

**An Incomplete Historical Survey**  
**of**  
**Montrose Hill, O'Hara Township,**  
**Allegheny County, PA**  
**and the**  
**Surrounding Area**  
**including**  
**Powers Run Area, RIDC Area, River Road Area, Blawnox**  
**Area and lands downstream as far as Aspinwall.**

**Dan Nowak**

**February, 2012**

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**Duganne**

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**Hoboken Stuff**

**Chronology**

## Introduction

I grew up on Montrose Hill. My family moved there in September of 1957 and I left my parents house on Lawrence Avenue in 1971 when I married. I always thought that it was a great place to live and raise children. It was a safe neighborhood where everyone knew each other, everyone seemed to be related to at least one other family on the Hill {if not three or four}. There was never a lack of playmates. Nor was there a lack of things to do. We had at least two ball fields when I was growing up there, wooded areas surrounding the entire hill and stretching out along the Workhouse Farm from Montrose Hill to the hill overlooking Fox Chapel High School, the Allegheny River at the bottom of Powers Run Road, Blawnox within easy walking distance and bus service at the bottom of the Hill that gave us access to East Liberty and downtown Pittsburgh.

I am an engineer by profession but have always been interested in history. I have worked with the Monroeville Historical Society {I have lived in Monroeville PA since 1975} and was coordinator of their oral history program. I always wanted to work on a history of Montrose Hill and the immediate surrounding area.

When we were growing up on Montrose Hill, the playground and ball field that is now Raymond Schafer Park did not yet exist. In fact, there was an old reservoir located where the basketball court and playground are now. No one knew why it was there or who put it in, much less when. Some kids claimed that they found Indian arrow heads in the reservoir, but I never saw any.

Most of the houses on the Hill were new when I was a child, being built {and a good many, if not most, were owner built} in the 1950s and early 1960s. There were, however, a few older houses that gave a hint that there were some people living there decades earlier. And then there was River Road. Some of the buildings down there looked as if they were “a hundred years old”. Also, there were several ruins there of what appeared to be substantial structures long since abandoned. We never considered this area to be part of the “Hill”. It never occurred to us that the Hill was actually an just an extension of the earlier village of Montrose that ran along River Road and, slowly with time, crept up the hill one house at a time, until it exploded with new construction in the post-World War II era..

No great battles ever took place on the Hill. Washington never camped out on the overlook in the bend of the Allegheny River. The Hill itself was essentially farm and grazing land that transitioned into a suburb after the Second World War. However, that does not mean that there is no history associated with the Hill and the surrounding area.

Due to the nature of the community during most of its history {farms and houses}, we must consider the adjoining areas of Powers Run, the Allegheny County Workhouse {RIDC}, the village of Montrose {River Road}, the village of Hoboken {Blawnox} and probably the area as far as Ross Farms (Delafield Estate, Aspinwall} as the region that impacted the people of Montrose Hill on a daily basis and as essential to understanding the history of the Hill. Therefore, this is the region that I will cover in this work.

I have one last remark. This is not intended to be a comprehensive history. Instead, it is meant to bring together, in what is hopefully a readable and entertaining form, various items related to the region around Montrose of which I have researched over the last few decades.

Dan Nowak  
January 17, 2012

## Introduction

### A Note on Sources and Future Additions

An excellent history of O'Hara Township was published in 2008 entitled "**Portrait of an American Community**". The book is now available at the Township office. Books are also available at the Heinz History Center Bookstore located at 1212 Smallman Street, Pittsburgh. This author strongly suggests that the reader first read the O'Hara history book before tackling this work.

As I mentioned, this work is an attempt to compile all the information that I have been able to collect over a three decade period so that others interested in the local history of south-east O'Hara Township can enjoy it. It should be considered as a compliment and supplement to the O'Hara Township history book.

As concerns the source of the information, the work has two basic parts.

The information on the nineteenth century came from three sources. The first is the United States Census records for 1870. The author searched the records available at the Carnegie Library main branch in the Oakland section of Pittsburgh, printed each page and then retyped the entries into a Word document.

The second source is a series of maps that the author collected through the years. Unfortunately, the exact sources for each map has been lost through the years, but they include the Library of Congress, The Carnegie Library main branch and the map collection of the University of Pittsburgh's "Historic Pittsburgh" project, available on the Internet by searching "Historic Pittsburgh". Since I am unsure of the origins and copyright owners of these maps, I sketched only the small section related to this work and made no attempt to include any portions of the original.

The third source for the nineteenth century information was a series of subject searches of the texts available on the University of Pittsburgh's "Historic Pittsburgh" website.

Regarding the twentieth century, I also used several sources, including the 1900, 1910 and 1920 United States censuses, and maps from the same sources listed above and additional subject searches of the "Historic Pittsburgh" site specifically and the Internet in general.

Additionally, and this is the most important original material contribution to history that this work is making, are a series of oral history interviews that the author conducted between 1986 and 2005.

To repeat, this is not a complete work and the author welcomes the efforts of any persons of a kindred spirit that would like to expand on this work, such as additional research involving sources that the author did not explore {legal records, special library collections, etc.} and additional interviews of people who have personal experiences related to Montrose Hill.

But, for now, what follows is the best that I have to share.

Dan Nowak  
January 17, 2012

## **Introduction**

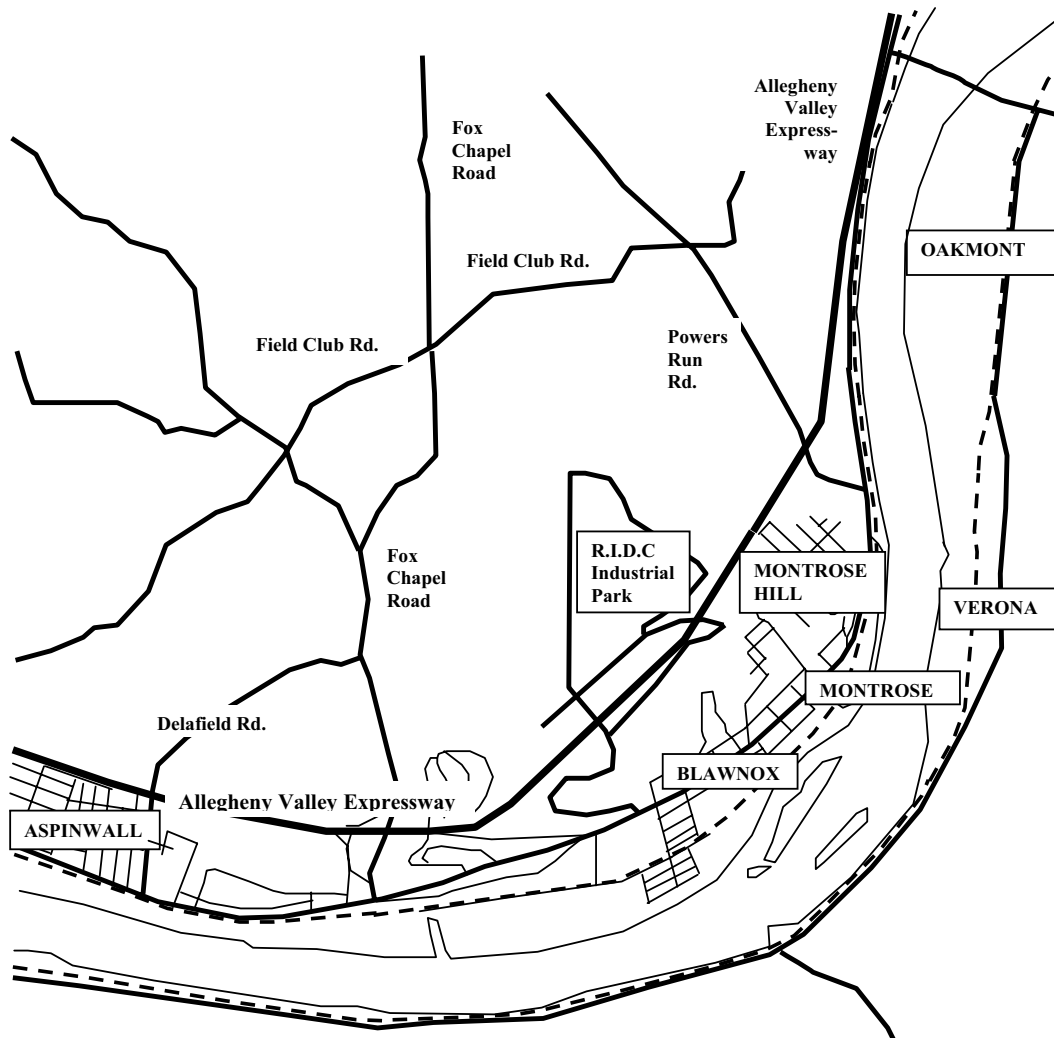
### **GENERAL NOTATIONS**

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NOTES on the use of (parenthesis) and {brackets} in this work:

1. Brackets indicate additional items of clarification by the author {also known as the editor, interviewer, transcriber or researcher as best applies}.
2. Parentheses within a quoted section of another work are part of the original text.
3. Parenthesis occurring within the subject response in one of the oral history sections represent the transcribers best guess of a section of audio that is not clear.

## A Sketch of a 2012 Map Showing the Area Covered by this Study



The boundaries are approximately the Allegheny River to the south, the towns of Oakmont and Verona to the east, Field Club Road to the north and Delafield Road/Fox Chapel Road to the west.

### Historical Notes:

1. Montrose, now mostly just referred to as “River Road”, was originally called Fairview.
2. Blawnox was originally called Hoboken.
3. Powers Run Road was called Fairview Road well into the 1930s.
4. The southern section of Fox Chapel Road was considered Squaw Run Road until the 1930s.
5. Aspinwall was incorporated in 1890, Blawnox in 1925.

## Fairview

When writing a history of their home town in Western Pennsylvania, people invariably try to show how it was populated by Native Americans through centuries, settled by brave, honest and industrious Europeans within weeks of the landings at Jamestown and Plymouth, and visited at least once by a young George Washington while wondering through this region. Some of these attempts are so contrived as to border on the comic.

Montrose Hill sits in a bend of the Allegheny River. The overlook behind the current Shaffer Park is 300 above the river and affords an excellent view of the river upstream for over two miles. Most certainly, at one time or another, Native Americans would have made use of the site to camp and observe. As I mentioned in my introduction, there were claims of arrow heads being discovered in the 1950s and earlier, but I do not know of any evidence of any Native American occupation beyond those few fragments.

There is no evidence that our first President was anywhere near the Hill.

There is evidence, however, that there were several groupings of homesteads in the early 1800s along the Allegheny stretching from the point where Powers Run enters the Allegheny River south to the where Squaw Run emptied into the river that, from time to time, became villages with names. Some stayed and grew, some disappeared. At the same time a very few settlers appeared on the high land further back from the river. Some were squatters that came and went while others purchased property.

The Powers family is generally acknowledged as the first permanent and legitimate settlers in the area. The 1889 History of Allegheny County article on O'Hara Township states (page 157): "James Powers was the earliest settler, and purchased land in 1796, in partnership with his brother Thomas, near Powers run, which took its name him. He was probably a resident some time before he and his brother made their purchase. The tract that they bought was a part of lands appropriated for the redemption of depreciated certificates. It had been patented in 1789 to Joseph Mercier, but it had never been occupied. Mr. Powers came before the Indians had left this region, and it is said that he was often compelled to take his rifle with him to his work and that on several occasions he was driven by the savages across the river. His nephew, Ashley Powers, was also an early resident, and many of his descendents still reside here." The recently published O'Hara Township history has an excellent write-up of this family and their contributions.

The village that occupied what is today known as River Road and included possibly a few homesteads on the hillside of what is today the Montrose Hill, was not known as Montrose in those days, but rather was the village of Fairview.

The name of Fairview is difficult to explain. There is a reference in the book "The Annals of Old Wilkinsburg" that may either shed some light on the issue or cause more confusion. It appears that the Boyd family of old Wilkinsburg and the Boyd family of early O'Hara Township were kin. On page 127 of the Annals, the following entry appears:

### "THE WILLIAM BOYD FAMILY

About 1840 Hugh Boyd persuaded his brother William to come to Wilkinsburg village where he (Hugh), the oldest brother John, and their sister, now Mrs. Jane Boyd Wadsworth, widow of Dr. John Wadsworth, had resided for a number of years.

After coming to Wilkinsburg William engaged in the cattle business, travelling through the adjacent counties buying and selling stock but always making his home with his relatives in the village until in 1860 he returned with his bride to the paternal farm;—David Boyd, Sr., his father, had died and his mother, Mary Bryson Boyd, had moved to the village of Wilkinsburg, where she



## Fairview

lived the remainder of her life. The Boyd farm was a large tract of land, and was known then as Fairview Farms. William Boyd resided on the part of it which was located on the west bank of the Allegheny River adjoining the little village of Fairview opposite Verona. The tract extended back over the hills to the now exclusive Fox Chapel district, and included the ground of the late Rogers Field Air Port. David Boyd, an older brother, occupied the hill or rear section.”

While the above does seem to tie together the names of the Boyd farm and the village, it does not answer the question as to which came first.

The earliest references to the village that this researcher was able to find were in the 1830s.

The 1837 edition of the Harris Pittsburgh Business Directory contains two entries referring to the village of Fairview, as follows:

“Lennox, Andrew, Gunsmith {page 61}”  
“Wilson, James, Tavern keeper {page 88}”

Both of these entries were followed by the location given as “Fairview, 10 miles up Allegheny river”.

Also included in this directory for 1837 was a listing {page 167 and 168} of the post offices in Allegheny County. Along the Allegheny River is listed “Sharpsburgh ( 4 ½ miles above Pittsburgh, R. S. Major as postmaster), Houston (Fairview) ( 10 miles, James Halstead), Spring Dale”.

