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**Nina Gibans** [00:00:01] Well, Bob, thanks so much for allowing us to interview you for the oral history project of Cleveland State University, focusing on Euclid Avenue and its rival, so to speak. But I want to start by just genealogical things. Are you a Clevelander? Were you born here in this...?

**Robert Gaede** [00:00:27] I am indeed a Clevelander and was born here late in 1920. And so next November, if I reach that day, will be my 86th birthday.

**Nina Gibans** [00:00:43] Mm hmm.

**Robert Gaede** [00:00:43] And my parents were not born here in Cleveland. I should say, more accurately, my father was born of German parents. My mother came from Minneapolis, and they met by sheer coincidence across a backyard fence and in Cleveland's Glenville district these days. And from that blossomed the romance that put me on earth. And so that is the way it began. I should point out, too, that my father was an architect. He had his own firm, which he founded in 1915, along with two other architects. The name of the firm was Christian, Schwarzenberg and Gaede Company, which for quite a long time bore that same title and was, back in those World War One days, one of the leading firms of the city in the field of architectural engineering and vice versa. They did a great number of buildings of industrial nature, some of them quite distinctive. And then the firm did survive the Depression with the usual difficulties of many firms, and it lasted until 1970, when by which time all of the original principals had gone. My father, being the first, unfortunately, quite by sudden, in 1933, and then then Mr. Schwarzenberg next, and finally Mr. Christian in 1970. And the firm today goes by the title of, what shall I say, short-term memory loss takes over, but Christian and Klopper. Now, you may remember last summer that that was in the news when both of the principals were victims of a plane crash in Tennessee. And that didn't stop the firm either. Its chief junior executive, Jim Neville, who has been on Shaker's architectural board or other equivalents, is now leading the firm further into the future.

**Nina Gibans** [00:03:22] Jim was very active with the Friends of Shaker Square at one point and with the development of Livingston Park.

**Robert Gaede** [00:03:33] There you are. Yes.

**Nina Gibans** [00:03:35] Right. Now...

**Robert Gaede** [00:03:36] So that's how I started.

**Nina Gibans** [00:03:38] So you really grew up in the architecture world.

**Robert Gaede** [00:03:42] I did. And I was... I think I had some kind of DNA or a gene benefit that favored my interests in that direction anyway. But my father did not hesitate to encourage it. And so I can remember as a little boy that he would take me downtown on Saturdays to visit the office. And I should tell you that the office in those days—and now I'm telling you about the 19, the very late twenties and the very early thirties—the office was located in the 1836 Euclid building. And it's... And then on another period of time and its neighbor, the 1900 Euclid building, which are side by side and still are today facing Cleveland State University. And so he would take me downtown where I could leaf through the latest architectural magazines and look out the windows at the city beyond. And then he would be so good as to take me down the street to the CAC club for lunch. And for a kid who was only 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 years old, this was pretty special.

**Nina Gibans** [00:04:59] Let me ask you, though, in those days what were your favorite buildings as you were growing up?

**Robert Gaede** [00:05:05] Well, I don't know that I knew the buildings well enough to yet identify them and to have selected a favorite one or ones. That kind of decision making and careful analysis of value came a little bit later, I think, in my life, and when I began to easily see which buildings were more perfectly done than others, World War Two interrupted all this, as you might observe. And I also should tell you that I went to school in Cleveland Heights. I grew up on East Overlook Road, if you know that street, but not in the high-rent district down around the lower part of the drop off of Coventry, but in the upper part of the East Overlook up between Cottage Grove and Woodward, if you know those two side streets. And then I went therefore to elementary school at Coventry and junior high school at Boulevard and Heights High School. Of those three, only Heights High School survived, and it survives with considerable alteration. The other two, as far as I remember, they are gone and sadly so because I think those schools in Cleveland Heights were striking pieces of work of the era and could have been upgraded and updated for modern purposes, but were thought to be impossible to alter sufficiently, so they were replaced and... But under a formula that then was completely addicted to the open-plan concept which did not survive.

