**Justin Hons** [00:00:03] My name is Justin Hons with the Euclid Corridor Oral History project. I am here with Robert...What is your last name?

**Robert Gutzky** [00:00:11] Gutzky.

**Justin Hons** [00:00:12] Gutzky... Robert Gutzky... Robert, just a second ago we were talking about some of the places you frequented or saw walking down Euclid. Let's start from Public Square and work our way down to that bar you were talking about on 55th.

**Robert Gutzky** [00:00:27] Public Square was always an interesting place. I used to have... as a kid they had dime stores that would show unbelievable Christmas displays. You had Arcade, a lot of theaters. Most of the places today are now, of course, gone and that part of Cleveland's history is sort of wiped out by modernization, so to speak. But Euclid was always a place where you could watch a good parade, seen a lot of things. It was a place as a little kid, which was a fascinating wonderworld, you name it, and you found it down there. I interested in Public Square down at the Civil War Monument. I've got a number of my family that are there on the walls. I did a research on the family genealogy and suddenly discovered a whole world down there right on Public Square. Going east probably there were a lot of museums that were located along Euclid Avenue going east short of, say, 55th or so. That were you... They were open and you could go in. A world of knowledge there for us, a young schoolchild, and they had trips where you could actually go and see these amazing things. Going further east there was an interesting item about the 30th and Euclid, Masonic Auditorium, I believe. Later years I came home from the service and my future wife had their graduation ceremony there. So I got to really see what the inside looked like. If you travel a little further east, up to 55th. Always an interesting area. One of the major intersections going north and south versus east and west. They're at 55th on the southeast corner there used to be a passenger train station that sat up above. I can remember the passenger trains on their way down to Terminal Tower, stopping there, letting people off. Down below was a great big, huge yellow cab stand. If you went underneath the bridge going east there was a famous cafe bar where in later years a bunch of the motorcyclists used to congregate late at night. And then a few drinks and they would sort of raise a little Cain along Euclid Avenue and finally wound up the evening being chased by the Cleveland police. If you crossed the street at 55th there was a restaurant that sat underneath the actual overpass bridge for the trains. A lot of people that were transferring busses and streetcars and so forth. They'd stop in for us as a real fast snack on the goings. Towards town on the northwest corner, there was a hotel, I can remember that. And I always have trouble trying to remember exactly what was on the southwest corner, that's a total blank. If you went further along Euclid Avenue and had a lot of prominent car dealers on both sides of the street, you got out towards 79th they had a Playhouse Square sort of thing where a lot of plays were enacted. If you went a little further, one of my favorite places as a young lad was called Skateland. And Skateland was one of the class acts in Cleveland at that time. Anyone who roller-skated went there and had a very elite atmosphere. They had probably one of the premier organist who played unbelievable music. Back then, people loved to dance on roller skates. It was a good place to learn a lot of activity going on. And going a further east there were a lot of stores there where you could buy just about anything you want. Now, I can remember as a young kid, I can't even remember the name anymore. But I remember, I had my first banana split there and I just couldn't believe how big it was! If you went up towards 105th, which was another major intersection for cross-town travel, above there you had a bunch of restaurants, a bunch of movie theaters. I can remember back in the middle 1940s seeing Walt Disney's Bambi, which was rather unusual at that time. Walt Disney was, of course, not known as he is now. And Bambi was one of his first movies. Very impressive. People hadn't seen it, it was an animated colored film and just captured my mind. And I've remembered it ever since. As a young lad, I can remember traveling out to 105th and walking from there down to Cleveland Art Museum, where it was quite impressive. They had the lake out front. You could feed the goldfish and then go into the art museum and take lessons on Saturday mornings. Euclid had a lot going for a young lad.

**Justin Hons** [00:06:17] When were you born?

**Robert Gutzky** [00:06:17] I was born in an early '38 and grew up during World War II. I wasn't really sure what was going on, but I can sure remember everybody heading downtown to Public Square when they surrendered in Germany. Everybody went and I remember it was a funny, funny summer day and everybody honked horns and were dancing and everybody jumping on the streetcars to go downtown to the square.

**Justin Hons** [00:06:53] Has there been anything similar in Cleveland since then?

**Robert Gutzky** [00:06:53] There may have on occasion, like when the Indians won the World Series or something. But nothing that then impressed, you know, a young lad more than that. Yeah, just a lot of activities all along...over time. Cleveland Clinic, of course, was just as a relatively small hospital, nothing like the massive thing that they have today, nor the world-renown. But it was a good place, the entire area along there was Millionaire's Row. And although there many of them had been gone and renovated and there are no longer there, you can still see some of the architect structures. The way it was over a century ago, the houses are there and starting to come back. They're well-kept and at least some of the younger generations coming up can see actually what Cleveland looked like back then, yeah.