In April of 1845, the city of Pittsburgh experienced a devastating fire that destroyed about 40 % of the city along the Monongahela River side. A publication “A Full Account of the Great Fire of Pittsburgh on the Tenth day of April, 1845”, under a chapter titled “Relief of the Sufferers” {page 21}, lists organizations and people in the Pittsburgh area that contributed to the relief effort. Included on page 22 under Individuals in Allegheny County was one John Boyd of Fairview who donated \$2.00. Also listed on page 28 was one Mr. J. Wilson of Fairview who donated 200 bushels of potatoes to the effort. I would venture to guess that Mr. Wilson’s donation, even at the prices of 1845, was significantly more generous than Mr. Boyd’s.

The 1866-1867 edition of the Thurston Directory of Pittsburgh and Allegheny contains an entry for: “Campbell, W. C., asst assessor, 23<sup>rd</sup> district, res Fairview”.

The 1876 publication of the History of Allegheny County contains an entry for each municipality, including O’Hara Township {page 171}. It notes that “The first post-office was located at Fairview. James Halstead was the first Postmaster.” Unfortunately, it does not give any dates for this event. It also states that {in 1876}, “Fairview and Hoboken are the only villages. The Pennsylvania (West Division) Railroad passes through the township.”

The 1889 “History of Allegheny County, page 633, contains a biographical entry for Captain Halstead, as follows:

“Capt. JAMES WILSON HALSTEAD. River-man, post office Verona, was born at Fairview, this county, in 1848, son of James and Rebecca (Lemmon) Halstead. His father was a tailor and worked in Pittsburgh on the bench with Andrew Johnson (afterward president), and was one of Pittsburgh’s early men. The post office at Fairview was named after him, and he served as

## **Fairview**

postmaster until 1872, when he turned the office over to his daughter. James received his education at Fairview, and in 1864 went on a steamboat carrying oil from Warren and Oil City to Pittsburgh. After five years of this work he began farming in Westmoreland county, but continued in the oil business to some extent. In 1885 he engaged with the Chartiers Gas company, having charge of the laying of their pipes across the river. He was shore-boss for Huling Brothers, at Pittsburgh, but now has accepted a position with Moorhead & McCleane...”

Several more references to the village will be presented later in this work. Certainly there is enough evidence of a thriving town called Fairview from very early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

## Riverboats, The Canal and the Railroads

### The Riverboats

The village of Montrose was born of the river. While the earliest transportation was by foot and animals, water transport was the most efficient way to move large quantities of goods.

The 1871 publication "The Allegheny River", credited to the Pittsburgh "Gazette and Advertiser" of April 10, 1845 and of February 29, 1845, the following discussion of the river boaters on the Allegheny River:

"Captains John and Jonathan Moore were among the earliest operators of keelboats on the Allegheny. Captain Moore owned the keelboat Swiftsure, and Captain Jonathan Moore the Arena. The Arena was later changed to a salt boat, operating between Tarentum and Emlenton. Captain James Hulings, who lived at Hulings' Eddy, near the mouth of Deer Creek, operated the Clipper, Lake Erie, and other keelboats on the Allegheny, while Captain Joseph Hulings operated a keelboat called the James Hulings. The Pauline was another keelboat in use in this period, as was also Captain James Kelly's keelboats, Paul Jones and Good Intent. The number of keelboats operating on the Allegheny River, between Pittsburgh and points up stream, in 1844, was 78, as reported by the wharfmaster at the Allegheny wharf. The keelboat Jolly Traveler was operating in 1845, between Meadville, Pa., and Pittsburgh. On her arrival at Pittsburgh, April 9, 1845, this keel had a cargo of book binders, salaratus, staves, chair stuff, etc.

On September 28, 1845, there was the following arrival at Pittsburgh: "A handsome keelboat, the Commercial, arrived at our city yesterday from Rochester, N. Y., with ample lading. She came by way of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, thence by the Erie Canal and Conneaut Lake to Meadville, passed down French Creek feeder to the Allegheny River, and then down to our city. She is bound for Cincinnati, and departs to-day, we believe. The present Montrose was once called Fairview. John Speer, a merchant of this vicinity, built the keelboat Fairview, operated on the Allegheny River. Captain Robert G. Mehaffey built a keelboat which was named for him, and manned by his sons. James Mehaffey, the eldest son, fell overboard and was drowned, when this boat hit a rock three miles above Freeport. His heavy clothing and big boots weighted him down, and prevented him from swimming. After selling this keelboat, R. G. Mehaffey built one of nine tons burden, enrolled at Pittsburgh, September 26, 1846, and called the Elk. In about a year, the Elk was crushed by ice, and her owner retired from the business."

The Hulings name is prevalent in the Fairview/Montrose area. It appears on the 1862 maps as both an S. D. Hulings located on Freeport about halfway between the current Hulton Bridge and the outlet of Powers Run and as a Mrs. Hulings in the village of Fairview itself. The Speer family seems to have been allied with the Kirkwood family.

Later, while discussing events of 1856, it continues: "The Clara Fisher and Cornplanter formed one line of Allegheny River packets, and the Hanna brothers' two packets the other. On the way up the river, laden chiefly with flour, the Clara Fisher, in the second week in December, 1856, struck a rock and sank, at Orchard Furnace. Her cargo was saved, and the boat raised. She sank again, but was raised and arrived at the Allegheny wharf, Pittsburgh, December 13th. Fifty men, working at her pumps by turns, had failed to keep her afloat when she was first raised, and it was only by the perseverance and skill of John Rogers, of the First Ward, Allegheny City, that she was finally kept afloat and reached the city. Thoroughly repaired, the packet was again operating on the Allegheny in 1857. The owners of the Clara Fisher, at the time of her re-enrollment, April 24, 1856, were Ezekiel Gordon & Co. (probably the interest of heirs of his deceased brother, W. H. Gordon); Ezekiel Gordon, and Thomas H. Reynolds, all of Allegheny

## Riverboats, The Canal and the Railroads

City; heirs of R. McCutcheon, deceased, late of Pittsburgh; Morris Coleman, of Kittanning; James Hulings, Fairview; and James M. Freeman, Clarion County, Pa. At the time of the re-enrollment of the Clara Fisher, February 13 1857, she was owned in equal shares by Captain Samuel Lewis, of Mount Washington; and William Dilworth, of Allegheny City. The packet Cornplanter, at the time of re-enrollment. May 2, 1856, was commanded by Captain Thomas H. Reynolds, one of her owners. The other owners were Ezekiel Gordon, of Allegheny City; W. McCutcheon, of Pittsburgh; James NT. Freeman, of Clarion County, Pa. and Morris Coleman of Kittanning, Pa. Beginning with May 2. 1856, Captain William Watterson was commander of the Cornplanter, for a time, but Captain Reynolds was back in command, when she stooped for coal, two miles below Brady's Bend, December 17, 1856 and got frozen in by ice. 'When the ice break-up came in February, 1857, the Cornplanter was cut to pieces by the ice, and parts of her wreck were seen floating past Pittsburgh, Sunday, February 8th. She was valued at five to six thousand dollars, and insured for but \$2,000. Steps were taken immediately to build a packet to replace the Cornplanter on the Allegheny.'

Again, beyond the direct reference of James Hulings of Fairview, the Gordon name {and specifically Ezekiel Gordon}, is related to the Fairview/Montrose area. Ezekiel is enumerated in the village in the 1900 census and noted on the 1906 map, so it appears that he moved from Allegheny City to Fairview/Montrose sometime after the above events. In fact, his son, Ezekiel, Jr. was born in Fairview in 1859. {See the reference to Ezekiel, Jr. in the section of this write-up on Various Other People. It also ties the Gordon and Hulings families together.}

Additionally, pertaining to the Hulings is a biographical entry in the 1889 publication "History of Allegheny Country, page 635, as follows:

"EDWARD JAMES HULINGS, captain of the steamer Return, post office Verona, was born June 21, 1854, at Fairview, this county, son of James and Frances K. (Halstead) Hulings, former of whom was one of the best steamboat pilots on the Allegheny and Ohio rivers, and died about 1858. Edward J. Hulings is the oldest of a family of three children. He received his education at Fairview and in Westmoreland County, and in June, 1864 he began driving horses for the boats from Pittsburgh to Oil City, being one of the youngest drivers before there was as much as a towpath. He afterward ran steamboats and flats. He and his brother Harry now own two boats—the Return, which he commands, and the Two Brothers, commanded by Harry. One of their principal trades is the transportation of garden stuff from Neville island to Pittsburgh. Mr. Hulings was married in September, 1882 to Ella J. Gumbert who was born and reared on River avenue, Allegheny City, daughter of Jerry and Mary (Tranter) Gumbert. Capt. and Mrs. Hulings have two children living: Emma Jane and Mary Frances; Harry James died when he was eight months and fifteen days old. Capt. Hulings parents and wife are members of the U. P. Church. He is a member of the Jr. O. U. A. M. of Lawrenceville, and the K. of P., at Verona; he is a republican. He owns a house and several lots at Verona."

### The Canal

Before there were train tracks, there was a canal running along what today is River Road. The 1855 map clearly shows the canal, although in the area of the village of Fairview, over-markings obscure the exact path. Further downstream at the Ross Estates {just to the west of the current intersection of Freeport and Fox Chapel roads} there is a "basin". The basin was a point where the canal either widened or a "side track" was installed allowing a boat to pull over and

## **Riverboats, The Canal and the Railroads**

load or unload, as with a railroad station. {The 2008 O'Hara Township history contains a sketch of the basin made specifically for the book.} However, with a canal much more room is required in the lateral direction. For that reason, a basin in the vicinity of Fairview was not practical, which limited the ability to load and unload at that village..

Unlike the river navigation, specific references to the Pennsylvania Canal, particularly as it relates to the Allegheny River in general and the area around Fairview in particular, are rare. Mrs. S. Kussart in her book "The Allegheny River", published in Pittsburgh in 1938, has a few paragraphs that document the canal in this area, as follows:

"A better means of communication between the Atlantic seaboard and the headwaters of the Ohio River was rendered necessary by the rapid development of the West. The deflection of the western trade through New York, by way of the Erie Canal, aroused the Pennsylvania authorities to the need of a quicker and cheaper route of transportation between the Delaware and Ohio Rivers. The act passed by the Legislature of Pennsylvania, February 25, 1826, authorized the commencement of the canal, to be constructed at the expense of the state. The Western Division of the canal was completed, and the first boat entered Pittsburgh, November 10, 1829."

It continues, "Passenger fare between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh was \$12, and the trip took four days. It was estimated that during the first year the canal was opened, 20,000 passengers and 50,000 tons of freight passed over it. The cost of the Pennsylvania Canal and adjuncts, originally, has been estimated at \$26,000,000; but subsequent losses and expenses brought up its cost to \$40,000,000."

"The Western Division of the Pennsylvania Canal passed down the Conemaugh, Kiskiminetas, and Allegheny Rivers to Pittsburgh. It crossed the Allegheny River at the present Freeport on an aqueduct, and proceeded on down the right or west bank of the river into Allegheny City (or the present North Side, Pittsburgh)."

"Along the line of the 'Western Division of the canal thriving villages grew up: Tarentum, laid out in 1829, by H. M. Brackenridge; Leechburg on the Kiskiminetas, Saltsburg and others, each of which prospered. Although the Pennsylvania Rail road purchased the main line of the Pennsylvania Canal, in 1857, it was not until 1864 that the Western Division, between Johnstown and Pittsburgh, was abandoned."

### **The Railroads**

There were two railroads that impacted the people in the vicinity of Montrose during its history. The first {chronologically} is the Allegheny Valley which ran along the opposite side of the river and the second is the Western Pennsylvania that ran through the village of Fairview {later Montrose}.

Regarding the Allegheny Valley Railroad, also from Mrs. Kussart's work, "The Allegheny River":

"On April 4, 1837, an act was passed by the Legislature of Pennsylvania for the incorporation of the Pittsburgh, Kittanning & Warren Railroad. No steps were taken to organize a company under this act, although in 1847 the time for the completion of the road was extended five years. On April 15, 1851, a supplement to the original act was enacted by the Legislature,

## Riverboats, The Canal and the Railroads

omitting Warren, the company being authorized to extend their road to the state line by any route north of Kittanning found best adapted to the interests to be served. By a supplement to the act of incorporation, on April 14-, 1852, the name o the road was changed to that by which it was popularly designated, 'The Allegheny Valley Railroad'."

"The route adopted was on the east or left bank of the Allegheny River, as it obviated the necessity of building bridges. Ground was broken March 17, 1853, at Lawrenceville, on property of Mr. Ewalt, above the United States Arsenal, the mayors of the cities of Pittsburgh and Allegheny and members of select and common councils and other prominent persons being present. By the summer of 1853, the stock subscriptions amounted to nearly \$350,000, so there was no lack of funds to prosecute building operations."

"By October 23, 1855, passenger cars were in operation to the mouth of the Kiskirminetas River, opposite Freeport, and as far as Crooked Run, on December 11, 1855. On January 23, 1856, the celebration of the opening of the Allegheny Valley Railroad to Kittanning was held on the arrival of the train which left Pittsburgh at 9 o'clock A. M. At a meeting held in the court house, addresses were made by Mayor Bingham, A. W Loomis, Esq., and the Honorable William F. Johnston and the Honorable Joseph Buflington."

As indicated above under the section covering the canal, Western Pennsylvania Railroad {commonly called the West Penn} was not built until the canal was abandoned after 1864. This researcher was not able to find and more details as regards this railroad. We know it followed the earlier path of the canal along the north-west side of the Allegheny River. {That fact actually allows one to trace the canal route today, along with the various "Canal" streets in the towns along the river.}

The 1871 publication "Pittsburgh Strangers' City Guide", lists time tables for both the Western Pennsylvania Railroad {that ran through Fairview} and the Allegheny Valley Railroad {that ran on the Verona side of the river and would have been accessible by ferry}.