**Nina Gibans** [00:07:14] Right. There being... I mean, isn't Coventry going undergoing another...

**Robert Gaede** [00:07:21] Another iteration?

**Nina Gibans** [00:07:22] Yes.

**Robert Gaede** [00:07:23] Is that so? [laughs] I'm not surprised to hear that.

**Nina Gibans** [00:07:25] I think it's one of the ones that's closing.

**Robert Gaede** [00:07:27] I see. Okay.

**Nina Gibans** [00:07:29] Well from Heights High, though, what did you do? Where did you go?

**Robert Gaede** [00:07:33] Well, Heights High, I graduated midyear in the early fall of '38 and at which point my now widowed mother was willing to risk me going to college. And in those days, you didn't take these things lightly because, not that we do either at this time, although scholarships would not have been available then anything like that would be today. But she allowed me to express my feelings, and I wanted to go to college out of Cleveland. I wanted to get out of town for college, thinking that it would be a well-rounding influence on my life. And I'm sure it was although college anywhere is that to some extent, to be sure. So I chose the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and began my course of work there, which was to be five years in length. That was interrupted by World War Two, and I was inducted into the service in 1942, and I remained three and a half years in the service in the European Theater. Interestingly enough, it was my engineering background within my architectural overall work that gave me cause, an opportunity, to pursue a totally new direction, and that is meteorology. And I offered myself in that field. If I could be accepted, I would become an air cadet. And that appealed to me. And so I petitioned for that and I got in. And so throughout World War Two and my next time in the service, which was the Korean episode, I was... By this time, I was an officer of the Air Corps, United States air forces. If you may remember, those days, they were separate. They were not separate yet. They were part of the Army, if you will. And so I experienced Europe very much during the war. In fact, I had to do some bomb dodging in London to outlive that era. And ultimately, I was present in Europe, of course, for V-E Day, and a number of visitations to European cities profoundly damaged by the events of the war. Visiting France and Germany both and seeing such devastation that you can hardly imagine it. As in the German city of Darmstadt, for instance, which was burnt to the ground. The whole city was firebombed. I don't know that they ever will find out, you know, what the loss of life was. In any case, but I got back home from all of that and went to, back to University of Michigan to conclude my work, which I did in '45 and '46, at which point I was... Now I had a Bachelor of Architecture, and I came home to Cleveland since I knew no other place [laughs] to come home to, and I put myself on the market place, and who should offer me an opportunity but the grand old firm of Garfield, Harris, Robinson and Schaeffer. [laughs] And in that firm I was sort of befriended by Alexander Robinson moreso than anyone else. And I joined them in '46 to '47, and what made it such a short run was the fact that I got word along the way that there was some thought about expanding work in industrial arts at Kent State University into the possibility of a program in architecture. Well, that hit me, at which point I was about, let me see, I was about twenty-one or -two years of age. That hit me with such excitement that I am I can hardly resist driving down to Kent right away, and which is just about what I did, and let them know of myself and of my interest. All of that occurred, and they decided that I was not a bad risk at all. Maybe I might even be useful. So there was one other person there ahead of me, Joe Morabito. Joe was teaching drafting in those days. And... But the architectural program didn't really have any dimension. It had no profound program with assurance to the students that this was part of an enduring process. And so there were at that time, twenty-two students who had taken the prospect of a future in architecture at Kent State seriously enough to sign in. That's how we started in the fall of '47, I think it was, with a group of twenty-two young men. In those days, it was always men, you know. And we built upon that, and I gave that every bit of energy I had, and I had a lot of energy on those days. Before you know it, I was... Besides the classroom I was active in the city of Kent planning and architectural issues, writing things for the news, touring the Western Reserve and its... And in those days, and it's relatively un, not uncluttered but it was not, it wasn't exhaustively over elaborately developed, you know. The towns were still towns. Rural crossings were still rural crossings. And thanks to the government's wonderful mapping programs of the early 20th century, I was able to study the maps of the whole of the Reserve, and I could... And on those maps the scale was such that actual small, extremely tiny little black squares filled in represented buildings. And you could see at a town just where all the buildings were and whether the town had any sense at all of a of a city plan, town plan if you please. Well, that fascinated me in those days so much that I think I must have traveled to every one of them in my trusty little old black Plymouth coupe. [laughs] And in any case, oh, I recorded a lot of information thereby and came up with some notions on town planning in the Western Reserve, which I should have already written into a book but haven't ever found the time to do so. But in any case I have the raw material. Otherwise, maybe somebody will, if they haven't done it already, may beat me to it because it's an interesting story. Why did those towns with just the raw material of the fields, not even cornfields yet of the Western Reserve to house them, develop into the shapes and forms that they did?

**Nina Gibans** [00:15:40] Right. Name just a few of those towns that you're talking about.

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [00:15:44] Can I interrupt for two seconds? The microphone is very sensitive and I'm getting a lot of the paper rumbling, so...

**Robert Gaede** [00:15:51] Oh. Yes. Okay. Thank you. I would never have known. Okay. Name some of the towns. Well, lacking the map in front of me, I would...

**Nina Gibans** [00:16:04] Just a few.

**Robert Gaede** [00:16:05] Only say that virtually every inhabited place in the Western Reserve today began as an inspiration on the map, in the minds of somebody who settled there, and whether it was a place which was given the special advantage of being designated the county seat like Chardon, or a place which ended up with one of the grandest of civic places in it like Mesopotamia but it remained a small town from thence to now. I think that is on... Is that on 322 East or is that on 87 East? But it's out there in Geauga County—and to my knowledge that's the county it's in—would be two sides on the east side, and of course this same configuration extended all the way over to the end of the Western Reserve, which it houses Norwalk and Huron County. And so there are towns [such] as Medina and smaller places west of there like the delightful little town of Wellington which began life with a concept, Well, shall we have a public square or not? And because sometimes never got one, but when they got one they got it by design, not by circumstance. Someone had to decide at this crossing that we should have a green. Now, not all the greens are rectangular, you know. There were two or three or four that were round. What is that town out in I think it's Trumbull County called Mecca, which I think is one of those. There were towns where the green was trapezoidal, and a number of which were triangular like in Chagrin Falls. And so it turns out that there was this fascinating addiction either to prescribed abstract squares and rectangles or split rectangles or quadruple quartered rectangles, which is like our Public Square. Of course, that was not so designed to begin with; that developed that way when they allowed the two main streets to punch through.

**Nina Gibans** [00:18:54] Talk about that a little bit... [He laughs] Because that's a kernal of Euclid Avenue there.

**Robert Gaede** [00:18:58] Yes, sure.

**Nina Gibans** [00:19:01] Talk about the relationship, perhaps. Is there a relationship and when was that happening? Of course it was happening way before the, what you're talking about, right?

**Robert Gaede** [00:19:13] Okay, the relationship of...

**Nina Gibans** [00:19:15] Of Public Square.

**Robert Gaede** [00:19:16] Well, my knowledge of Public Square, which I'm sure is incomplete... But when Moses Cleaveland and his party, P-A-R-T-Y, meaning his group, laid out the essence of Cleveland as a small community on the east bank of the Cuyahoga River, never imagining ever, that it would grow to the dramatic size that it did, it was enough for them to copy the traditional sense of town center which came from New England along with them, and that was a green, which could be any one of numerous shapes, even as those in Ohio were. But in the Cleveland instance, the shape was essentially a square and was largely just developed and populated up to from the West Side towards developing it all towards the east, but was not really in the heart of the town at the outset at all. It was at the edge of the town. And then some of those survivors of that surveying party probably came back to see how it developed over time and were astonished to see that Cleveland was taking root as a town of commerce with the prospects that looked pretty good. So ultimately, maybe this Public Square might end up really being at the heart. Indeed it was. But it was really something in the way of a kind of a meadow at the outset with no indication that it would house public buildings. But we know it did for a time. The second courthouse, I believe it was, possibly even the first one, which was hardly more than a log building, but the second courthouse, which was a nicely furnished wood frame building, was right on the Square and remained there for quite some time. That was in the southwest quadrant of today's Square and it was in the styling would have been, I would suppose, a somewhat modified Georgian on this slim side of heavy detail. I don't think that the community could afford anything more elaborate at that time.

**Nina Gibans** [00:22:00] I think it's in the the William Summer painting in the Cleveland Public Library. I think that building is in that painting.

