -

CS: Just visiting?

GH: Yeah.

CS: Uh-huh. Um, [background noise of people talking in the hallway] so you told me where you went to school, where did you hang out as a teenager?

GH: Merrick House.

CS: Merrick House? Oh, what did you do there?

GH: Basketball.

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: Ah, we had a, back then it was what you called clubs and, uh, from the High School- -

CS: Mhhmn.

GH: [background noise of people talking in the hallway] Ah, group of guys would get together and form a club, group of girls would get together and form a club- -

CS: Mhhmn.

GH: So there was maybe [background noise continues of talking in the hallway], Ah, a local High School, there would be four or five different clubs and you competed against each other for girls- -

CS: [laughing] And for basketball? [laughing] but it was a friendly rivalry?

GH: Yeah,

CS: Type thing?

GH: Yeah, yeah.

CS: Okay, um so where did you begin working? Did you always work...

GH: Uh, graduated January, they had mid term graduations then- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: I graduated in January of fifty-six and I got a job working at...Its called NASA now it was NACA then. National Advisory Council of Aeronautics, at its present site and [laughing] probably one of my big mistakes in life, they were, computers were just, just starting... yeah fifty-six- -

CS: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

GH: And they had me in there teaching me- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: Computers from the ground floor level, and, uh, I worked [tsk] I think it was a ten by ten wind test, ah wind tunnel, and it was just computerizing things a that time, just, just the very beginning, and I decided I wanted to go to college.

CS: Hmmn.

GH: See I wasn't making any money there so I quit and got a job in the post office, figured I'd work in the post office for three months and then go to college, and [long pause]...used, used the money bought a convertible and that was it [laughing].

CS: That was it no college?

GH: I went to night, I went to Fenn College for one year in High School.

CS: Hmmn. You mentioned that you were drafted- -

GH: Yeah, I was drafted in sixty-one right before the Cuba crisis. No, uh, during the Berlin Wall- -

CS: Oh, and um, did you spend a lot of time over there?

GH: I didn't go over there.

CS: Oh, you didn't go over?

GH: I spent, uh, most of the time in Fort Devons Massachusetts. Ah, was in the infantry for awhile and then, ah, during the Cuba crisis, ah, I got transferred to Fort Benning Georgia for the invasion of Cuba- -

CS: Hmnm.

GH: That was as close as I came.

CS: That was kind of scary.

GH: Yes it was, yeah, yeah [laughing] yes it was.

CS: But you were lucky.

GH: Yup, just before I got, I got out of the Army in August sixty-three, and just before I left, they sent a directive around looking for helicopter pilots, and I would have had to go to helicopter, well, I would have had to sign up for another year- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: And go to school for helicopter pilot, I thought seriously about it, but the fact that my father died while I was in the service and my sister was, just at that time fifteen years old, I decided no to do it—

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: Probably the best move of my life- -

CS: Yeah?

GH: Because just, I turned it down, just before I got out, a young man moved into our barracks, he just came back from Vietnam. Nobody at that time new what was happening- -

CS: Uhuh. Mhnn.

GH: And he said they were shooting helicopters out of the sky like flies [sniff]. That probably why they needed helicopter pilots.

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: So that probably- -

CS: A good thing- -

GH: One of my good moves [sniff].

CS: Yeah. Yes, um, let see, what was it like delivering the mail then, uh...

GH: Good

CS: Good?

GH: Yeah, it was, ah, I started out in my old, in my same neighborhood.

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: And, uh, it was a good job, not too much money, but I was young, I didn't get married until I was twenty-seven. I started the Post Office at fifty...well the summer of fifty-six. I worked at NASA, NACA for like four months, something like that- -

CS: Uh-huh. Um, did you get, a long, a big route? I mean was it? Was...

GH: I bounced around a lot. Different routes as a substitute- -

CS: Okay.

GH: But it was, ah, again it was, uh, it was still a lot of ethnic people in the neighborhood, and like at, uh, especially around, uh, Orthodox Christmas and Easter, which was always a week after the regular Christmas and Easter, people would get packages and letters for the old country- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: And I delivered that, uh-huh, yeah, come on in the house and have a drink and have food- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: People respected the mailman at that time [sniff].