The Western Pennsylvania Railroad was listed as having its depot at "Federal Street in Allegheny City. The daily arrivals from the depot were: Springdale No. 1 at 6:35 a.m., Freeport No. 1 at 8:15 a.m., Express at 11:15 p.m., Claremont accommodation at 1:18 p.m., Freeport No. 2 at 3:45 p.m., the Mail run at 5:40 p.m. and the Springdale No. 2 at 7:15 p.m. The departures from the depot were: Springdale No. 1 at 2:40 p.m., Freeport No. 1 at 9:30 a.m., Express at 4:40 p.m., Claremont accommodation at 11:30 a.m., Freeport No. 2 at 5:10 p.m., the Mail run at 6:50 p.m. and the Springdale No. 2 at 6:20 p.m. Also, it was noted that the church train leaves Freeport every Sunday at 8:10 a.m., reaching Allegheny City at 9:50 a.m.; returning leaves Allegheny City at 12:50 p.m. and arrives at Freeport at 2:50 p.m. The 6:50 a.m. train and the 2:40 p.m. train from Allegheny City make direct connection for Butler. Local tickets to all important stations on the main line of the Pennsylvania Central Railroad."

The stations and distances were listed as: "Allegheny City, Chestnut Street (0.6), Herra (1.6), Bennett's (2.8), Pine Creek (3.9), Etna (4.6), Sharpsburg (5.1), Guyasuta (6.2), Ross (8.0), Claremont (8.6), Hoboken (8.9), Petroleum (9.2), Fairview (10.0), Harmarsville (12.8), Linclon (14.3), Colfax (15.6), Springdale (16.4). The list continues with 28 more stops passing through Tarentum, Freeport, Leechburg, Apollo, Satltsburg and ending at Blairsville".

The Allegheny Valley Railroad had its depot at the Union Depot in Pittsburgh. It had nine trains per day, along with a Sunday church train, also. Three of the trains were listed as

## **Riverboats, The Canal and the Railroads**

“accommodations”. There were “two Express trains and a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Hulton, running morning and evening. The stations included several in the city, one named Sharpsburg, Brilliant (6.0), Sandy Creek (8.8), Armstrong’s (9.3), Verner (10.2), Edgewater (10.9), Hulton (11.8), Johnston (15.1), Logans Ferry (16.5) and Parnassus (17.4). There were an additional 46 stops along the line heading north through Kittanning, Brady’s Bend, Franklin and Oil City”.

## The 1855 Map

An 1855 map of Indiana Township {that included the current O'Hara Township until it was split off in 1875} clearly shows the village of Fairview near the bottom of what is now Boyd Avenue. At that time, there was not yet a railroad running along the Allegheny River. Instead, where the railroad later would be was the Pennsylvania Canal.

A sketch of the map, showing only the section of Indiana Township in the vicinity of Montrose Hill is presented at the end of this chapter.

A sprinkling of settlements is shown on the map, many difficult to read. Directly above the name of the village of Fairview is a name that starts with a "J". Not much else is discernible. However, just above this name, located over what is now the lower part of Montrose Hill, are two names easily read, Mrs. Jessup and J. Malone. These are the only two settlements in the area that is Montrose Hill today.

Between Fairview and Squaw Run, including the area that is currently Blawnox and Oakhill Manor are the names F. Beatie, A. Beatie, J. Cable, J. Ross, and what might be a Mrs. Young. J. Ross, of course, would be James Ross, whose extensive properties covered from this point to the area near the current Highland Park Bridge and north into current Fox Chapel.

The road names are not shown on this map, so designations placed on the sketch are in parenthesis. A road following the current Freeport Road {FPR} and another following the current Powers Run Road, designated {FVR} as it was probably known as Fairview Road at the time, are indicated. Additionally, there is a road following Squaw Run {SRR} and one following the current Field Club Road, designated {BSR} as it was probably known as Boyd School Road or School Road at the time. These are the only roads in the area around the then village of Fairview.

About a half mile north of the mouth of Powers Run along Freeport Road was located a tavern {TVN}.

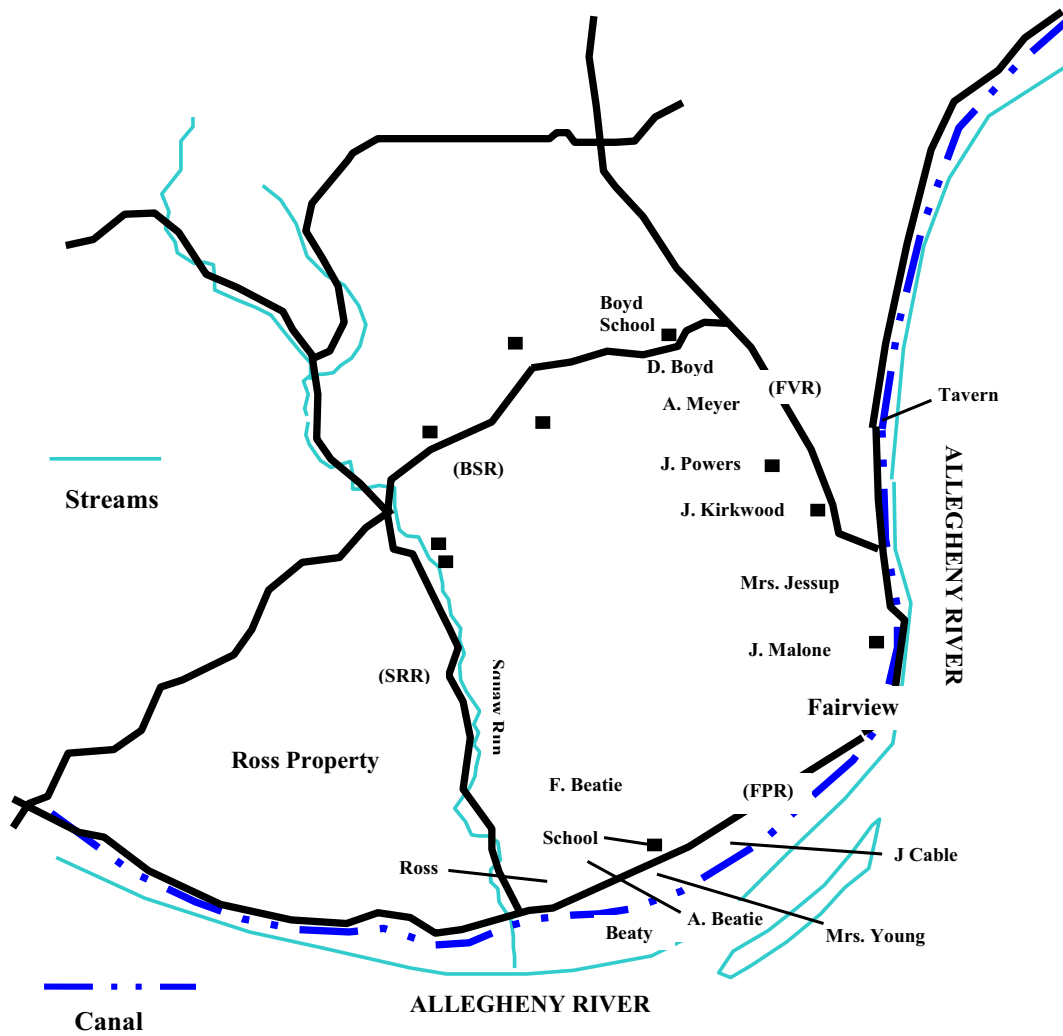
Along Fairview Road {the current Powers Run Road} were the settlements of J. Kirkwood, J. Powers, A. Meyer and D. Boyd. The schoolhouse, known as Boyd School is also indicated near the David Boyd property. The Boyd schoolhouse was on what is today Field Club Road near and to the east of the current Fox Chapel High School.

The origin of the original map is uncertain as the author obtained a copy 25 years prior to the writing of this study. Most probably, it was obtained from either the National Archives or the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.



The 1855 Map

A SKETCH OF THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF  
INDIANA TOWNSHIP, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PA,  
TAKEN FROM THE 1855 MAP



## The 1862 Map

An 1862 map of Indiana Township, unlike the 1855 map shows neither the village of Fairview nor the village of Hoboken. The boundary of the township was colored over with what probably was a wax crayon or something similar, destroying a lot of the details where the two settlements would have been.

There are, however, numerous names of both the land owners and the farms themselves. Additionally, two new roads, one approximately following the current Delafield Road and another {a continuation of this first road} following the current Fox Chapel Road are shown.

Eight names are identified on properties at the village of Fairview, as follows:

Mrs. Kirkwood  
J. Malone {twice}  
Mrs. Powers {twice}  
Mrs. Hullings  
J. Halotcott  
J. Wilson  
E. Gordon  
W. Boyd

Also, the map indicated the existence of both a store and a hotel in the village.

Both the Hoboken School on Freeport Road and the Boyd School on what today is called Field Club Road are shown.

Again, the source of the original map is uncertain.

The 1862 Map

A SKETCH OF THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF  
INDIANA TOWNSHIP, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PA,  
TAKEN FROM THE 1862 MAP



## William Speer Kirkwood

William Kirkwood was born in Fairview on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July in the year 1835. His father, Archibald, was born in Ireland and appears to have lived in Fairview / Montrose until his death as various maps in the 1860s and 1890s show his name associated with land near what is now the north end of River Road. His mother was Elizabeth Sterrars.

In his early life, William worked as a farmer and ferryman. He was known as a hardworking and industrious person. According to the 1876 publication of the History of Allegheny County, "He received a fair English education in the public schools of his native place, but no military training. From youth he was steady and industrious, and it was remembered that he never saw Pittsburgh until he was fifteen years old".

When the Civil War broke out, William recruited a company of soldiers for the 63<sup>rd</sup> Regiment and was commissioned Captain of the same. He eventually rose to Colonel, seeing much action. Again, from the 1876 Allegheny County history, "During McClellan's campaign, Captain Kirkwood was constant at his post of duty, sharing with the humblest subaltern the privations and sufferings incident to life in camp, amid the bogs and swamps before Yorktown and upon the Chickahominy; and in the battle of Fair Oaks bore himself with great gallantry, and fortunately, where so many comrades went down, he was preserved unscathed. Soon after the battle he was promoted to major. At Bull Run the regiment was again subjected to a fiery ordeal. Kearney's division, to which it belonged, was drawn up in line of battle near Grovetown. Robinson's brigade was ordered to advance upon an old railroad bed, behind which the enemy's skirmishers had taken shelter. The left of the line was already warmly engaged, when General Kearney rode up to Colonel Hays and ordered him to take charge, saying as he gave the order, 'I will support you handsomely'. The troops behaved most gallantly, but the deadly fire threw them into confusion. Rallying, they again went forward, when they were again saluted by another fatal volley, by which Colonel Hays was wounded. Major Kirkwood promptly assumed command, and led his regiment on; but he was severely wounded, being struck twice in the left leg. He was carried from the field, and his wounds found to be of a serious nature. In September, 1862, he was commissioned lieutenant-colonel, and in April, 1863, colonel."

It continues, "When the Chancellorsville campaign was opened, Colonel Kirkwood insisted, against the remonstrances of his surgeon, upon leading his regiment. He was still so crippled from his wounds that he had to be lifted upon his horse; but no inducements could persuade him to remain in camp. On the afternoon of the 2d of May the battle was hotly contested, and renewed again on Sunday the 3d, resulting in heavy losses to the Union forces. The Sixty-third was on the left of the brigade, exposed to heavy fire and outflanked by the enemy. Colonel Kirkwood, while conducting the fighting and leading his men with unsurpassed bravery and skill, was stricken down with mortal wounds. He survived until the 28<sup>th</sup> of June, subject to intense suffering, when he expired, deeply lamented by his entire command."

An Internet search of William Kirkwood yielded an almost identical write-up, which leads me to believe the above was taken from military records. I was unable to find the home page of the website to identify the name due to system problems. There were, however some extra information on this site, as follows: the Bull Run referenced above was the Second Battle of Bull Run, Kirkwood was originally elected Captain, the Division facing them at Chancellorsville was Stonewall Jackson's {although Jackson himself had died several months earlier} and Kirkwood was "nearly six feet in height, and stoutly built".

## Oil and the Refinery

History books generally point to the accomplishments of Edwin Drake in 1858 at Titusville, Pennsylvania as the beginning of the oil industry. In reality, you need three things for the creation of an oil industry –a way to extract the oil, a method of turning it into a usable product and a use for that product. Edwin Drake provided a successful method of extraction that became the model for the American oil industry. The remainder of the equation was provided by Samuel Martin Kier (July 19, 1813 – October 6, 1874) of Pittsburgh who, in 1853 set up the first American oil refinery in Pittsburgh on Seventh Avenue above Grant Street. There he refined oil into “lamp oil” (kerosene) for use in a new lamp. (It should be noted that in Poland ten years before the Drake exploit, Ignacy Lukaszewicz had developed a similar drilling technique. Lukaszewicz had also developed a refining technique and designed a lamp. That is why the Poles consider him to be the father of the oil industry.)

Several aspects of the history of the oil industry relate to the area around Montrose.

First, there is the existence of properties attributed to one Samuel Kier (Keer) at Montrose on the 1906 map of Montrose. This Samuel Kier also appears in the 1900 and 1910 Census records (spelled Kier) as residing in the Montrose area. Unfortunately, his birth date of May 1935 would make him too young to be the famous Samuel Kier that fathered the American oil industry. Possibly this was his son.