**Robert Gaede** [00:22:08] I think you're right. Yes. And then, of course, when that building soon was found to be insufficient for public purposes, the courthouse was built, I hope I'm correct in this respect, as an early Victorian period building on the northwest side of the Square, but not in the Square. And that building lasted for quite some time. That building was right next door to what today is old Illuminating Building is or right on the side of today's new Illuminating Building. And it was a rather powerful piece of Victoriana in masonry.

**Nina Gibans** [00:22:49] Talking about Public Square and maybe moving a little bit forward in time, let's go to your career in architecture, your personal career in architecture. How did you come from Kent and your wanderings around the Western Reserve and obviously your love of history following you...

**Robert Gaede** [00:23:12] Yes.

**Nina Gibans** [00:23:13] Where were you?

**Robert Gaede** [00:23:15] Well, I... I did graduate and I did return to Cleveland. As I say, I was hired by the the Garfield office. And at that time they were out... They were ensconced in an office in the building which stands today at the corner of Euclid Avenue and East Sixth Street. In fact, I think it has been called the Euclid Avenue–East Sixth Street Building for some time, a component in, over time, as part of the NCB group.

**Nina Gibans** [00:23:49] The National City Bank building?

**Robert Gaede** [00:23:50] Yes.

**Nina Gibans** [00:23:51] Is this what you're saying?

**Robert Gaede** [00:23:52] Yes. And... But in those days that was not its name. Not long after that, the office picked up its effects and moved down to what was called the Newman Stern Building on East 12th, if I am correct, I believe, over between Superior on the north and what would that be on the south as a diagonal of that? I don't think it was Vincent, but it was, in any case, it was in that neighborhood, and that building has long since passed away. But that's where I began to learn how to really draw and draft and be... Live the life of an architect, so to speak. And so it was there, then, let's see, how did this intermix with my teaching at Kent? Because I was gone from 1948 to 1952 at Kent State, and part of that time I also spent at City Hall as like two jobs instead of one only and in the world of Jim Lister, if you remember Jim Lister, as an upstart persona interested in city planning as well as in architecture. And so I finally completed work in those several directions around the mid '50s, at which point I said, well, I think I'm—probably prematurely, I shouldn't have said it so quickly—that I'm ready to open my own place and hang up my old shingle, which I did, actually, in July of 1956, which means this, just past July, would be my 50th anniversary. The only thing is I didn't have any work. [laughs] And so not to be surprised, the firm of Garfield, etc., was nice enough to keep me housed and keep me fed, so to speak, the rest of the year while I tried to find some. And I did try to find some and I did find some. And so I didn't really leave them fully until year's end. But officially I hung up my shingle 50 years ago July. But in that ensuing several months, I also found myself a partner. I surveyed myself at the time and decided that I was, well, I was good in certain areas, I was weak in others such as a promotion and the more material and hard-boiled side of architecture. So there was a Herk Visnapuu waiting to be summoned. [laughs] So Herk and I got together late in that year and formed a very loose association, which at times we called Visnapuu and Gaede. Sometimes we called it Gaede and Visnapuu. Defended who got the job first. [laughs] But we worked together, and out of that in time that the earlier title Visnapuu and Gaede took precedence, and we worked with that title from, it was about, say, fifty... Well, '56, if you please, until '74. It was late, very late in '74 that we split up and we went our separate ways. But that's almost eighteen years, and that was pretty good, you know? So that was my first formal architectural partnership, and that was so vital a one that we did well. We, well, first of all, the competition was just a small fraction of what it is nowadays. And so doing well wasn't so hard to do in those days. But we got work. Cleveland was on the bounce after the debacle of the Depression and the hardships of World War Two. Cleveland was recovering itself and finding increased amounts of opportunities and work. And so we shared in that. And not only did that, but we were both so interested in city planning that we opened our own planning service within our firm, which at one time grew to be sixteen people, and we had twenty-four in architecture so that made forty, doesn't it? That was our peak size. It's been all, well, less than that ever since. In any case, so... But that meant that we were working in multiple towns and cities doing various and sundry city planning assignments as well as designing buildings. And, you know, in 1959 when we were only three years or so in practice, we had an opportunity to do a little church project for Pilgrim Church on the Near West Side. Pilgrim Congregational. Still there today and still one of the citadels of Cleveland's ecclesiastical buildings.

**Nina Gibans** [00:29:31] It's one of the most interesting designs.

**Robert Gaede** [00:29:32] Yes. So over time, we did... We remodeled the kitchen, something as basic as all that. And from that began artwork in churches, which just spun off like it was meant to be. And over the next 50 years or so, well, 47 years from that point forward until today and still today, we have built up a list of approximately 100 church clients, and some of them invited us back four or five or six or seven times to do new work on this or that or the next thing, either remodeling or a brand-new building or whatever. So we had probably about 120 assignments from the hundred or so clients, and we have a lot of a log of that which I'm trying to refine right now. And one of my projects of retirement, which I'm very interested in and enthused about, is what I call the Early Church Work Reconnect, or ECWR. And what this is, is to look at the log and try to correct all of its shortcomings because it wasn't perfectly correct in all cases. But to go back and see if the church that was claimed by us to be either remodeled or done from scratch is still there. What is its condition? Is it surviving? Does it look well? Am I proud of it yet or not? Has someone else came along and altered my work altogether already.? [laughs] And so I'm into that right now as we speak. That's one of my projects to keep my mind active in retirement.

**Nina Gibans** [00:31:26] So you've named, obviously, one of your specialties, but you really are the start of a lot of our restoration.

**Robert Gaede** [00:31:41] Well, I think that is correct because when I was became clear-headed about it pretty much, the year was about 1950. That's when I got my license. I was... I passed the state board first time in 1950, and that accounts for my relatively low number of 1777. And the at that time, historic preservation was so new to the field of architecture that most architects couldn't spell it. And so... And of course, we found also that most architecture, architects couldn't be interested. So that gave me full opportunity to the playing field. I could kick field goals all day if I wanted to. And, and I tried to and I did. And the competition then was so slight that I had more opportunities in that growing and burgeoning field than I ever expected to. And I loved it, and I still do. But today every other, every architect virtually claims the same thing. And so I find that being a historic preservationist today is no longer so remarkable and so unique. It's all just part of the baggage of what it's supposed to have. And of course, saying that is evidence of the success of the movement. And what I was interested in then immensely was that the movement movement to succeed and not die. And it didn't die. It just... It just expanded and gained strength ever since to now and will continue to do so.