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: They still do I guess but...

CS: I, I think I do [laughing] at least my mailman, that I know of, its like you said they switch around a lot.

GH: Yeah, then I got, I got my own route, ah, downtown Cleveland. I carried to Terminal Tower and the Status Building, and then I had a route for about three years on west third street, west sixth, which is now the warehouse district, but then it was all the warehouses and clothing stores.

CS: Clothing stores?

GH: Clothing stores. [long pause] The flats at that time was all commercial

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: And that Flat Iron Café was still there, and that was a dive [sniff, laughing]

CS: Was it? Huh,um, yeah its, um amazing how its changed.

GH: Uh-huh.

CS: I mean now it's the place to be.

GH: Yup, its going down hill now too- -

CS: The Flats? Yeah, I haven't been down there in a couple of years.

GH: That's not what it was, what it was I guess, the upper, is now the...west sixth and west third is the place to be.

CS: Okay, okay, you see I haven't really been down there either, um...

GH: I left, I left down town Post Office and transferred to Rocky River...[long pause, breathing out] about 1974,seventy-five. I transferred to Rocky River and I stayed there until I retired in ninety-three.

CS: Mhmnn. That was quite a difference wasn't it...Rocky River [laughing]

GH: Oh yeah, I was on the street then.

CS: Yeah?

GH: In the winters- -

CS: Driving, I mean did you- -

GH: I walked.

CS: You walked. Still? Wow.

GH: The only thing that saved me was I had an three hundred suite apartment complex—

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: So...

CS: Yeah.

GH: It kept me out a little bit- -

CS: Indoors at least a while?

GH: [sniff]

CS: Um, I hate to bounce back, but do you remember where your parents grocery shopped?

GH: Uh-huh, uh, hmmn, it was on the corner of west eleventh and Professor. Ah, it was a Greek restaurant...Nick, uh...oh boy, I know the two boys because they went to Lincoln High School and they graduated a few years before me and I still see them at a reunion every two years- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: Right now there is a restaurant in the same spot that's, that they had this grocery store- -

CS: Uh-huh there was a restaurant slash grocery there? They- -

GH: They, they don't, it was just- -

CS: Just a grocery store?

GH: Just a grocery store. It was run by Greek...

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: Greek people...for the life of me I cant remember the last name...boy- -

CS: Do you think the family still owns it? Or...

GH: No.

CS: No, its- -

GH: No they sold it in fact the two boys were the founders of Pizza King

CS: [laughing] Really

GH: Yeah, Todd, they had quite a few Pizza Kings around the city at that time and they still do in Berea.

CS: So they did alright then, um, where did you grocery shop...you said you lived in the neighborhood for awhile, um- -

GH: Well, lived with my mother- -

CS: Oh, okay- -

GH: Until 1965- -

CS: Okay- -

GH: Got married in 1965- -

CS: So they're was really no need for you to- -

GH: I never shopped.

CS: Okay [laughing], um

GH: But a good friend of mine owned a place called Cities, his father owned Cindy's Tavern- -

CS: Okay, uh-huh.

GH: Its on the corner of west eleventh and Professor, spent, spent a lot of time in there [sniff].

CS: Okay.

GH: Earlier younger days helping clean up on Sundays and then older on the other side of the bar [sniff].

CS: Hmmnn.

GH: Now its called Kostas

CS: Oh? Is it? Okay.

GH: Its very, very high class expensive restaurant in Tremont.

CS: Yeah, I've heard that.

GH: Hum?

CS: I heard that they were- -

GH: Very

CS: Yeah, um, lets see you said you got married at, when you were twenty-seven?

GH: Uh-huh.

CS: Um, where did you meet your wife?

GH: Uh, actually knew her, she, she went to Saint Michaels Parish on Scranton road. I used to hang out around Saint Pat, Saint Michaels from, oh, when I turned eighteen at fifty-six, fifty-seven.