Then there is the oil refinery that was located in what today is Blawnox, but then was considered part of Montrose. The 1876 map shows it located at the bottom of what is today Humbolt Street. There is also a railroad station near it, appropriately named “Petroleum”. The 1883 map shows the rail station, but not the refinery. The 1906 map of Hoboken (not covered in this paper) shows the area where the refinery was in 1876 as a block of lots that were designated the Montrose Plan Number 3. This plan stretched from Cable to Boyd Avenue.

The 1867-1868 Directory of Pittsburgh & Allegheny contains a listing under “Oil Companies” for “Fairview, St. Clair and Duquesne Way” {page 479}.

The 1870 census lists a Peter Duganne, age 39, from what appears to be the south-east corner of Indiana Township {now O’Hara} as a Superintendent at an Oil Refinery.

The 1872-1873 Directory of Pittsburgh and Allegheny lists on page 227 an Arnold Hertz as working at the Fairview oil refinery offices in Pittsburgh while living in the City of Allegheny.

The 1876 publication of the History of Allegheny County contains the following entry {page 171}: “At Montrose Station the Columbia Conduit Company has a vast amount of oil stored, and there is an oil refinery at Fairview, just below.”

The 1876 publication “Pittsburgh and Allegheny in the Centennial Year” contains a list on page 208 of the oil refineries in the Pittsburgh area. The “Fairview” refinery is listed as owned by D. Hostetter and having a capacity of 2,136 gallons per week from three stills.

It would appear from the above references to the refinery that it was called the Fairview and was located in what is today Blawnox with its headquarters in Pittsburgh and that a large (for its day) oil storage facility was located upstream.

Finally, there was the incident that took place at the foot of what is now Powers Run Road that helped shape the way oil was delivered to the refineries from the oil field in Pennsylvania. As George S. Davidson wrote and delivered as a speech entitled “Pittsburgh and

## Oil and the Refinery

the Petroleum Industry” to the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce and is documented in the publication “Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Spirit, Addresses at the Chamber of Commerce of Pittsburgh, 1927-1928”, page 97, as follows:

“As already related, pipelines were first used in the oil region to replace teaming. They were of two and two and a half inches diameter, and but a few miles in length. After the railroads had built their lines into the main valleys of the oil fields, more ambitious pipe lines were built for the purpose of delivering the crude oil direct from the wells to the cars. The success of these local ventures eventually suggested the idea of building pipe lines of larger diameter and much greater length that would compete with the railroads and carry the oil directly from field to refineries. As methods of terminal operation, the railroads welcomed the pipe lines, and in many cases owned them. But as competitors they opposed them, which for a long time they managed to do successfully, because this new service was not recognized as a public utility and did not possess the right of condemnation of land. The approach of a pipeline to the crossing of a railroad meant a legal battle. A pipeline of much interest to this community was the Columbia Conduit Pipe Line, under the control of Dr. Hostetter of this city, planned to bring oil from the Butler county fields to Pittsburgh. The line was built in late 1874. The General Pipe Line Act of Pennsylvania, conferring the right of condemnation was not enacted until 1883, some nine years too late for use by this enterprise. When the line reached a point upon the West Penn Division of the Pennsylvania railroad above Montrose, Allegheny county, and an attempt was made to lay its line under the railroad in the bed of Powers run, its workers were met with a large force of railroad employes, armed with all sorts of weapons both offensive and defensive, and the ‘Powers Run Riot’ passed into history as one of the outstanding incidents of the oil industry. The pipe line company appealed to the courts in vain for relief, but six months later the interested companies settled their dispute, the line was put in operation, and the delivery of 3,000 barrels a day to the Pittsburgh refineries was accomplished by means of it.”

Unfortunately, Mr. Davidson did not mention the extent of battle casualties from this encounter. It would appear that the railroaders had the better of the situation and, most likely, the pipeline men backed off after a short engagement. Any locals that were involved were most likely working for the railroad, while the pipeline men were probably all outsiders.

It appears as if the oil era in the Montrose area did not last long. If the reference to a “Fairview” oil company is the refinery that was at Montrose, then it existed by 1867. Surely, by 1870 when Mr. Duganne was the superintendent, it was there. When it ceased operations and was torn down is another matter. According to the maps, that was probably sometime between 1876 and 1883, but this is speculative as maps are not always accurate. The best guess is that it operated and was a source of employment for the people in the area for approximately a decade.

## **The Allegheny County Workhouse and the Allegheny City Poorhouse**

The 1876 publication of the History of Allegheny County contains the following entry {page 171}: “The County Workhouse is located at Claremont Station, as is also the Allegheny City Poor House. Both are large and imposing buildings.”

### **The Workhouse**

In response to a petition from the Board of Prison Inspectors of Allegheny county concerned with the rising costs of maintaining prisoners at the county jail and the increasingly crowded conditions there, in 1866 the state legislature authorized the construction of a workhouse in Allegheny County. The Allegheny County Workhouse and Inebriate Asylum at Claremont {just west of present day Blawnox} admitted its first inmates in 1869, two years before the buildings and walls were completed. The workhouse was officially closed in 1971. The walls, in greatly reduced form, remain in segments to this day.

For several generations of kids living on Montrose Hill during the first seven decades of the twentieth century, the Allegheny County Workhouse farm constituted the western boundary of the Hill and was their parents imposed {though seldom followed} boundary of their play area. However, from the maps available, it appears that the original Workhouse property was confined to the area bounded by Freeport road to the north, the river to the south, Hoboken/Blawnox to the east and what is currently called Fairview Avenue to the west. The expansion to the north, eventually taking the property to as far north as Field Club road near the current Fox Chapel High School and curving around the north end of Hoboken/Blawnox to the boundary with Montrose Hill would not take place for another half century after the minimum security prison first opened.

The 1876 map is the first one that I have that shows the Workhouse and indicates only the buildings between Freeport Road and the railroad. The 1883 map also only shows the Workhouse as existing only below Freeport Road. The region north of Freeport road has several farms occupying the area.

The 1883 map is the first that shows the Workhouse property extending north above Freeport Road, although not more than a few hundred feet.

An 1897 map, presented at the end of this chapter shows the beginning of the northern growth of the Workhouse property as farms originally belonging to the Beaty {Beattie, Beatty} families were added to the farm. A 1905 map, also at the end of this chapter, also shows this expansion. Even then, the municipal farms did not extend to the east to Montrose. This area is shown as still listed as owned by Paul H. Hacke and Edward Cable at the time.

The article on Cyrus Blackham, included in this work, describes how some of the land that his wife’s family owned became part of the Workhouse farm, as follows: “He went to Zelienople, where he was with the Iron City Manufacturing Company for a period of two years. Thereafter, he took up farming, conducting a farm, owned by his wife’s people {his wife was born Emma Boyd}, back of Hoboken in O’Hara township, until 1902. This farm was sold to Allegheny county and is still part of the farm land owned by the county and used in connection with the workhouse, which is situated in what was formerly known as Hoboken and is now the borough of Blawnox.”

Even after the above mentioned Boyd property was taken into the Workhouse farm, several other properties would have had to have been added to take it to the final full extent. This author got to experience the Workhouse farm in its last decade of actual operation. Our family moved to Montrose Hill in September of 1957. Concurrently, I started 4<sup>th</sup> grade at Boyd School

## **The Allegheny County Workhouse and the Allegheny City Poorhouse**

{the “new” one on Powers Run Road}. I do not remember the first time that I ventured onto the Workhouse farm property. As kids, we virtually lived either on a baseball field or in the woods when we were not in school. The Workhouse property was just an extension of those woods and the work roads that surrounded each made for easy paths when going from one section of woods to the other or from the Hill out towards something near where the Fox Chapel High School is now. Early on, one of my buddies probably mentioned nonchalantly, “Watch out for the Jeep”.

If, as children, we wanted to actually “go to the Workhouse”, the most likely entrance was just north of the Sunoco complex. That opened onto the “cornfield”. There were several cornfields on the property, one to the north and another to the south of this one, but this was ours. Oh, in case anyone is interested, we did not help ourselves to the corn. Well, to be honest, newcomers sometimes did, but they soon found out that no matter how long you cooked it; this corn was meant for animals, not people. It was tough and not sweet. Beyond the cornfield on the top of the hill was the apple orchard. Unlike the corn, the apples were quite edible and were some of the largest apples in the most varieties that I have ever seen. I heard tell that some kids tried to help themselves to these apples from time to time, but I’m sure that’s just a rumor.

The top of the orchard was one of the highest peaks in the area and afforded an excellent view that included not only most of the farm itself but the Cathedral of Learning on the Pitt campus and the larger buildings in downtown Pittsburgh. To the north of the orchard was one of the great attractions of the area, an abandoned house known as “Old Joes”. It appeared to date back into the late 1800s and also included a windmill that I am told still exists and turns with the wind. Old Joes was on another tall hill and looking out of the second story window gave a wonderful view directly across the farm to the clubhouse of the Pittsburgh Field Club head on.

Often when we were in high school, we would walk out to Fox Chapel High to swim in the Summer along the work roads at the perimeter of the Workhouse farm property. The combination of the farm itself and the large amount of wooded areas that came with it and surrounded it meant that any kid growing up on Montrose Hill surely had enough area to explore.

### **The Poor House**

The City of Allegheny, now the north side of Pittsburgh, was an independent city until it was annexed by the much larger Pittsburgh in 1907. Since Allegheny was hemmed in to the south and west by the rivers, they naturally looked to the north and east for any future expansion and facilities that had to be located outside of the city.

The Poor House appears on maps starting with the 1876, which shows only a single building representation. The 1883 also shows a single building. The 1897 map, at the end of this chapter, clearly shows a large main building and at least one out building. The 1905 map, also at the end of this chapter, clearly shows not only an expanded main building but a large barn and a dozen out buildings.

An interesting series of photographs, taken on September 29 of 1914, can be found on the University of Pittsburgh’s website “Historic Pittsburgh”. By this time the City of Pittsburgh had taken over the farm. It was also known as the Warner Station Poor Farm. The description of most of the photographs reads “View of the wagon shed at the Warner Station Poor Farm. The poor farm, also known as the Allegheny City Poor Farm, was located at Warner Station along the

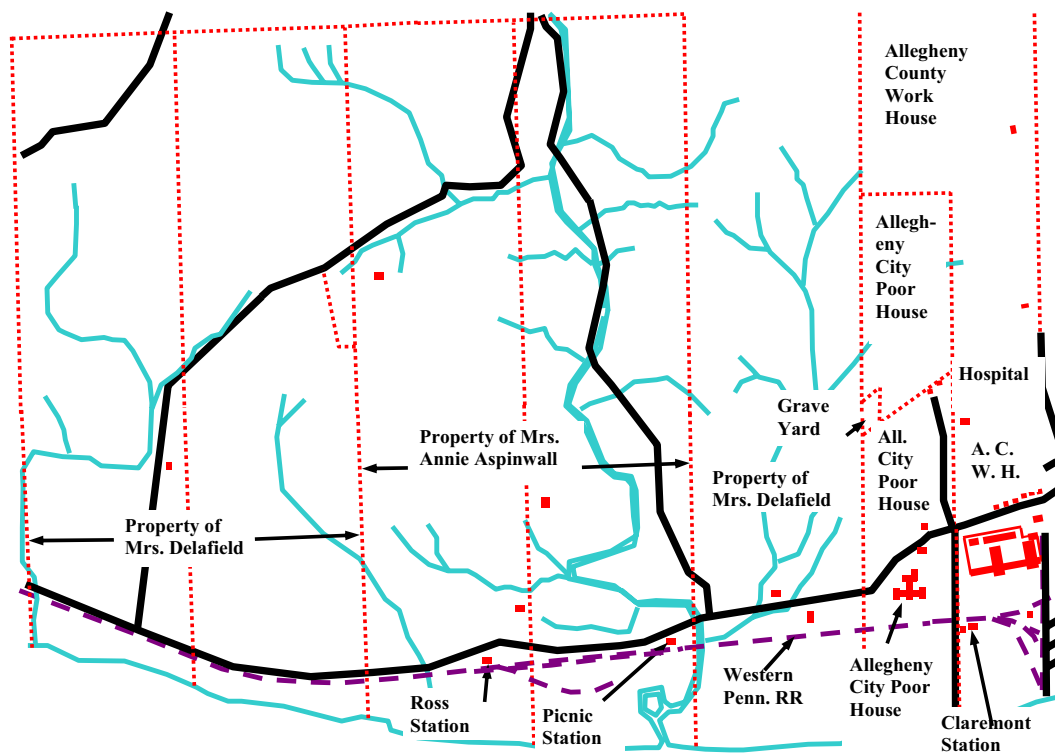


## The Allegheny County Workhouse and the Allegheny City Poorhouse

Western Pennsylvania Railroad, (Claremont), in O'Hara Township just beyond the Aspinwall Pumping Station and was adjacent to the Allegheny County Workhouse.”