**Nina Gibans** [00:33:38] One of the aspects of Euclid Avenue is the preservation aspect and the future aspect and what should always remain and which has been revived very nicely, and those things that perhaps are missing because we didn't preserve them. So let's talk a little bit about Euclid Avenue in that respect.

**Robert Gaede** [00:34:07] Well, let me start that conversation with the remembrance and the recognition that back in the few years right after World War Two, being kind of cognizant of and conscious of cities and city development in itself was a new area of activity. We were not really, as a nation, certainly that particularly interested in shapes and forms of cities. Townscape was an unknown word to us. If anything, I think the English developed that way, that phrase, and we began to stand back and perhaps take cognizance of what were the elements that made our city, our city, and made it a place. And Main Street so comes to mind as the chief of these perhaps. In some cases, perhaps it was Courthouse Square or some other cases, it might be some particularly notable structure at the waterfront or elsewhere. But in Cleveland's case, Euclid Avenue was synonymous in the minds, I think, of most Clevelanders with downtown. It was like no use mentioning any other street. It was Euclid Avenue. And Superior, as we know has its good share of splendid buildings and passes right through the center of our Square, as does Ontario. But it never was the commercial dash retail and or even the office heart of the city. It began to gain in those respects for a time, to be sure, but Euclid Avenue held forth as being the embodiment of a vigorous and an enduring city. And the fact that Euclid Avenue stretched way out of sight somewhere to the east, first of all, passing through a semi-industrial zone which minimized Euclid Avenue's right to claim architectural uniqueness or a special aspect. But it built that up again once it reached University Circle, where the cluster of cultural institutions was already either in place or being built year by year as it still is being, so Euclid Avenue did disconnect—and does connect—the city's two nodes of greatest consequence, downtown and University Circle. There's nothing quite equal to that on the West or South Side. And then from of course University Circle, Euclid Avenue continued all the way to Buffalo, New York, as the main connector. That reminds us of the fact that why is Cleveland what it is and where it is, is substantially because of its wonderful location on the south shore of Lake Erie that picks up the main thrust of East-West traffic, be it rail, bus, or automotive. And it also, thanks to the lake itself, it becomes part of the international realm of shipping. And so it's no wonder Cleveland gained rapidly in population, particularly also when just south of Cleveland, it turns out that we had a combination of the natural resources, the product of the earth itself, the iron... The iron was not here so much. It was at the other end of the lake. But the lake connected us to the iron in Minnesota and Wisconsin and up in that area. But we had also the coke opportunities to create that and the waterpower, and we had some towns of the nature of Youngstown, and of course, the center of all this was Pittsburgh, although Cleveland must have been equally considered with them. But so I'm saying that—and a long ways around, and I'm given to longwindednes, Emma, so forgive me—the importance of Euclid Avenue was not superficial. It wasn't designated. It was a natural happening. And so when the surveyors allowed this diagonal roadway at to Buffalo to enter the Public Square from the corner, which might have looked as by some to have been kind of an aberration, it wasn't anything of the kind. It was a perfect connection. And so I, as a child, grew to know downtown as largely... And I'm gonna interrupt to say that the Terminal Tower was built over a long period of time, as you know. It was concluded in 1930. And I was... At that point I was nine or ten years old, but I was aware of this happening and of the activity that surrounded it because the towers stimulated a whole lot of subsidiary buildings, like those big buildings behind it and the department stores and whatever. So when my mother took me to the shop that's Higbee's or preferably at Halle's—that was her favorite [laughs]—I became very mindful of the fact that Euclid Avenue connected these essential places of desired goods and purchases. And so as a kid, I got used to walking the avenue. And then when the entertainment industry moved into the scene and developed the theaters of Cleveland, and what a job they did there that we had not only the Playhouse Square confluence of five, I think it is, substantial theaters, some of them very substantial, all of them, although with the exception of some later movie houses only, existing today as part of Playhouse Square Inc. or whatever they call it, but also the biggest of them all, we all remember, it was the Hippodrome, which is [on] Euclid Avenue, just short of Ninnth Street. Now, I must admit that as a kid, my parents never took me much to the Hippodrome, for whatever the reason, I don't know. But we also went to Euclid Avenue theaters at University Circle. The Keith's 105th Street Theater, which was a giant theater of the grand 1928 style period, was one of the places that we rather frequented. But that whole district out there had, and all of them around Euclid Avenue. The Park, for instance, comes to mind. And the Alhambra is another one. The only one of those, ones of those, if any, existing today, I can't even recite what's still, of all the University Circle theaters, of which there must have been six, exist today, and I don't immediately know that any of them do. But be that as it may, the point is that they were on Euclid Avenue. They weren't on Broadway, they weren't on Detroit Avenue, they weren't on Kinsman Road, although there were theaters on all of those. I might tell you that the Facade, the publication of the Restoration Society, back in the '80s, I think, did a series of the history of Cleveland theaters. Largely, it was the work of Ben Kotowski, who was enthralled by this subject, and probably still is, but then with some input from me, did in sequentially like a wait till the next session, we'll talk about this group of theaters, we covered perhaps 75, maybe, of the theaters of Cleveland that were extant at one time or another, and all but maybe six or eight of them had already been lost. But the fact is and those accounts of Facade from sometime around, let's say about 1980 or '83 or -4, are a fascinating story about the theater life of Cleveland, especially when it turned from motion pictures... I guess they were without sound at first, weren't they? They had... They had labels that ran through the bottom.

**Nina Gibans** [00:44:13] The ones that went back that far.

**Robert Gaede** [00:44:16] Yes. And they had a piano up front that gave you the proper sense of excitement. And anyway, so there's an interesting story to be seen there if you want to read from those pages. So where are we now? We're on Euclid Avenue. All this while, it was the street that captured not only the the life and excitement of Cleveland, but also much of its architecture as well. Not all. We have to concede that Superior sort of did well in that regard, too, and to a lesser degree Saint Clair and Ontario. But certainly Euclid Avenue was prominent. Even East Ninth Street, which figures in all of this, it was not until the new-style skyscrapers of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, East Ninth Street didn't count as much, but then it got a good dose of those, as you know, and is today one of the handsomer streets for big buildings in downtown.