**Justin Hons** [00:08:01] Tell us the story of how you broke your arm skating.

**Robert Gutzky** [00:08:01] As a young lad would go out to Skateland and I thought I was pretty good on a pair of roller skates. Got to showing off for the young girls, not paying attention. And on the east side of Skateland was a locker area with an area you could cut through from one side of the skate floor to the other. Not paying attention, I suddenly hit the wall and did a flip over it and wound up breaking my arm. Taught me not to show off anymore.

**Justin Hons** [00:08:34] Were these roller skates or ice skates?

**Robert Gutzky** [00:08:35] No, these were roller skates. And Cleveland was in competition. There were two famous brands of skates. One was Chicago and the other was Cleveland. And of course, my favorite was Cleveland. But it was a great atmosphere, a good place, and I learned a lot of things there.

**Justin Hons** [00:09:03] What part of Cleveland did you grow in?

**Robert Gutzky** [00:09:03] I grew up in the Southside. Southeast side and went to school in the area. As a young man, I left and went into the armed forces and stayed there, did a complete tour in the military and retired from it and came home to raise my grandchildren.

**Justin Hons** [00:09:36] Let me ask you a question about Bambi. When it first came out what were the connotations surrounding... was there a buzz about the movie coming out? Like it is going to be a full-length cartoon movie?

**Robert Gutzky** [00:09:37] Well, if I remember correctly, Bambi was the first full-color animated cartoon movie, and they weren't sure whether it was really going to be a hit. They had no idea exactly and it turned out to be an unbelievable thing and actually launched Walt Disney's career. But the entire area had a lot of theaters from 105th on out. A lot of things going on day, night, whatever. And then you had the atmosphere around the Art Museum and Wade Park.

**Justin Hons** [00:10:18] When do you think that started to change?

**Robert Gutzky** [00:10:24] Well, it started to change probably right at that time in the late '40s or early '50s. World War II had just been completed, Korean War was in full bloom. And people were either trying to reorganize their life and get ahead from World War II to or were being called back in to engage in Korea. And everything started to change. Technology changed. The entire nation's thinking changed about that time. And then it never stopped, technology launched and based on technology, Cleveland and everything else started to go and modernize. Some of the various activities along Euclid had changed. And Cleveland sort of grew up and a lot of people... it grew up and people didn't really notice it. They were more engaged in a lot of pressing needs. But it was a good time. We sort of went from streetcars to trolleybuses to modernization.

**Justin Hons** [00:11:46] I want to go back and ask you about that bar... the famous bar you said sat over on East 55th.

**Robert Gutzky** [00:11:48] Famous Cafe.

**Justin Hons** [00:11:49] The Famous Cafe, right.

**Robert Gutzky** [00:11:49] There was a bunch of hooligans that congregated over on St. Clair and they were called the Outlaws and they were they were not the greatest organization. They definitely sat right on the borderline and weren't too well-liked even by any of the other motorcycle groups through Cuyahoga County. Definitely a wild bunch and probably just as well they congregated in one bar. At least the police knew where they were located, but they would go in there and raise Cain. Usually it wind-up where they'd come out with a few drinks, start their bikes, throw it in gear and chase it down Euclid Avenue and jump on it. So you could see why the local Cleveland police were definitely looking to either put a few of 'em away for the weekend or get 'em out of everyone else's hair, but they eventually phased out. And to the betterment of the citizens.

**Justin Hons** [00:12:53] Well, Robert, do you have any final stories you want to go over or anything else you want to say?

**Robert Gutzky** [00:13:03] Well, Euclid Avenue was famous when I was a kid. It sort of deteriorated since but now it's coming back. And as great as it was then it'll be great in the future, I think.

**Justin Hons** [00:13:16] Why do you think it's coming back?

**Robert Gutzky** [00:13:18] Well, I see a lot of things going on. Right now to drive down Euclid is like going through a combat zone. You'd better have a jeep, but once they finish it, it's gonna be something to really look at. It'll do a lot; it'll draw people who moved out of Cleveland back in. And what they have to do now is they've improved Chester, they've improved Euclid, now they need to work on the area around it. But it will come back. Cleveland Clinic will play a big part in it.

**Justin Hons** [00:13:51] Thanks a lot for talking to us.

**Robert Gutzky** [00:13:54] Hey, glad to talk to you.