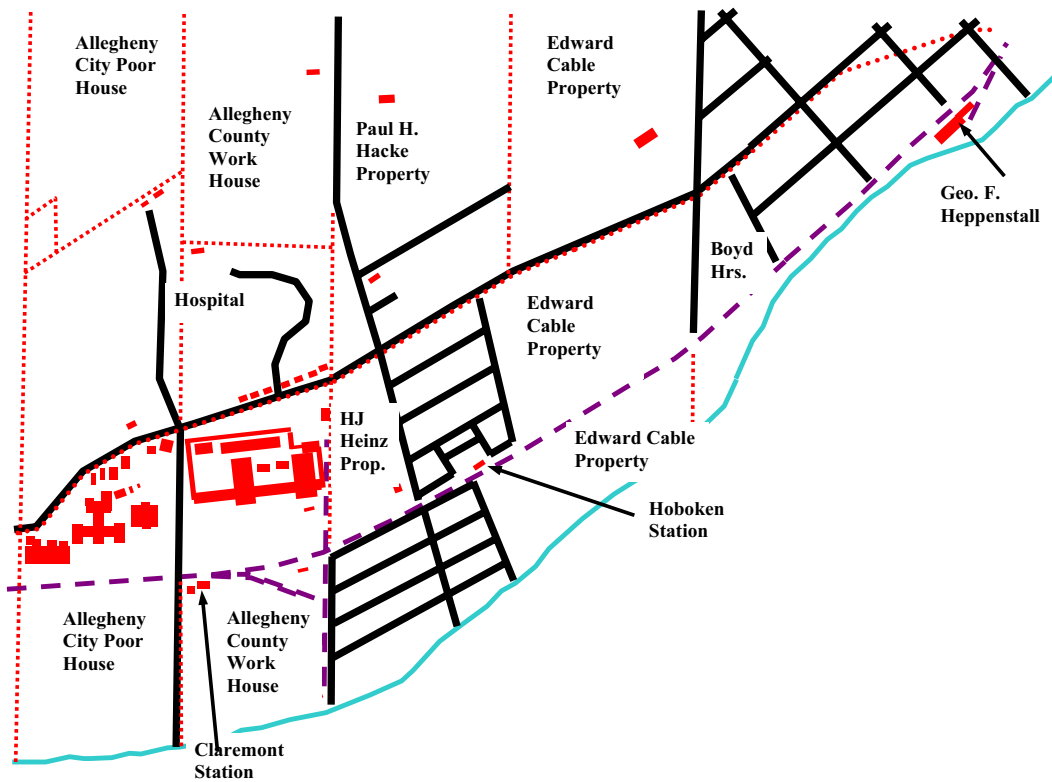
It is not known when the farm was abandoned. No mention of it was made by any of the oral history subjects covering the period of the 1920s and 1930s.

**A Sketch of an 1897 Map showing the breakup of the Ross Estate, the Picnic rail station, the property of the Allegheny City Poor House and the property of the Allegheny County Work House**



# The Allegheny County Workhouse and the Allegheny City Poorhouse

An Sketch of a 1905 Map showing the growth of the Allegheny City Poor House and Allegheny County Work House



## Fairview Becomes Montrose

From the 1889 History of Allegheny County {page 158}: “The village of Montrose was laid out in 1872 by the ‘Modern Life Insurance Company’, of Pittsburgh and Hoboken, by the ‘Hoboken Land Company’. The former has not materialized to any extent.”

The effort to develop and sell the lots of the new village of Montrose must have continued for some time with little results. The 1889 “History of Allegheny County”, page 497, contains a biography of one John Graham Armstrong, a merchant in Acmetonia who was born in Harmarville in September of 1859. It mentions that at the age of 15 he worked for the Montrose Land Company for one year. That would probably have been the year 1875.

The ambitious project continued to be shown on area maps into the early twentieth century, although there is no evidence that more than a few lots were sold up to that time. The various maps from 1875, 1883, 1898 and 1906 show the same pattern of mostly non-existing roads. {See the chapters covering these maps.}

The reason for the name “Montrose” is a mystery that this researcher was not able to solve. There is one circumstantial connection, however, that bears further research. It all revolves around people by the name of Jessup, as follows:

The 1855 map indicates a Mrs. Jessup living at Fairview.

The 1900 census lists a Charles Jessup, age 17, living with his uncle, Charles Hertzell, age 35. Ten years later, Charles Jessup is listed as a boarder with the same family, minus the uncle.

The 1858-1859 Directory of Pittsburgh and Vicinity contains an advertisement on page 16 for the Farmer’s Union Insurance Company. The advertisement lists some references for the product, including one Honorable William Jessup of Montrose Pa. This Montrose would have to have been the county seat of Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania as the village of Fairview had not yet changed its name. Judge Jessup and his family was a leading figure in the history this Montrose. He also visited Pittsburgh on several occasions.

While pure speculation, if Judge Jessup, or one of his sons, were involved with the Montrose Land Company and possibly was related to Jessups living in the Montrose, Allegheny County, area, he might have been instrumental in transplanting the name of his home town in Susquehanna County to the new development in Allegheny County.

Regardless of how Montrose got its name, the village name of Fairview, which had existed in the area for at least four decades, quickly disappeared, in spite of the fact that it would be a 80 years before the town laid out in 1872 filled in as designed.

## The 1876 Map

The 1876 map of O'Hara Township is much clearer and with much more detail than earlier maps previously discussed. For the most part, this is due to the fact that by this time there was just a lot more in the area to show.

The most obvious change is the indication of a new town, Montrose, of significant size. Without knowing any details, one would assume that it was a town of at least 5000 people. In reality, it shows only the anticipated future development. The actual settlements were still only a few houses on the hill and a dozen or so along what is now River Road {but was then part of Freeport Road}.

Another major change was the replacement of the Pennsylvania Canal by the West Penn Rail Road following essentially the same path. Several stations are indicated, including Ross Station located about a quarter mile to the west of the current junction of Freeport Road and Fox Chapel Road, Claremont located near the current junction of Fairview Avenue and Papercraft Avenue, Hoboken {indicated only as "Station" on the map} located just to the west of Center Avenue in Blawnox, Petroleum Station located approximately down the hill from the current Jackson Street in Blawnox and Montrose Station located at the bottom of Boyd Avenue.

Hoboken, currently Blawnox, consisted of only First through Eighth Streets {all between Freeport Road and the Allegheny River}, Center, and what today is Blaw Avenue.

The only house with a label in what was previously called Fairview and by the time of this map was apparently Montrose is labeled Kirkwood.

A ferry is clearly indicated as crossing the Allegheny River between Montrose/Fairview and Verona. The exact location appears to be just down the hill from where the current Clifton Avenue {the "Old Road"} junctions with Freeport Road.

Curiously, the designation "Fairview", previously applied to the village that ran along Freeport Road {currently River Road} between the current Boyd Avenue and the mouth of Powers Run is now shown up the hill on what today is the upper eastern section of Blawnox. This displacement is hard to understand as there was no appreciable settlement in this area with the exception of the F. Cable home and, presumably, farm.

Of great significance to the area is an oil refinery located between the West Penn Railroad and the Allegheny River. The actual location appears to have been from below the current Jackson Street to below the current Lewis Avenue. In other words, it appears to correspond with the eastern end of what later would later in the 1920s would become the shops of the Blaw-Knox Company.

To the west of Hoboken was the Allegheny County Workhouse and to the west of it was the Allegheny City Poor Farm. Both were served by the Claremont Station.

The only schoolhouses indicated on this map that were close to Montrose were the one just to the west of Hoboken on Freeport Road and the one on what is now Field Club Road near the current Fox Chapel High School, probably already known as Boyd School in 1876.

The Powers Run area was pretty much comprised of the various Powers, Marshall, Boyd, and Kirkwood farms.

## **The 1876 Map**

Much of what is today the R.I.D.C. Industrial Park was the farms of the Beatys {with two spellings}, Cable and Mabon {spelling uncertain}.

Everything from what is now Oakhill Manor west to Sharpsburg and north into current Fox Chapel continued to belong to the Ross Estate.

The 1876 Map

A SKETCH OF THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF  
O'HARA TOWNSHIP, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PA,  
TAKEN FROM THE 1876 MAP



## The 1883 Map

The 1883 map of the southwest corner of O'Hara Township indicates a lot of the industrial growth in the region.

Starting in what appears to be the western part of present day Aspinwall was a structure designated of F. J. Heinz {which obvious should have read "H. J."}, along with another structure labeled "Pickle Mfg.". Both of these structures were located on the map to the east of the Darlington estate, which is known to have been located where the north end of the present Highland Park Bridge is today. Also marked on the map is the grave of Guyasuta, also located near the present Highland Park Bridge. The southwest quadrant continues to be taken up by the Ross Estate.

The West Penn {Western Pennsylvania} railroad runs along its present course, with stations at Ross, Claremont, Hoboken, Petroleum and Montrose. Also along the rail line is the Allegheny City Poor House and the Allegheny County Workhouse and the villages of Hoboken {not delineated, although it includes a post office and school house} and Montrose. The farms above Hoboken are designated as Cable and Beatty {two spellings}.

The village of Montrose lists the following residents: Mrs. Kirkwood, Charles Malone, Jonathan Magraw, David Lenox, Mrs. Cochran, Mrs. {??}iage, James. Wilson, Mrs. Gordon {and Hotel} and James Callahan. A ferry is shown near the north end of the village.

The Kirkwood property is gone from the lower Powers Run area. The properties along the present day Powers Run Road are {from south to north} Joseph Marshall, Jonathan Hayes, William Wilson, E. and Thomas Powers and James Bain. One of the manifestations of the Boyd School is shown as School House Number 5.

Also, a substantial village is shown at Harmarville, at the point where the Hulton Bridge would later rest.

## The 1883 Map

### A SKETCH OF THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF O'HARA TOWNSHIP, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PA, TAKEN FROM THE 1883 MAP





## Fitzgerald Plaster Works

I first became aware of the plaster works while interviewing Mrs. Elizabeth Van Horn in the 1986. She was 89 years old at the time and referred to the “Old Plaster Works” as being located at the bottom of Boyd Avenue, past the railroad tracks. She also mentioned that her father worked there and that her husband’s family lived in the “old plaster works house” when he was young.

The Fitzgerald Plaster Company first shows up in the 1892-1893 Pittsburgh business directories with the following add:

“THE FITZGERALD PLASTER CO.,  
of Western Pennsylvania,  
Manufacturers of  
**Fitzgerald Patent Plaster**  
WORKS AT MONTROSE STATION,  
W. P. R. R.,  
Office, 59 Ninth Street, Room 11,  
PITTSBURGH, PA.  
Telephone 2030.”

An identical add was run in the 1894-5 directory along with a classified listing under “Patent Plaster”, of which Fitzgerald was the lone entry.

Also in 1894, the Western Pennsylvania Exposition Society held its 6<sup>th</sup> exposition from September 5<sup>th</sup> through October 20<sup>th</sup>. Their booklet contained a simple two line add for Fitzgerald Plaster that simply stated: “Fitzgerald Wall Plaster, Manufactured by Fitzgerald Plaster Company”. However, the booklet also contained a section elaborating on various companies with a specific paragraph on Fitzgerald Plaster, as follows:

### “FITZGERALD PLASTER COMPANY

The architects of Pittsburgh and Allegheny are very much in favor of recommending the above named firm’s plaster as the best in the country. Read their advertisement on page 36.”

This was quite a statement for a general industrial exposition that was intended to showcase the entire regions enterprise. It is not known whether an honest assessment prompted this statement or if it is the result of the fact that the officers of the company may have been “well connected”.

The 1895-1896 directory had a listing for Fitzgerald Plaster under the classification “Wall Plaster” and gives the offices as 24 Isabella Street, Allegheny City. The 1896-1897 Directory also had a listing for Fitzgerald Plaster under the classification “Wall Plaster”, but gave the office address as 42 to 46 Anderson, Allegheny City. This directory also had an alphabetical listing that

## Fitzgerald Plaster Works

included Fitzgerald Plaster that gave the company president as August H. Lauman. The 1897-1898 directory had the same alphabetical listing as the previous year.

Also of interest at this time was an entry in the 1896-1897 Allegheny City Municipal Report containing a resolution to accept a settlement for \$15,000 in restitution against the city and benefiting the Fitzgerald Plaster Company, "in full payment for their claim for damages on account of laying of the water conduit". This "water conduit" was the 60 inch "Montrose Rising Main" built a few years earlier to connect the Montrose pumping station with the City of Allegheny. This was only one of various such claims. Curiously, most were challenged in the courts. There is no reference in the city solicitor's report {part of the Municipal Report} that the Fitzgerald Plaster claim was ever challenged, however this researcher did not check the court records.

The 1898 and 1899 directories both contain several entries for the Fitzgerald Plaster Company under the categories of Building Supplies, Lime {& Cement, 1899}, Plaster and Wall Plaster. The 1899 version also had an entry under Cement and gave the officers as August H. Lauman, president, and C. H. Stolzenbach, Secretary. The addition of cement as a product and Mr. Stolzenbach as "Secretary" is curious. Mr. Stolzenbach was "well connected". His family had been active in the sand and gravel industry for decades and he had served on several commissions.

Of additional interest in an entry in the Allegheny City 1899-1900 municipal report, under the Department of Charities. It documents two contributions by the Fitzgerald Plaster Company, one for \$24.00 and one for \$4.45. It is good to see that they were returning some of the \$15,000 that they received from the water conduit damage settlement to the community.

The 1900 and 1901 directories again contain several entries for the Fitzgerald Plaster Company, under the listings Building Supplies, Cement, Lime & Cement and Plaster. The office location was now 212 Anderson in Allegheny City.

The directory entries continued through 1902 {Building Supplies and Plaster entries}, 1903 {Plaster only}, 1904 {Wall Plaster only}, 1905 {Building Supplies only} and 1906 {Plaster only}. The offices were now in downtown Pittsburgh on Smithfield Street.