**Nina Gibans** [00:45:25] What are some of your very favorite buildings?

**Robert Gaede** [00:45:29] My very, very...

**Nina Gibans** [00:45:31] Favorite buildings.

**Robert Gaede** [00:45:31] Favorite buildings? Let me see if I could find some answer to that in my notes without crinkling these too much. I thought about that issue, and I have so many favorite buildings, you know, that for me to recite one is unfair to the others because I can't remember it. But I will tell you this, that back there in the '60s, especially, and '70s, when we began to be much more self-conscious about our building stock and our history of buildings, I became very enamored of terra cotta as a building material, and I helped found a short-lived organization known as the Terra Cotta Conservation Group, TCCG. But you may remember because you attended some of its meetings, but it had a decent life there for a while, but it faded out, as so many things have, when the architects preferred to make money back at their store rather than indulge themselves in intellectual frivolities. And so terra-cotta buildings in Cleveland were strongl stated, and are all favorites of mine. The B.F. Keith Building that I was in for quite a long time, from 1960 to 1975, and other buildings of that nature, such as the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, B. of L. E. Building, which of course we lost that to the Downtown Marriott, although we have four or five pieces of it in our office as remnants, and the May Company with its facade on Public Square, which is just superb. And those just are a few of the number of them. The other buildings that might be favorite of mine, I would look to not just tall buildings, although I do love tall buildings, I must admit, but I like tall buildings, especially, I should say, that aren't what I call Buck's buildings, which are the same look on all sides. Each floor is the same as the one above or below, and they go up to 20, 30, 40 stories and then there's cut off as though by scissors. That style of building—I'm not sure we've ever given it a nickname—but that style of building is not as prevalent in Cleveland at all as it is in some cities, fortunately, I think. But the buildings that I like the most are what I call the vertical setback buildings of the late '20s, early '30ss. They could be dark terra cotta too, but they didn't have to be. Limestone will do quite well, [laughs] and a combination of those things with brick. A good example of that style of building is the old, older now, telephone building on Huron Road, 75 Huron Road. That building by, oh, is that not, other than Weeks and Weeks? I have to look at my guidebook to see to be sure.

**Nina Gibans** [00:49:14] I should know.

**Robert Gaede** [00:49:15] Yes, I can't remember immediately, but that building is.... Now, I must admit, they have adorned the top of that building with every device known to modern technological alterations. And so the building is beginning to be disfigured seriously at the top. But other than that, that building is in good shape.

**Nina Gibans** [00:49:37] Do you have any suggestions about that kind of thing? Because it is true... Well, there are two things that I hope you'll talk about a little bit. One is, take the May Company building. What in your mind would be an ideal future May Company building use? Number two, the technological things that really just, really disfigure the tops of so many of the older buildings, because where else are you going to put those things?

**Robert Gaede** [00:50:16] Yes. Well, what we're doing is we're conceding to new mechanical and technological demands that were never foreseen at the time of the building's construction. Can you imagine if left to the unprincipled notions of some company is what some of the grand obelisks of Europe and Africa would look like today if festooned with the same material or, what, the Arc de Triomphe would be, covered with this garbage? [laughs] And so we leave it to the strength of the French Republic to resist. [laughs]

**Nina Gibans** [00:51:11] And we need to do some resisting or some thinking about how to.

**Robert Gaede** [00:51:17] Yes. And now, of course, the latest is not just the architectural impact of the mechanical devices, but now we must also label a building with the symbol of its entrepreneur. The KeyBank building, which is one of my favorite buildings, if you want to talk about a favorite building, I like Pelli's piece. KeyBank building in Cleveland, I think, is one of his best pieces. And I find it much better to my taste than its equivalent building in Charlotte, North Carolina, which is just about the same size. He also has one in Minneapolis. But I think the Cleveland building is just superb, not only its setting, but also its daring height. And its, I might say, almost clean lines and subtle, soft setbacks. And then finally, the crown of stainless steel or whatever that is up there, which is not frivolous and corny. It is a serious sculptural piece. And all those together, I think, make that building quite a marvelous piece. So I should tell you, I put that among my favorites of all sorts. But this vertical setback style, as I've tried to picture, as evidenced by the old telephone building, is a tower-style building. Walker and Weeks, for instance, which was Cleveland's leading firm there for a time, for quite a long time, was well known for its banks. It did banks throughout the Middle West, and one of them is in Fort Wayne, Indiana. That bank, which was known as the Lincoln National Bank, built about 1925 or '6 or '7. It's not extremely high. It's only 23 floors. But in those days that was far and away the tallest building in Fort Wayne and remained so for quite a while until it was superseded by two much newer buildings than that. But that building is so graceful. It's much more delicate even than our telephone building. But it's that sort of tower that appeals to me a great deal, often developed in Art Deco detailing, which is true, I think in the Fort Wayne incident. That same firm did the tallest building in Lima, Ohio. Again, not a huge building, 13 floors, I believe, but its building is in limestone. And if there's a more lovely material of a long lasting quality, I don't know what it is. Limestone is my bet for nature's own product [laughs]. And in any case, but the bank building in Lima, I think, is just a lovely piece of this nature.

**Nina Gibans** [00:54:39] Well... Maybe we should discuss some mistakes we've made.

**Robert Gaede** [00:54:46] Some what?

**Nina Gibans** [00:54:46] Mistakes we've made on Euclid Avenue.

**Robert Gaede** [00:54:49] Yes. Well, I guess when I thought, saw that question of mistakes, I was thinking of mistakes throughout the city. But your list of questions... Oh, I like the one about what is Cleveland evolving into? May I go back to that?