CS: Uh-huh. Oh, so you knew her?

GH: Till I got drafted in sixty-one I kind of left Our Lady of Mercy Church and I hung around Saint Michaels.

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: And I collected there a lot of my friends were from Saint Michaels and they coached their basketball and baseball teams, and she was with a whole group of people- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: And then when I came home from the service I just kind of met her again, got married in sixty-five [sniff].

CS: Okay, and so she was from the neighborhood also?

GH: Yeah, she was, ah, she was actually born on Auburn Avenue.

CS: Hmn, um, do you remember, of course you remember where you got married

GH: Saint Michaels

CS: At Saint Michaels? Then, um, and the reception was probably there too?

GH: No

CS: No?

GH: The reception was at UAW Hall on...I want to say Madison. Madison near Triscuit. Had to pay a buck fifty a head.

CS: [laughing] My sons getting married and their looking at about eight thousand dollars for a hundred people. So, huh- -

GH: Yup, I went to four of my three, three—

CS: You have three children?

GH: Four.

CS: Four children, boys?

GH: Ah, two boys thirty-seven and thirty-six. Daughter is thirty-three, and the other boy is twenty.

CS: Do any of them live in the neighborhood? In Tremont?

GH: No.

CS: No, um do you, do you try to pass on your Slovenian, any kind of, uh traditions that you have to your children?

GH: I try to.

CS: Uh-huh

GH: But they don't I think, I think that probably my youngest son Anthony is probably the one maybe, that, that carry the traditions on, he's different that the other three- -

CS: UH-huh.

GH: For the fact that he was born, my wife was forty-three and I was forty-four

CS: Wow.

GH: Yeah, Garrett was a senior in High School, David was a junior my daughter was in the eighth grade, so he grew up amongst adults his entire life moreless.

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: Probably helped him, made him as intelligent as he is.

CS: Hmmn. Yup, yeah, um, I know you mentioned that you went to, uh, you spent a lot of time at Church and that was where you got your um background, is that kind of what you do with your children...did with your own- -

GH: Yes.

CS: Did you take them to Slovenian masses and, um, do they speak the language at all? You said you don't- -

GH: No, No.

CS: Um, Okay.

GH: I wish I would of- -

CS: Yeah, I know my dad is from Hungary and we don't know anything- -

GH: Okay, well my wife, her parents are from Italy- -

CS: Okay.

GH: They spoke it of course in the home, the house, she understood it.

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: And she can still understand a little bit, but she never really spoke it either.

CS: Have you visited the neighborhood lately?

GH: I always take a ride through

CS: Do you?

GH: Oh yeah, at least two or three times a year.

CS: Um.

GH: About once a year we have a party down at, ah, my baseball group at University Inn, which is on University overlooking the valley and its been there since I grew up and the first time I was in the place was like five years ago.

CS: Uhuh. Yeah, um, hows it, hows it changed? The neighborhood, have you noticed?

GH: Just with the new people coming in and building condos its changed you have high rise, ah, a lot, alright around 1956-57 maybe a lot of, ah, Spanish Americans...

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: And, uh, the influx later of some black families moving in so its really a cross section of everything down there now- -

CS: Yeah, they just had a Puerto Rican Day parade, or something, or not a parade but a festival they just celebrated there- -

GH: Yeah.

CS: Um, do you, do you like some of these changes? I mean what do you think of those high rises?

GH: Well...

CS: Some nice homes...

GH: Well without the changes the neighborhood probably would have deteriorated totally- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: You had a low income, I mean it was with out a doubt some low income- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: It wasn't at one time it was a median income when I was going to school but the big thing was to make the money in the steel mills and then move our to Parma.

CS: Is that where a lot of them, a lot of people moved to?

GH: Um, I had, after my father, when I came out of the service, my father died in sixty-two, I was in there I couldn't get my mother out of the neighborhood, and she just, she wouldn't go- -

CS: She enjoyed it, she liked it there, just where she- -

GH: She was active, she was active in the Church and active with the welfare and with the clubs down there and just wouldn't go, and when we finally got her out in...I want to say 2000, no probably about 1990. Talked her into going to a, a place called Franciscan

Village- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: Out on Rocky Wood Drive, its not assisted living, but its kind of- -

CS: Yeah.