A 1906 brochure, with the titles "Pittsburgh, The Distributing point for the West and South" and "Allegheny County, Destined to be the Greatest Manufacturing Center in the World", contained an article on the Fitzgerald Plaster Company. The article contains some generalities about the nature of the region before actually getting to the plaster works, as follows:

"In this connection, we would refer to the well-known Fitzgerald Plaster Company, which was established here seven years ago. The office and warehouses of the company occupy the two-story brick building at 42 and 46 Anderson street, covering an area of eighteen thousand square feet. The works are located at Montrose Station, on the Western Pennsylvania Railroad, are very complete in their construction and appliances, cover two acres and employ forty hands. This company deals in and manufactures all kinds and descriptions of builders' supplies, and makes a specialty of Fitzgerald Wall Plaster and New Process Lime, which is being rapidly introduced and very generally used by the leading builders and contractors. The officers of the company are August H. Lauman, president, and C. H. Stolzenbach, secretary. Both of these gentlemen are natives of this city." {all verbatim}

## Fitzgerald Plaster Works

Although published in 1906, this appears to have been written earlier as it gives the age of the company as seven years, which would infer organization in 1899, much later than the 1892 date that the directories would imply. Also, the office address is out of date.

Of note to Montrose history is the employment figure of forty. Considering that in 1906 there were probably less than 25 houses on River Road and 10 on Montrose Hill, the plaster works would have been a major employer in the area.

The last directory entry was 1909. The address was 209 9<sup>th</sup> Street. No reference was found for the Fitzgerald Plaster Co. past this date.

As previously mentioned, the president of Fitzgerald Plaster was August H. Lauman. Mr. Lauman first appears in the 1893-1893 directories, identified as the President of Fitzgerald Plaster and residing on Federal Street Extension near Perrysville Avenue in the City of Allegheny. He appears in the 1895-1896, 1896-1897, 1899, 1900 and 1901 directories, all at the same location, on Federal near Perrysville. The 1901 directory was the first to show actual house numbers {2218 Federal} and a telephone number {Bell North 1102-2}. No further directory entries for Mr. Lauman were found by this researcher, although there is an entry in the 1919 City of Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce membership listing for a A. H. Lauman, Jr., probably his son.

The disappearance of the Fitzgerald Plaster Company from the directories after 1909 can be explained by an entry in the trade magazine "Brick", covering the period from January to June, 1906, as follows:

“The plant and property of the Fitzgerald Plaster Co. at Montrose Pa. have been sold to George T. Heppenstall, of Pittsburg, the consideration being \$35,000. The plant has been idle for some time, but will be placed in operation again at an early date. The product of this factory, which has been built upwards of a half dozen years, consists of patent wall-plaster, made from a mixture of sand, plaster-Paris and other ingredients. The mixture employed is of such character that the plaster can be made so that it becomes hardened within a few minutes after being spread upon a wall, or, if it is desired to have the material set more slowly, the various ingredients are proportioned accordingly. Montrose is a small town on the West Penn Railroad about 15 miles from Pittsburg. In addition to it's factory, office and warehouse, the Fitzgerald Company also has maintained a city office and warehouse and has also disposed of a good portion of it's output in Pittsburg. The new owner of the Montrose plant is a member of the firm Heppenstall & Marquis, of Pittsburg, which concern deals quite largely in builders and contractors supplies.”

Also, the 1906 map of the Montrose Plan shows the owner of the former Fitzgerald Plaster works as George F. Heppenstall.

I have not been able to find any evidence of exactly when the plaster works at the bottom of Boyd Avenue ceased operation and stopped being a source of employment in the Montrose-Hoboken area. Also, the reference in the “Brick” article to the plant being idle “for some time” casts doubt on the viability of the operation as a place of stable employment after about 1905. In spite of these facts, it appears that the Fitzgerald/Heppenstall & Marquis plant was a vital part of the community for at least 15 years.

## The Water Works

Cholera was the great health scourge of the nineteenth century for urban populations. The cause was usually contaminated {usually with human or animal waste} water. The cities of Pittsburgh and Allegheny went through numerous epidemics, some killing hundreds of people. In an effort to relieve the situation, Pittsburgh established reservoirs high above the city and waste sources, first in the Lower Hill District and later on Herron Hill.

The City of Allegheny responded by progressively moving its water intake up the relatively clean Allegheny River to try to keep ahead of the upstream development of towns and industry that was dumping waste directly into the river. Finally, they decided to go as far upstream as was feasible from an engineering point of view and they built a pumping station at Montrose along with what was then a massive 60 inch "conduit" all the way to the city of Allegheny. The publication "Standard History of Pittsburgh Pennsylvania", edited by Erasmus Wilson and published in 1898, states: "The new water-works of Allegheny are a credit to that city. They are located at Montrose, and were first operated in 1897. The cost of the building and intake cribs aggregated \$292,000. Provision was made for six engines, having a pumping capacity of 36,000,000 gallons per day. The cost for this whole improvement will be over \$2,000,000."

This was a massive project for its day as the "conduit" disrupted towns, businesses and private properties in Hoboken, Aspinwall, Sharpsburg, Etna and Millvale before reaching the city boundaries. Numerous claims were filed against the city for damages. The 1896-97 Municipal Report of the City of Allegheny stated the following: "There is a very large number of cases pending and ready for trial—and many new suits have been entered by and against the city. Most of the cases are, of course, appeals from Board of Viewers on the many new and important thoroughfares in the Tenth and Eleventh Wards. The only other cases of great moment are those arising out of the laying of the water conduit from Montrose to the City. I have tried the case of Walters, Walker & Co. vs. the City; McKee heirs vs. same, and Mary Williams vs. same, receiving verdicts which the Water Committee and the supervising Engineer considered entirely satisfactory, and not exceeding the amounts we had offered in settlement before trial. I have tried before the Viewers the cases of Darlington estate and Aspinwall estate on account of damages by the conduit. In the former the award was \$6,850.00 from which plaintiff appealed; in the latter \$5,800, from which both plaintiff and defendant appealed. This leaves but one more large tract unsettled, and, in fact, but one probable claim unsettled, that of the Delafield property, but no proceedings have as yet been commenced."

Also in the same report: "In regard to time new water works being constructed at Montrose, it is rapidly being completed and it is expected that by the 15th of April two of the pumps will be in operation and will be supplying the greater portion of the water consumed in the City, and by the 15th of May the entire plant will be in operation. The work has progressed very slowly, owing to delays in the contractors completing the building and the contractors for the pumps and engines being very slow in the erection of machinery. Regardless of the delays the entire work is now completed, with the exception of the pumping engines, and all the material for them is now on the ground and is rapidly being put in place. Such preliminary tests as have been made so far are satisfactory, but the full efficiency cannot be determined until the final completion and tests are made on all the branches of the new works."

Some of the technical aspects of the station {which most readers will find to be boring and you might want to skip on a few paragraphs, but since I am an engineer, I decided to include this information} are included in the City of Allegheny Municipal Reports for the fiscal year 1899-1900, as follows: "When the Montrose Pumping Station was built it was contemplated to move the two Allis pumps from River Avenue to Montrose, and to that end foundations were built for them, since that time, however, the conditions have changed somewhat and after an

## The Water Works

examination of the old pumps by experts, it is found that the cost of repairing them and remodeling them to suit the other station is so great that it will be more economical to erect new anti modern machinery at Montrose of a much larger capacity than the Allis pumps, and I would recommend that at least one new pump be erected at Montrose of 15,000,000 gallons capacity. The foundations built for the Allis pumps will be available for the new and larger pumps. There will also be required a battery to two 350-horse power boilers, steps should be taken at once in this matter, as the consumption is increasing at such a rapid rate that in a short time the pumping capacity will be inadequate to the demand for the water. It will take a long time to install the new pumps and this matter should be attended to at once.”

Also, later in the report: “MONTROSE PUMPING STATION - The pumping station at Montrose is in good condition, but I would suggest that arrangements be made as soon as possible for two fifteen million gallon triple pumping engines of crank and flywheel type. The object in placing this type of engine is to economize in the consumption of fuel, also, this type of engine, being coupled at 120 degrees insures a regular motion to the machinery, and does away with any mechanical notions of applying weights to the reciprocating parts to attain what should be accomplished by first class mechanism, instead of trying to remedy faulty construction. All surplus weight attached to cover faulty construction takes power to drive it, and should not be considered in contracting for machinery of this magnitude. In regard to the new boilers at this station, it would be advisable to contract for same as soon as possible, from the fact that a foundation will have to go down for twenty to twenty-five feet, and the tunnel for taking out ashes will have to be extended to take in these boilers, and, considering the amount of work to do in installing this work, it would be advisable to have it well out of the way before the pumps are erected. The boilers should not be less than 350 horse power each. This will leave us only 250 horsepower in reserve when the pumps are supplying the city with the present consumption, and if the boiler capacity has to be increased in the future it will be necessary to lengthen the building or pull out one or more of the old batteries, and substitute boilers of greater horse power.”

The building, photographs of which are available on the University of Pittsburgh “Historic Pittsburgh” website, was the equivalent of three stories, although without floors. This height was required to the size of the engine-pumps. Steam engines and reciprocating pumps of that era were very large. Today, an equivalent centrifugal pump driven by an electric motor would be the size of a small automobile, rather than a 30 foot tall monster.

After the annexation of the City of Allegheny by Pittsburgh in 1907, this system became part of the Pittsburgh water system. In 1914, Pittsburgh, having annexed part of O’Hara Township that was formerly the southern section of the Ross estates, completed the Aspinwall pumping station and mothballed the Montrose station. It should be noted that the complex at Ross also included filtration beds. For the most part, before this time, drinking water was not filtered nor treated, but simply pumped directly from the rivers to the consumer.

Although the Montrose station was only active for 17 years, it was left in place as a backup and the buildings were there for several decades. By the 1936 flood, it had been demolished and only a hole was left {see Jim Murdock interview}.

The most lasting aspect of this system, however, was the 60 inch pipe that ran the 10 miles to the city. It continued to be used by the various municipalities and has recently become a problem due to its deteriorating condition and size.

## Verona, Oakmont and the Ferry

Verona grew up with the railroads and, as such, is not as old as Fairview/Montrose. However, it became a much more sizable town and was incorporated as a borough in 1871. Four stations of the Allegheny Valley Railroad {which opened in 1856} were within the limits of the town by the time of incorporation; those being Iona, Verona, Hulton and Edgewater. Jonathan Hulton was one of the earliest settlers and his farm was at what was later known as Hulton and today is the lower section of Oakmont near the bridge that bears his name. Oakmont was a part of Verona until 1889.

The 1876 History of Allegheny County, published by L. H. Everts & Co., contains a section on page 161 covering Verona. Interestingly, it also contains a description of the view towards Montrose and Hoboken, as follows: “The Allegheny Valley and Western Pennsylvania Railways {the Allegheny Valley running along the Pittsburgh-Verona side, while the West Penn ran along the Montrose side of the river} follow the noble sweeps of the river, and at almost any time a swift, whirling train may be seen winding along the serpentine way at the foot of the bluffs on the west, or across the long level plain, with a perfect straight line of track to the east. In the distance are seen the white dwellings around the noble structures located at Claremont Station, and away to the north the hills rise abruptly from the river, their undulating summits crowned with fine dwellings, and fine orchards and fields, spotted with the darker green of the forest-trees.”

For many decades during the last of the ninetieth and the first of the twentieth centuries, Verona was the closest town to Fairview/Montrose in which to shop due to the ferry connecting the two entities. {Sharpsburg would have been the closest town with shops on the same side of the river and would be considerably further away, particularly on foot.}

It should be noted that some folk lore attributed the ferry connecting Montrose with Verona as being run by Jonathan Hulton. Sources indicate that Hulton was a farmer and not a ferryman.

A 1932 publication, “Pittsburgh of Today”, contains a biography of one Parker W. Grubbs, page 847. Mr. Grubbs was a well known builder and lived in Oakmont at the time, although he was born in Harmarville in 1898. Of particular interest, however, is his wife’s lineage. Her father is identified as “Patterson Woolslayer, who operated the ferry which used to ply from the site of the present Hulton Bridge, near Oakmont, Allegheny County; and where Mrs. Grubbs was born, and passed away, February 1, 1930.”

While the above paragraph suggests a ferry at the current site of the Hulton Bridge, other sources define a ferry as being located at the foot of Montrose Hill. These sources include a panorama of Verona, painted in 1899 and available on either the Library of Congress website {loc.gov} or the University of Pittsburgh “Historic Pittsburgh” website under the Darlington collection. This depiction clearly shows the ferry at the bottom of what is now Montrose Hill. Unfortunately, although Oakmont is clearly visible, it does not include the area where the current bridge is located, which would have shown if there was a second ferry at that location.

Also, the maps covered in this work {1876, 1883 and 1906} indicate that a ferry was near the current waterworks at the Montrose side.

Additionally, oral history interviews of Mrs. Van Horn and Mr. Murdock {presented later in this paper}, reference a ferry still operating from River Road in the 1910s, 1920s and possibly into the 1930s.

## **Verona, Oakmont and the Ferry**

Mr. Murdock attributes the ownership to a member of the Ecker family, as follows: “One of the Eckers had the ferry boat down along the river. Had a float down there and anytime you wanted the ferry you got a hammer hit the old brake drum. It would ring like a bell. He’d come across and pick you up. Take you to Verona.”

## **The 1898 Map**

The 1898 map of O'Hara Township is a lot different than the other maps in that it shows specific property boundaries and most of the owners.

The Borough of Aspinwall, along with the villages of Montrose and Hoboken {both part of O'Hara Township} are shown. The properties of the Allegheny City Poor House and the Allegheny County workhouse are also shown.

The names associated with the farms and estates include: Bain, Beatty, Benson, Boyd, Cable, Glass, Hackel, Hawkins, Kirkwood, Powers, Price and Ross.



The 1898 Map

A SKETCH OF THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF  
O'HARA TOWNSHIP, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PA,  
TAKEN FROM THE 1898 MAP



## Hardships and Disasters in the 1800s and Early 1900s

Daily life could be difficult during the 1800s and early 1900 when the weather had a much greater impact on daily life, both at work and at home, then it does today when weather forecasting and climate control is part of our daily life.