**Nina Gibans** [00:55:08] Sure.

**Robert Gaede** [00:55:09] Okay. It's evident all the while that Cleveland is very much in change. The latest population figures are quite disturbing. Not that they are down. We knew they would be down, but they are down as much as they are. We didn't expect, I think, that this downness would still be so compelling, so serious. What is that saying to us? One response to the Plain Dealer's articles in the letters to the editor the other day hit it on the nail when they said, Look, guys, Cleveland is evolving into a lot smaller city than it used to be. And obviously it is. And rather than being so embarrassed and uptight about it as we have been, I think we should take this phenomenon gracefully and combat it in the sense of ever more strenuously telling our many advantages and our achievements, both cultural, social, architectural. So just like Buffalo today, which is in tougher straits than Cleveland, is making architecture one of its chief purposes of existing. I read the Buffalo News quite a bit in the summertime up at Lake Chautauqua—interesting newspaper, I should say—and they have advertisements, stories, events, and whatever built around the built Buffalo scene and are counting on that to arrest the fall of the city in population and prestige but also to reengage the citizenry in a new sense of pride and purpose that they may not have ever really expected to be involved in at all before, but now are involved in it because of sheer purposes of survival.

**Nina Gibans** [00:57:32] Right. What have we forgotten?

**Robert Gaede** [00:57:34] Well, what have we forgotten? Let's see. We were talking about mistakes there for a moment. Should have... And what did we sacrifice? We know, as you said, as you said already, that we have torn down some buildings and leveled some sites that had already had achieved a consequence and significance for their excellence. What buildings? What sites? I'm trying to think of just which ones I would list there as leaders in this particular. They are... They exist. And in fact city hall right now is dealing with the issues of the nurses dormitory next door to the Allen Memorial Library, which I fear is going to be an example of concession to the materialist needs and purposes of the hospital and will be turned into... That site is already programmed to be turned into a parking garage. Can you see a parking garage uptight against Severance Hall across the street from... I mean uptight against Allen Memorial Library across the street from Severance Hall and Thwing Student Center? I can't. Also, one other option for that site is a high-rise building. That is just as objectionable. I don't care what its purpose is. It's not equal to the repose that that conservative five or six story building that's there today and the green sward in front of it facing the avenue and a neighbor to Allen and therefore our neighbor to the other buildings that are around.

**Nina Gibans** [00:59:34] Scale.

**Robert Gaede** [00:59:34] You see what I mean?

**Nina Gibans** [00:59:35] Scale.

**Robert Gaede** [00:59:36] There you are. Scale and character and texture. And so it's things like that that we do and then we forget that we do them. So to remind ourselves, what did we do wrong back in 1942 or '65 or '85 or whatever it is, we tend to forget, but we do have other opportunities right now. That is, what to do with the remains of our old department stores, because they're not fully assigned, as we know. And some of those questions are so tough to answer that I don't know that anybody has got their finger on them exactly. But it's not to say that there still is not an answer. We just have to... We have to worry it out farther. And that gives rise to your interesting question. What do we do to better achieve just design objectives? And I am, you know, we're all aware of the fact that the city has a city planning division, department. It has an architectural board of review. It has a zoning body, as do most of the suburbs, but not all of the suburbs. In any case, what can be done to better achieve design objectives? And with that kind of an apparatus already in place and being in place now for 30, 40, 50 years, one would say, well, have we done all we could do? And I want to have to answer, no, we haven't done all we could do. But what are design objectives that have such a compelling embrace of individual citizens that they would work hard and willingly sacrifice to see them be carried forward? And unfortunately, there I run into a cloud because I fear that the whole concept of design objectives as you know it, as Jim knows it, as I know it, as Jean knows it, are sufficiently abstruse to most Clevelanders that they could not answer that question in a, today at least, in a sensible or a positive way. That is to say, if you read as you do, I'm sure, every day, the letters to the editor there is the widest range there of feeling that is so nonsensical most of the time that I have to fear, even though I know the paper edits what gets printed and what doesn't get printed, but nonetheless, I fear that to develop a spectrum of design objectives on the part of the people as a group, the people of Cleveland right now as a group would be very, very difficult. I just don't think that those objectives would find a base of support of any consequence and, too, even a base of understanding of any consequence.

**Nina Gibans** [01:03:12] Maybe you Euclid Avenue represents one of the best, though, of a unified plan.

**Robert Gaede** [01:03:21] Well, I think we're going to have to, I feel, permit me to be a little bit tentative about this, we're going to have to see how the plan is in its felt stage. Right now it's all been the abstraction of drawings and propositions, but we haven't yet to experience it. And only then can we test whether or not it was a good idea. [laughs]

**Nina Gibans** [01:03:51] Right. Isn't that so? Is there anything else that we've missed, Emma?

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:04:00] I just had a couple of questions. And if you want to continue talking, facing the direction you have been because I'm getting great sound, just kind of going back to your childhood, sitting in your father's firm and you mentioned looking out, looking out the window at the city. What did the city look like from the vantage point?

**Robert Gaede** [01:04:22] What would you just say then?

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:04:24] What did the city look like from that vantage point?

**Robert Gaede** [01:04:25] Oh, I didn't bring to our table right now the, one of the pockets of Cleveland views that I have. I have a townscape collection upstairs that is breathtaking. And it stretches all the way from San Diego to Portland, Maine, and little towns as well as big, big towns. There's some international towns as well, but it's mostly USA. The Cleveland part of that is the biggest, by all means. I have three fat file folders, each one containing perhaps a hundred images or two hundred images or whatever it is of Cleveland drawn quite leisurely from any source that I could lay my hands on at the time I saw it. That did not mean stealing it from the library. But if I found an ad in a magazine lying idly someplace and nobody was reading it any longer, I would take that out and add it to my collection. Postcards? Absolutely. I didn't... The Walter Leedy got a jump there that no one's gonna surpass, [laughs] and good for him. So I wish I had done more with postcards, but I didn't. However, they're very vital in all this. But my townscape pictures of Cleveland reveal what the city looked like from the twenties to now from every angle of the center city, let's say. I didn't apply my attention to say that the general west side or the general east side of the same degree. But downtown I have pictures, some of them from the old rotogravure section of the P.D. Back there when they printed the Sunday edition and even called it the rotogravure section, and everything was printed in this beautiful chocolate color. That's little bit too dark. It isn't that dark. Bronze would be a better word for it? You know what I mean, Emma? I've got some pictures and they don't seem to age. Some of them are 40 years, 45, 50 years ago.