GH: And she was, uh, there until she broke her, she fell in ninety-eight or ninety seven, and then we had to, moved her into, ah, Mount Alverna nursing home- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: And she died there in 2000, but she never wanted to leave the neighborhood.

CS: Uh, sound like she was a big part of the neighborhood.

GH: Yes she was.

CS: Yeah, um did you, how did you find it growing up in Tremont, with uh, all the different, like you mentioned the Greek, um, Church. Neighbor, um obviously there was Greek people in the neighborhoods, uh, uh, Italians, uh, all the different ethnicities, did you feel like, um that you were still, uh retaining your Slovenian heritage?

GH: Oh yeah, everybody did.

CS: Everybody did?

GH: Everybody kept they're own ethnicity [sniff].

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: Ahh, with the exception of, ah, I had a good friend of mine lived down they street and his parents, his mother was from Ukrainia, he spoke the language fluently- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: And he would never speak it nobody ever spoke it, you knew the language, they wouldn't speak it when they were together with their peers- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: Just wasn't the thing to do then.

CS: Uh, were they all trying to be American?

GH: Yup [laughing} Yes, that's it exactly.

CS: I know that's what my father did, he just wanted to be American, and that's why he didn't teach us, but now the sentiment has changed a little...

GH: yes, it has [sniff].

CS: Um, I just have a couple more questions, um do you remember when the inner belt project was going through?

GH: Yes, I do.

CS: Um, how did that affect either your family or the neighborhood?

GH: It started just when, I think its if I remember right, it started when my, after my grandmother died. She died while I was in the service also- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: And there was a big family argument whether to sell the property or not- -

CS: Okay.

GH: And I was aware of things, that things were happening, but I was in the service and I wasn't around then I , I remember a few bits of advice that I could give was to hold onto the property, being that the inner belt was coming through- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: It could make an impact on the neighborhood- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: And they decided they were going to sell it. Sell the whole thing, maybe it's good because its still standing, nobody ever bought it.

CS: Oh yeah?

GH: Bur they sold it in about, dad, my dad, my father died in sixty-one my grandmother died in sixty-two so they sold it in sixty-two.

CS: Uh, and um, uh, this property that your grandmother owned, I know you said where it was, but was it near the inner belt? Or would it have been- -

GH: Ah, two streets away.

CS: Two streets away

GH: Uh-huh.

CS: So it could have been, it could have been a good thing?

GH: Well at that time- -

CS: But then nobody- -

GH: Some of my mothers brothers thought it was and others didn't, it was a big rift in the family.

CS: Which- -

GH: At the time and they decided to sell it and as it turned out it probably was a good deal to sell it, because like I say its still standing.

CS: Still standing?

GH: I go by and look at it.

CS: Yeah, I.

GH: Ah, the houses around it are still standing and the house the next street over which is west eleventh those houses are still standing, so the inner belt had no impact at all.

CS: Okay, no impact, yeah, uh, I heard it described that it kind of split the neighborhood in half because it just built a street right through a neighborhood that a- -

GH: Yeah.

CS: That used to be- -

GH: Yeah, well there really wasn't much on the other side.

CS: Nothing?

GH: Ah, a movie theater, some houses, some light industry and then there was a bridge that went over the west twenty-fifth street, they had the bridge and that, that was always its own neighborhood over there.

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: That's was mostly Spanish American.

CS: Oh.

GH: On that side of the bridge- -

CS: So it really wasn't the big, uh.

GH: Nope.

CS: Okay.

GH: Nope it didn't do anything to the neighborhood at all.

CS: Okay, um, lets see. I'm going to shut this off for a second [shut off tape recorder].

CS: Um, I'm hoping to write a paper on how ethnically diverse neighborhoods hold onto their, you know individuals hold onto to their own ethnicity was that ever a problem when you were younger.