Besides natural disasters, man-made disasters were much more frequent. Safer materials, better safety practices and regulation of dangerous substances have greatly impacted the accident rate in the last 100 years.

### Low Temperature Extremes

Low Winter temperatures into the minus numbers on the Fahrenheit scale have long been noted in south-west Pennsylvania. The 1913 Gazette Times {page 32} under a paragraph titled “Temperature Extremes”, lists the following low temperatures for the Pittsburgh region on a monthly basis {I have included only the normally cold months}:

Month	Temp., F	Year	Day
November	4	1880	22
December	-9	1880	22
January	-12	1879	3
January	-12	1875	10
February	-20	1889	10
March	1	1900	17

## Hardships and Disasters in the 1800s and Early 1900s

### High Temperature Extremes

In spite of the recent discussions on global warming inferring that the 1800s was a cool period, unusually warm weather is documented as not a rare occasion in the late 1800s. Again from the 1913 Gazette Times, for the Pittsburgh region:

Month	Temp., F	Year	Day
January	75	1906	22
February	77	1900	8
February	77	1883	16
March	83	1910	24
April	90	1896	18
May	95	1881	29
May	95	1887	3
June	98	1895	4
July	103	1881	6
August	100	1881	6
September	102	1881	6
October	91	1879	5
October	91	1884	3
November	79	1876	1
December	73	1885	9

For the pre-global warming period, 1881 sure was a hot year! It can most likely be assumed that any year with temperatures in the 90s and 100s is probably a year of drought and poor crops.

## Hardships and Disasters in the 1800s and Early 1900s

### Floods

Floods have historically been the most frequent and reoccurring disaster experienced in the south-west Pennsylvania area from the earliest of time until the completion of the extensive flood control system of dams on the Allegheny and its tributaries all the way north into New York state in the 1970s.

Any flood recorded near the 30 feet level at Pittsburgh would, no doubt, have flooded out the part of the village of Montrose that was located next to the river and the lower section of Hoboken. The 1908 publication, "A Century and a Half of Pittsburg and Her People" lists on page 363 the following floods over 28 feet:

Year	Magnitude		Year	Magnitude
1810	32 feet		1898	28 feet, 5 inches
1832	35 feet		1901	28 feet
1852	31 feet, 9 inches		1902	32 feet, 4 inches
1861	30 feet		1903	28 feet, 9 inches
1865	31 feet, 4 inches		1904	30 feet
1884	33 feet, 3 inches		1905	29 feet
1891	31 feet, 3 inches		1907	36 feet, 6 inches

There are two items of note from the above table. First of all, even lesser floods than the ones shown would have impacted Montrose. These probably came nearly every few years. Secondly, although record keeping probably got better with time, it is still apparent that the flooding got worse with time. This was probably due to more upstream development and deforestation.

## Hardships and Disasters in the 1800s and Early 1900s

### Disaster at Ross' Grove

In the late 1800s, on the Ross Estate, was located a picnic grove that was widely utilized by the community. This researcher was not able to ascertain what restrictions, if any, were placed on the usage. The exact location, also, was not indicated on any maps. However, some railroad timetables indicated a rail station up river from the Ross station called the Picnic Station. That would suggest that it was on the Ross property near Squaw Run, probably on the flat portion of land where the Fox Chapel Plaza is located today.

On July 4, 1878, disaster struck while several groups were busy celebrating the 102<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of American Independence.

Michael Riethmiller of Etters, Pennsylvania, as part of his genealogy research {available on Ancestry.com} compiled a description from accounts in three Pittsburgh newspapers and the diary of H. J. Heinz. His ancestor, Conrad, was in attendance as a member of the First German Lutheran Church of Sharpsburg. His work describes the location and events as follows: "Extensive arrangements were made for an all day gathering, which would include the picnic, to be held at the Ross Estate in an area known as Sugar Camp Grove, some 400 yards away from the Ross mansion. The grove lay along the West Penn Railroad line, some seven miles from the city and consisted of a cluster of very large and very old Maple and oak trees, of which some stood anywhere from 40 to 75 feet in height and measured some 4 to 6 feet in diameter."

Accounts from various sources describe a day that started out ideal for picnicking, but turned ugly into the afternoon.

An entry in the 1895 publication "Kelly's Handbook of Greater Pittsburg", on page 29 in the section covering severe weather, notes the event as follows:

"JULY 4, 1878. Especially remembered on account of the calamity at Ross' Grove, where seven persons were killed by the falling of a tree struck by lightning. Heavy wind, rain and destructive lightning accompanied the storm. Six people lost their lives at Sandy Creek, on the A. V. R. R., by drowning."

Mr. Riethmiller's work contains much detail of the event, including the efforts of H. J. Heinz, who was in attendance, and his wagons and employs in their attempts to rescue people trapped under trees and in the rubble and the transporting of wounded to facilities in Sharpsburg.

Although no mention of the impact of the storm to the east in the Montrose area is mentioned, a storm of this magnitude no doubt caused serious damages, if not injuries to both the river town and houses on the lower hill.

## Hardships and Disasters in the 1800s and Early 1900s

### Fires

Most fires affecting a personal residence in a sparsely populated area such as Montrose in the 1800s would no doubt go unrecorded. In the 70 years between 1830 and 1900, there must have been a few fires that, although never making it into the records or newspapers, nevertheless left a family homeless.

This researcher did, however, come across an entry in the Pittsburg Press "Almanac and Cyclopaedia of Useful Information" of 1898 referencing a fire at a Montrose business. From page 81, Important Happenings of 1897, listed under January 21, is the entry "Jutte & Foley's office at Montrose destroyed by fire. Valuable plans destroyed." Curiously, while this researcher found numerous references to a "C. Jutte & Company", no other reference to a Jutte & Foley company could be found to identify the type of business although the reference to valuable plans being lost would suggest an engineering firm.

### Explosion

This incident occurred well outside of the area that this paper has defined as the normal influence area for Montrose. However, due to the magnitude of the disaster, it no doubt was known and most probably heard and physically felt in Montrose and on the Hill.

The incident involves a massive nitro-glycerin explosion at a dynamite factory up river about 4 miles. The incident was reported in numerous newspapers, not only in Pittsburgh, but in New York state and city. This is part of the report from the Pittsburgh Press of March 23, 1894:

#### "DEATH IN DYNAMITE

Terrific Explosion at the  
Acme Powder Works.

FIVE PERSONS WERE KILLED

And Five Buildings Literally  
Blown to Atoms.

A WOMAN TAKEN OUT ALIVE,  
But She Died on the Way to the Hospital.

#### THE HEAD OF ANOTHER FOUND

A terrible explosion accompanied with a loss of five lives occurred this morning, at 7:10, at the nitro-glycerin and dynamite works of the Acme Powder company, at Blacks Run, a station on the Allegheny Valley railroad about two miles north of Hulton. The entire plant, consisting of four buildings, and a boarding house near by, were blown to pieces.

The explosion occurred while the platform of the small station was crowded with people waiting for the arrival of the 7:20 train to bring them to Pittsburgh. The works had been running only a few minutes when a terrific report was heard simultaneously with a concussion that threw everybody at the station from their feet and broke the windows in farmhouses several miles distant. What caused the explosion is not known, but instantly everybody concluded that one of the workmen

## Hardships and Disasters in the 1800s and Early 1900s

had been guilty of some act of carelessness. Maeder's gang of road repairs with the work train were located half a mile distant, and hearing the explosion they hurried to the scene and started to remove the wreckage in search for victims. In a few minutes hundreds of people set out from Hulton to render assistance to the injured ones if any should be found. They were not needed, however, for the plant had been literally blown to atoms. Of the four buildings composing the plant and a boarding house adjoining, there was nothing left on the hillside but a pile of debris, which took fire, and for an hour afterward it burned fiercely.

The working force of the plant consisted of 10 men and two girls. These were supposed to be at work at 7 o'clock sharp. There is no grounds upon which to base a hope that they had not gone into the place. They were surely blown to pieces without the least warning. In the boarding-house were three women and it is thought half a dozen men. This building was also destroyed and it is feared all have been killed. The dangerous nature of the product induced the owners to move it to Black's run.

Reports from the surrounding country say that the concussion was plainly felt at points seven and eight miles distant. At Springdale, two miles away, plate glass windows a quarter of an inch in thickness were shattered, and the houses rattled as if shaken by an earthquake

### FURTHER DETAILS Five Killed and Some Other Employes Hurt.

The boarding house was conducted by William Arthurs, whose wife was Mrs. Bell Arthurs. Two sisters of Mrs. Arthurs, Sarah and Nellie Remaley, lived with her and were employed in the works.

When the explosion occurred Sarah Remaley was washing the breakfast dishes. The house was blown to fragments, and she was hurled high in the air and landed 20 yards from the house, fearfully mangled, but still alive. Her eyes were blown out of her head and her arms torn from their sockets. She was picked up alive and placed on a train which at that time was ready to leave and brought to the city.

At Hulton, John Remaley, her brother, who works for the railroad company, jumped on the train and kissed his sister goodby. Before he could be prevented, he leaped from the morning train and started for the scene of the disaster to care for his other sisters. Sarah died just as the train reached the Tewnty-ninth street station. Her body was taken to the West Penn hospital.

Mrs. Arthurs and her and her sisters were blown to pieces. The head of one was picked up a few feet from where Sarah was found. Not a portion of any of the other bodies had been found up to 9 o'clock."

The article continues with a listing of the dead, and statements by the manager {who was in his downtown Pittsburgh office at the time of the explosion}. The manager {E. B. McAbee} blamed "one of the dead" for causing the explosion. The article continued with more gruesome details and estimations of the total losses for the better part of a full second column.

Of interest to the Montrose area is the last statement: "Many windows were broken in buildings in Parnassus, four miles away, and houses at oven greater distances shook as if an earthquake had occurred." People at Montrose, being slightly closer to the blast than Parnassus, surely heard and felt the explosion. The view upriver from the hill would have resembled a later-day nuclear explosion as witnesses stated that a large cloud rose thousands of feet into the air. This event must have been the topic of discussion and retelling for several decades.

## The 1906 Map of the Montrose Development

The 1906 map of the Montrose Development is part of a series of maps that can be found on the University of Pittsburgh's "Historic Pittsburgh" website under the G. M. Hopkins Company series of maps, 1906 for the area north of the Allegheny River {Blawnox included in the listing}, plate 29.

It is interesting in that this map shows the anticipated final development of the three Montrose plans of lots, including streets, access alleys, three parks and even a reservoir to provide water for the community.

Although the map contains various structures and roads that did exist in 1906, most of the roadways would not be built for another 30 to 50 years and some would never exist. A number of the roads were just never feasible as the way that they were drawn would have had them going over a cliff.

The sketch that follows delineates the planned but never built roads from the roads that would eventually exist. The alleys are not shown on the sketch for clarification.

Items of particular interest shown on the map are the structures that existed at the time, most of which have the owners delineated. There are a total of 14 structures that appear to be either a residence or an out-building along River Road. Of those, 12 show ownership, distributed among 9 individuals. Various residents shown on the map also are found through succeeding United States Census enumerations, including David Lennox {1900 as Lenot, 1910 as Lennot}, Samuel Dugan {as Duganne in 1900, 1910 and 1920} and Samuel Keer {as Kier in 1900 and 1910} and Charles Malone {1900}.

Also along River Road is a hotel and the Allegheny City Water Works. The path of the 60 inch water line that ran to the east and south to the city is shown.

A ferry to Verona is near the hotel and the Montrose station of the West Penn Railroad is near the waterworks and considerable further north than the "near Boyd Avenue" location that some sources give.

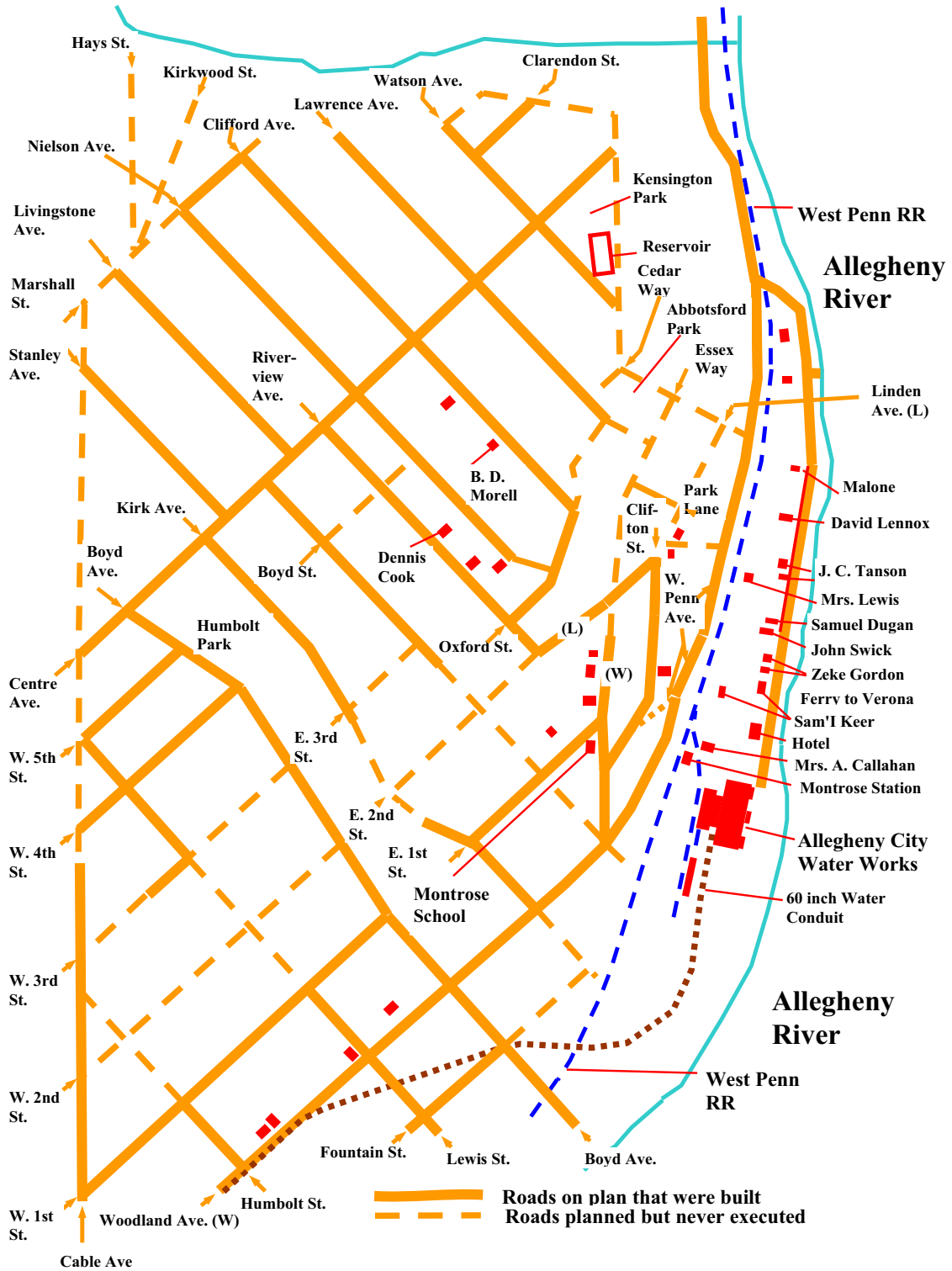
On the current Montrose Hill itself are shown 13 structures, including 2 on Clifford Avenue, 3 on Riverview, 2 at what is today the horseshoe bend, one on Clifton and the remaining 5 on East First and Woodland Avenue. Of those 5, one was the Montrose School.