**Nina Gibans** [01:06:43] It's because the paper quality was...

**Robert Gaede** [01:06:46] In any case, those pictures show our city, often from the air, sometimes from the street, sometimes with high buildings. They show our city as it was. You'll see buildings where long since forgotten. You think the downtown parking lots were always so? Oh, no. On this corner was a six-story building, on that corner was an eight-story building. And here we have the pictures of them. I would see those buildings as they were then, but little did I know that they wouldn't be there that long. And so even today, you know, we forget the names of these buildings that I can remember the Newman Stern Building, but I couldn't remember exactly where it was. It's something I think was on East 12th Street close to, I think it was north of Superior towards Saint Clair on East 12th Street. That was a six-story building and a brick or yellowish brick, if I may remember, and a big building at that. And so that neighborhood there was identified by structures like that, a parking garage here and there, and a large hotel which was called the Manger. And that was not the first name. The first name was the Allerton. That was built as the Hotel Allerton. I remember working with the firm that I told you about, and at the end of the day, going over to the rooftop of...

**Nina Gibans** [01:08:14] Of the Allerton.

**Robert Gaede** [01:08:17] Deck of the Allerton, later the Manger, and having a drink up there [laughs] as a young twenty-year-old. And I thought, you know, that was... That made me like a dashing piece of urbanity to do something like that. And but as... That building has long since passed away, and so downtown has its numerous examples of of the the life and the death of American buildings.

**Nina Gibans** [01:08:53] Well, I think of the Bond building, the Bond's store building.

**Robert Gaede** [01:08:56] Oh, yes, I know the building. You mean so well. And the Bond building, as much as we admired its late modernism or maybe its early modernism, you might say, in a way, but you know, the Bond building itself was a destroyer. It destroyed the building that preceded it, the name of which is suddenly eluding me. But it was a building of prominence, much taller, with a slender minaret-like spire at the corner, which was a feature of the corner of Ninth Street and Euclid Avenue.

**Nina Gibans** [01:09:33] Well, so maybe that is one characterization of a mistake.

**Robert Gaede** [01:09:39] Well, you might say in this case that the successor building was respected, at least in certain circles, as a quality building even though the building that was taken down for it, the Hickox Building, that was its name, H-I-C-K-O-X. About eight or nine floors, but with that beautiful, slender minaret corner. I'll find a picture of that someplace.

**Nina Gibans** [01:10:12] I would like to see that.

**Robert Gaede** [01:10:14] Yes. [crosstalk] So anyway, our mistakes, we've been on and off of this. And just before you came today, if you'll allow me to recite a little bit of my short, little terse notes here. Under "Mistakes," I said we copied, in the middle 20th century and later, we copied the crowd. We copied the crowd. Urban removal, urban renewal and replacement with barracks-type towns where the texture of the town removed was perhaps deficient in certain ways, but at least it had texture. The Urban Renewal program brought us uniformity and a bleak, almost military look. And, well, in Cleveland, it wasn't nearly as serious as it was, of all places in Saint Louis, it was horrific, and Chicago, equally bad. And the loss of public money and the fact that these buildings lasted sometimes only 25 or 30 years before they were pulled down is something that has to be recognized. And that wasn't as bad... It wasn't as bad here as it was in those cities and others. Another thing in the way of mistakes was the failure to celebrate neighborhoods per se and develop reasons for pride. Back in the '60s and '70s, either way, neighborhoods were simply neighborhoods. And there were... You would've hought of them as being, Oh, that's Polish. Or that's poor. Or that's industrial. Or that's whatever it is. You didn't think of them as being pieces of the city, which all together created a marvelous jigsaw puzzle. And because each of those neighborhoods, in spite of its obvious association, that's the word I wanted, with either a ethnic or religious or work-day ethnic group, whatever they might be, each of those neighborhoods had architectural interest that most suburbanites failed to even know about. And, you know, a Little Italy was always in my childhood it was called the Italian town. We didn't think of it as being, even potential of being, one of the most celebrated entertainment places in the city filled with the drinking restaurants and small shops as it is today. Holy Rosary Church still there, which is the citadel of that neighborhood, is a building of some architectural interest. It should be so celebrated, and to some extent it is, I guess. Another thing I thought under Mistakes was the... The beginning way back and extending to our present moment, the quality of our educational system. Granted that that is almost a... It almost seems to be an impossible issue to correct. But in any case, it's an issue that needed serious self-consciousness addressed to it from the beginning. And I don't think I've got it. I may be wrong there, and I'll have to be, I hope to be, challenged on that. We also constantly... We also... Permit me to look through my notes closely here. Oh, we did not constantly reinforce, those of us who had a chance to really think about this and act upon this, the issue of self-respect and pride in specific neighborhoods that was inherent in them, but that the people in the neighborhood did not have a notion that outsiders would feel that way. But we just didn't do that, I don't believe. We also... Pardon me, please. Oh, yes. We also have to acknowledge that Cleveland's diminishment, if you will, is not just due to our mistakes and misfortunes of that nature, because certainly many Clevelanders have tried valiantly to do well by the city over the years, but our city, like many others, the Toledos, most Pennsylvania cities. [phone rings] Sorry about that. Jean will catch it in a moment. She got it. That Cleveland, like most of the cities of the Northeast and the Middle and the Middle America, are tending to wither because of the extreme benefits, as seen at least by most Americans seeking comfort first and everything else second, in the West, the South, the Sunbelt. And you can't deny that the Detroits and the Clevelands can't cope with that. But the Chautauquans can. You see there is a city of such dimension that it had the momentum to ride right through that, that issue and still does. The Bostons, for instance, doing the same, in spite of falling pieces of the subway. In any case, so that Cleveland has to acknowledge the fact that there are mega forces at work in this nation, and any nation and in the whole world, that an individual city, especially a smaller city, can't expect to be the equal to. And I don't think we should be ashamed of that. That's the way all cities have grown, have thrived, have diminished, and then have thrived again. You know, we don't know when our next beginning will be. It will occur sometime. And then finally, we've... We are finding, as we must, alternatives to our early in life emphasis on heavy industry. Right off the bat, our city became involved with iron, coal, and its relevant products, steel, if you will, etc. We are trying to find an alternative to that world, and we are doing so. But it's much... It's a much lighter, softer, and less earthshaking world. A world of biochemistry, a world of letters, a world of whatever it might be. Not quite the same thing. So do we not... I say, finally, I say, do we get enough help in all this sort of endeavor from our own state government or federal government to assist us in other cities like us in this issue?