GH: No, it wasn't a problem because everybody celebrated the holidays there own way, uh.

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: You had some customs that were strange maybe or, uh, different being down in the neighborhood, you had two distinct Christmases the regular one and the Orthodox because of the big influx of Ukrainian Orthodox and Greek Orthodox.

CS: Okay. Uh-huh.

GH: So its like three weeks of each Church, the first Christmas the regular Christmas would be the Catholics and there was very, very few Lutherans, very, I cant remember any Lutheran Churches down there at the time, or anything but, Catholic and Orthodox Churches-
-

CS: Okay.

GH: And there still standing, but each Church had their own customs. Slovaks had their own customs of certain things, uh, Saint John Cantius, the Polish had their own customs, uh, the Greek Orthodox, they would have their Christmas a week afterwards and the Russian Orthodox. My, we were Slovak and we, my we where all practicing, well Catholic and my uncle married a Russian woman and, he married late in life.

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: Yeah, his mother, my grandmother wasn't too happy about it because he changed to Russian Orthodox.

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: He was married at Saint Theodosius Church and, if you remember the movie Dear Hunter?

CS: Yeah.

GH: That Church was portrayed in the Dear Hunter, yeah, he was married in the same ceremony that they had in the Dear Hunter- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: And I remember, a little kid at the time, again ten maybe eight, and I can remember going to the wedding how different it was, things that I knew.

CS: Uh-huh, you knew even when you were young, you could see that it sounds like a lot of the ethnicity and a lot of your culture was practiced in the Churches.

GH: Yes.

CS: And you were really, and so then in the neighborhoods you were just trying to fit in as Americans.

GH: Yeas, uh, we always had a big Christmas party, birthdays, Christmases, a big thing at my grandmothers house, all of her kids would come back with the grandchildren and that, and if you read an article by Dick Feagler...

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: At Christmas he always writes an article and that is exactly what happens at our house too- -

CS: Okay.

GH: He grew up in a, I relate to him he's, ah, he's the same age as me, and a lot of the things he said happened to me growing up- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: That I- -

CS: Uh-huh, he's a Cleveland...

GH: Ah, Columnist.

CS: Yeah, right.

GH: Uh, some people hate him some people love him- -

CS: Yeah.

GH: Ah, a the Orthodox Christmas because of the fact that my uncle married an, a Orthodox Church, the choir would come to my grandmothers house and sing Christmas carols.

CS: Oh, how nice.

GH: Ten to fifteen people would come and they listened, and they sang in Russian- -

CS: They did, did she liked that?

GH: It was kind of neat- -

CS: Yeah.

GH: It was kind of neat of course you had, you had to wine, um a little bit, dine them-

-

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: She always donated some money to them, but- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: Ah- -

CS: You don't see that anymore- -

GH: I think no, no I think it was a, it was just they decided to go Slovak instead of Orthodox otherwise I would have been Orthodox maybe, being the fact that my grandfather died very young, so like, I never knew him- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: He died young I guess he was a very strict Russian Slovak, my grandma just kind of just, kind of moved into the Slovak Catholic end of it- -

CS: Uh-huh. Well, that's very interesting, um, well I cant think of anymore questions I think that you've answered everything that I was going to—

GH: Good.

CS: Thank you for talking with me.

GH: Okay, one other thing that I think was kind of neat- -

CS: Yeah.

GH: I kind of, I laugh at, its right across caddy corner from my house where I grew up there was a bar it was owned, Ukrainians, the daughter was very good friends with my sister and it was a wine and beer place, but they, they sold whiskey- -

CS: Uh-huh.

GH: Illegally, now its called Fat Cats [laughing]

CS: [laughing]

GH: Which is one of the most, I guess high, upscale bars in the neighborhood, and I drive by and I look, and I kind of laugh [laughing]

CS: A the irony of it? [laughing]

GH: Yeah.

CS: Interesting.

GH: That's it [sniff]

CS: Okay, well thank you.

GH: Great.

[end of tape]