**Nina Gibans** [01:18:29] Other?

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:18:33] Um, just... I'm gonna take you back again to your childhood. And you just talked about how special it was to go to the CAC for lunch.

**Robert Gaede** [01:18:45] Yes.

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:18:46] Why was it special? What was that like? What was... Tell me a little bit.

**Robert Gaede** [01:18:51] Well, can you imagine a ten-year-old kid from Cleveland Heights goes downtown, drives downtown in his dad's, whatever my dad was driving in those days, probably a Buick [laughs] and/or on the streetcar, which we would pick up in front of the Heights Theater at Coventry Road, and once downtown is submerged in a totally different atmosphere and a totally different venue, the sounds, the sight of the city, and the busyness of the streets, all so exciting to a kid was... I mean, whose antenna is out there reaching for every bit of it and then to be taken first to an architectural office, introduced to the staff and then sat in a corner with all these magazines. I just lived it up. [laughs] And then at lunchtime, my dad said we're going to go down and get some lunch and I want you to come. And of course I'd come eat, so we would walk down the street. That was a pretty good walk from East 18th Street to CAC, which is East 12th Street. But but it was, in those days that was not considered much of anything at all. That was commonplace. So that was a nice walk past the theaters, past the Halle Brothers Company, and looked at the big windows, what was happening inside of them, especially at Christmastime. Imagine. And then past that, Statler Hotel, other side of the street, but nonetheless down to the club, up the elevator, and to the dining level, which was up there somewhere above six floors, because my office, my first downtown office was on the fifth floor of the CAC building. [laughs] It was a tiny little office about the size of this room. In any case, we would have lunch there, and I would always have the same thing because I loved it it. It was same. I forget what it was, but it was a dish you all know that they featured. And as a kid, I thought this was heaven on earth. Sitting with my dad and all these businessmen having lunch at the Cleveland Athletic Club, my gosh! [laughs]

**Nina Gibans** [01:21:18] Yeah. For for us, it was Halle's and the tea room.

**Robert Gaede** [01:21:25] Oh, yes.

**Nina Gibans** [01:21:25] Or whatever.

**Robert Gaede** [01:21:26] Oh, I didn't venture to the tea room so much, [laughs] but I did get there occasionally. And of course, the tea roomsat Halle's and at Higbee's. The famous tea room at Higbee's had a name, didn't it?

**Nina Gibans** [01:21:45] Silver Grille.

**Robert Gaede** [01:21:45] The Silver Grille. That was more than tea, but it was also, architecturally, it was a marvelous statement of the early modernist era.

**Nina Gibans** [01:22:02] Well, isn't it wonderful how we remember food?

**Robert Gaede** [01:22:06] Well, we remember those things which at the time are most compelling to us. [laughs]

**Nina Gibans** [01:22:14] Right. That's awesome.

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:22:17] Can I just... I'm gonna start a new track, and if I can get you to say your names and the date just so we have it.

**Nina Gibans** [01:22:23] Right. It's been such a pleasure, Bob, to interview Bob Gaede, Robert Gaede, and... You want me to say my name?

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:22:39] Yeah, and the date.

**Nina Gibans** [01:22:39] And I'm Nina Gibans and special interest in architecture and living with an architect.

**Robert Gaede** [01:22:50] Well, am I to respond?

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:22:52] You don't have to but if you would like to.

**Nina Gibans** [01:22:53] They just want to identify, I think, for us.

**Robert Gaede** [01:22:56] I'll simply say that it's my special pleasure to be asked to participate in a program like this. And it's not only fun to reflect and to recite happenings of past times, but also to try to find meaning and threads of consequence in it all. And you have drawn those out of me. I hope they make some sense.

**Nina Gibans** [01:23:30] Well, they certainly did, Bob. The one that you brought to my mind that I hadn't thought of at all was the fact that 105th Street and Euclid was THE place that kids from the two temples met on Saturday and went to the movies after Sunday school because we had Saturday Sunday School and then we would go to the Tasty Shop for lunch. [He laughs] And then that was totally something I had totally forgotten. But we would meet there and then take our streetcars home because we lived in Cleveland Heights and you could take the streetcar, or those that lived elsewhere would take other transportation.

**Robert Gaede** [01:24:21] Well, that neighborhood, that crossing, 105 and Euclid, would be the downtown of a city of 100,000.

**Nina Gibans** [01:24:32] That's right. My mother did her banking there at Cleveland Trust. We went to the market there, the 105th Street Market. I can tell you every stall that was there.

**Robert Gaede** [01:24:41] Oh! [laughs]

**Nina Gibans** [01:24:43] I can tell you even the name... This is now during the war when we had our coupons for meat, Mr. McDermott and his meat, you know, I can do that and that all came as you were talking. So it takes, you know, it takes a couple of sessions to even think it.

**Robert Gaede** [01:25:01] Well, it does to encourage and elicit these ancient memories out of the... Out of their little dark crypts in your mind. [laughs]

**Nina Gibans** [01:25:13] Right! I can even tell you the movies I went to. Vertigo.

**Robert Gaede** [01:25:16] Wow! Wow!

**Nina Gibans** [01:25:16] The Stillman. I know that.

**Robert Gaede** [01:25:19] Oh, Stillman. Yes. I'm trying to now visualize... The Stillman was downtown, was at not?

**Nina Gibans** [01:25:25] Well, then it was one on the right side of Euclid Avenue, just past the bank.

**Robert Gaede** [01:25:34] I'll have to look in my Facades to see how Ben Kotowski speaks to the Stillman. I can't remember exactly its location, but the name is as familiar as anything.

**Nina Gibans** [01:25:46] Right.

**Robert Gaede** [01:25:46] Yes.

**Nina Gibans** [01:25:48] Right. So.

**Robert Gaede** [01:25:48] So this has been fun. Emma and Nina, thank you for having me...

**Emma Yanoshik-Wing** [01:25:54] Thank you so much.

**Robert Gaede** [01:25:54] Join you for this.

**Nina Gibans** [01:25:56] Thank you so much.