There are only two owners delineated on what is now Montrose Hill, B. D. Morell on Clifford Avenue and Dennis Cook on Riverview Avenue. Mr. Cook appears in the 1900, 1910, and 1920 United States Censuses. He was 64 years old in 1900.

The 1900 census record suggest that this map was either made before 1906 and not updated or is missing several residences on Montrose Hill, including George Moyse and the John Asdale.



**A SKETCH OF THE MONTROSE DEVELOPMENT IN  
O'HARA TOWNSHIP, ALLEGHENY COUNTY, PA,  
TAKEN FROM THE 1906 MAP**



## Summer Camp

The name “Montrose” throughout the last few decades of the nineteenth century was usually associated with such things as an ambitious housing development that went nowhere, steam locomotives and riverboats, the waterworks and the plaster works, none of which suggest a fun time. However, for a period of times in the early years of the twentieth century, “Montrose” meant something special to children from the city of Pittsburgh. It meant a change to spend a portion of their Summer far away from the smoke and grime of the industrial city in the fresh air surrounded by trees and the river, hiking, swimming and playing games.

This researcher has not been able to determine the exact date when the city of Pittsburgh Recreation Department began the Summer Camp program at Montrose next to the mothballed water pumping station. A 1917 publication “The Challenge of Pittsburgh” states: “The Bureau of Recreation operates a summer camp during the months of July and August at Montrose. This is a piece of city property with 1,500 feet of water frontage on the Allegheny River, opposite Verona. Children are taken from the city at a cost of \$3.00 a week, which they themselves assume. In the summer of 1916, 3,000 children of Pittsburgh took advantage of this camping opportunity. A trained camp leader is in charge while the camp is in operation”.

The June 1922 report of the Department of Recreation by Superintendent Mrs. Margaret Stewart Gray stated: “The summer camp at Montrose was a success during 1921, when a total of 3,818 guests were entertained. The close proximity to the City and the equipment, together with swimming guards on duty, made these recreation facilities most desirable. The instructors provided entertainments, a special show being given regularly on Wednesdays. It was not long before nearby campers availed themselves of these pleasures, as many as 500 in one evening standing throughout the program.” Surely, the residents of Montrose and Montrose Hill availed themselves of this free entertainment on a regular basis.

The University of Pittsburgh “Historic Pittsburgh” site contains a great series of photographs of the Summer Camp at Montrose from the year 1916 and 1921. They include children canoeing, children playing a game with a net similar to volley ball {although the ball is not visible in the photo}, tents in rows up on the river bank, and a nurse attending to a child.

While looking at the photographs of these city kids by their overturned canoe, I cannot help but remember an interview that I did with Bill Sproul, a long time resident of Blawnox, born there in the mid 1920s and still alive at the time of this {2012} writing. Bill mentioned that there was always a drowning or two at Sandy Creek across the river from Blawnox every summer. He explained that the hill people from Penn Hills just did not know the river and its tricky currents and drop-offs like the “river rats” from the bottom of Blawnox did. I would image that the same situation would have existed when the Pittsburgh Recreation Department was operating its summer camp at Montrose. The “river rats” from Montrose and Hoboken would get a good chuckle out of watching the city-slickers overturn their boat three feet from the shore while the locals were rowing their boats up to Harmarville or leisurely taking a swim across the river to Verona.

**A Glimpse at Life on Montrose Hill and Surrounding Area  
In the Early Part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century  
An Interview with Mrs. Elizabeth Van Horn**

This is an edited transcription of an interview with Elizabeth Van Horn from March 16, 1986 and a followup interview from April 27, 1986. The purpose of the editing was to enhance readability without losing content. A verbatim transcript is available upon request of the copyright owner. Both interviews took place in her residence near the south-east end of Clifford Avenue on Montrose Hill. Note: editor's notes are shown in {brackets}, probable missing words, due to difficulties hearing the tape recording, are in (parenthesis).

Mrs. Van Horn was born Elizabeth Walder in 1897 on Powers Run Hill. Her parents came from Germany and settled in Woods Run. From there they moved to Powers Run Hill. When she was about 10 they moved out into what today is Fox Chapel, but was then O'Hara Township, near the present Fox Chapel High School. In 1910 her parents built a house on what is now East First Street on Montrose Hill, at the east end of the street, on the uphill side of the street near Woodland.

In her words {speaking of her father's farm}: Out where the school is out there. He had a strawberry farm. We picked strawberries for years and years and years. And then they sold it, we only rented it, and they sold the place and Dad came in and started to work at the plaster works. That was down over the hill here, down on Boyd Avenue. The old, old, old plaster works.

Q: When did you marry?

A: Nineteen fourteen. Yeah, because Harry was born nineteen sixteen.

Q: Did you **move to the Hill** right away?

A: Well, we just left here for two years and Harry (went) to work over at Westinghouse, and he didn't like it so he came back and worked in Blaw-Knox, he was a machinist in Blaw-Knox for, well he died when he was forty, he died in '42. He run a great big lathe in Blaw-Knox machine place there.

Q: Is this the only place you have lived on the Hill, or did you live somewhere else?

A: Well, my mother lived in the place that Olson's used to live in. Mother and Dad built that house. It's on East First Street down there.

Q: Right where the old chicken path used to come in?

A: Yeah, and then across from that, what they used to call the old Cornelius house, we lived in there. And then we built this house and moved up here. So, I haven't (been) off Montrose Hill very long, I'll tell you.

Q: So, you were here when you were a child?

A: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Uh-huh.

Q: You **went to school** here?

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A: Went to school when it was one room. Down right below where Olson's house is. There was a one room school house and about 20 kids. About 20 kids and one school teacher taught the whole thing.

Q: Now, is that the same school house that was torn down in the nineteen sixties?

A: No, this was just a little school house. Then they built the other one. They built a two room school. But, the school that I went to, they moved it down on East First Street and they made a house out of it. On the left hand side going down. Jim somebody lives in there, but I can't remember what their name is. But they rebuilt the school house and made a house out of it. And then they added two more rooms later so there was four rooms there. It was off when you come up on the old road, there's a real nice brick house up in there now.

Q: And how long did you go to school there? What grades did you go through there?

A: Well, what did they have, eight there then or did they only have six? No, I went to eighth grade. I went to school there and that was it.

Q: Do you remember any of the teachers there at that time?

A: Well, Mrs. Humes, taught there. Now, the Humeses lived right across from where Mother was. Nan Humes, she taught there. And there was a (Slader) and Mr. White.

Q: What was the school called?

A: Montrose!

Q: Just Montrose?

A: Just Montrose, yeah. When my kids went to school, they went down here to school and then they had to go to Aspinwall to high school. They'd go down get a streetcar then. Go down get the streetcar, go down to Aspinwall. All my six kids graduated from Aspinwall High School. Yes.

Q: So, did you **build this house** or buy this house?

A: No, we built this house. In '22. 1922. We built so much and then every time we'd have a youngster, we'd have to add a room. (Laughs)

Q: So, when you came up here to build, how many other houses were there, in this area?

A: Ten.

Q: Ten on the Hill?

A: Ten houses on the Hill, yeah. 'Cause I'll tell you, when we came up here, that was a mud road out there. Everything was a mud road. And, they brought the lumber, the first lumber we bought was 800 dollars worth, and Kribb's Lumber Company was across the river and they had to

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go up and come down. And come up with two horses and that's how we had the lumber delivered.

And then we got gas. There was no electricity then. The gas was down around the corner there. And then we had to put a forfeit up to have the gas brought up. But we got the money back 'cause anybody built on it, we got all our, three hundred dollars of our forfeit was a lot of money, I'll tell you, at that time. (Laughs)

Then we finally did get electricity, too. Then we had to pay for a telephone pole. Had to pay 50 dollars to have a telephone brought up. Then we finally got electricity.

And I'll tell you something else, we didn't have any water. We had to walk across the road and go down over to the creek here, and there was a spring down there and we had to carry our water up from down across the street. (Laughs)

Then we finally got a well drilled. We had a well that was 67 or 69 feet, I think it was 69 feet, and put an electric pump on it, and did we have fun! (Laughs)

**Q:** Well, who were the **old families that were here** when you moved into this house?

**A:** Well, Grandma and Grandpap Van Horn lived next door here, that's Harry's (parents). My mother and dad lived here. But Grandma Van Horn's dad was George Moyes. Now that was one of the oldest houses, up here, the third or fourth house up. The granddaughter lives in there now. There were ten houses up here when we came up. And look what's back there now.

Did you come up the old road or the new road? Well, go back the new road. What used to be all Montrose Hill, is O'Hara Woods now. We used to have a ball field back there and go back there and play ball. (Laughs)

The girls had a team and we'd play with the, well, there wasn't stuff like there is now, television and this and that and the kids entertained themselves a lot better than they do now, believe you me.

**Q:** Then that **ball field that was up by the Sunoco**, that was there a long time?

**A:** Yes, yes, yes, yes. Uh-huh. That was our entertainment. We'd play Blawnox and we'd play Harmarville and we'd play different, the girls had a team and the men had a team.

One of my biggest things I remember of is, oh, what the dickens was their name, lived down the foot of the Hill,...uh, Frankie, Frankie, Frankie,... I can't remember, but this youngster kept tanning Roy. He'd pull his hair in school and when they were coming up the road, pulled Roy's cap. Roy wasn't a very sociable guy, he wanted to be alone. Anyhoo, Dad said to him one day, Hildebrand, Frankie Hildebrand! Dad said to him one day, "No, just let's take this thing and turn it around. The next time he does something to you, you turn around and you knock the hell out of him". (Laughs) "Show him that you're just as big as he is." So, they were up there playing ball and Frank done something to Roy and Roy turned around and he did give him an awful sock. Well, his father came down the back there and he said to Harry, "Look what your son done to my son". He said, "Well, he's only getting paid back for I told him to do it". (Laughs) It ended the argument, so that was the end of it. But, kids played together. Kids had to play together, there wasn't television and this and that and something else, and cars at 16. Who had cars then? (Laughs)

**Q:** Well, then was this area right around here originally all that there was of the Hill?

**A:** Oh, yes, yes.

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**Q:** There was nothing out anywhere else?

**A:** Well, years and years ago somebody thought they were going to pump water up to make a reservoir in what they called the reservoir, on Holland's Hill. That was up on the top there.

But that's all closed up now, it's just growed up. Nobody builds there. In fact, I just heard not too long ago that they're not allowed to build on across here anymore because they're afraid of knocking the stones off and go down on Freeport Road.

But, we have anything you want up here now. I'm quite happy.

{Brief discussion of a personal nature leading to the Vogel family deleted}

**Q:** Oh, you are related to them {Vogels} somehow?

**A:** Well, I'm Alice's great aunt! She had 6 boys. Yeah, 6 boys and 2 girls. And everyone of those boys cut grass for me. (Laughs) Yes sir. John quit now, he's going to college, and he don't do that anymore so I got another guy. Yes, sir. And Joe, if I want a ride I just pick up the phone and I'll say, I need a blue taxi. (Laughs) (And) Joe comes over and takes me shopping.

**Q:** When you first moved up here, where did you **go to church**?

**A:** Hoboken Presbyterian Church.

**Q:** In Blawnox?

**A:** Uh-huh. All my kids went down there to Sunday School and some of them was married in the church. The girls married, the boys didn't. The boys was married in different churches. Well, we were married in the Methodist Church. We was Methodist. John Henderson's church was down below the old railroad track, in Blawnox. And then he passed away. And then Johnny Whiteman got us to join the Presbyterian church. And that's were my family then grew up in the church. In the Hoboken {Presbyterian church}, and that's a beautiful place now, oh my goodness! We've renovated it 'till it scorches (us)! (Laughs) And we have gone from 60 members in the last years, we were down to practically nothing, and in the last two years we have a wonderful minister, Frank Davis, and we now have 129 members. And they come to church as if they're church members. (Laughs) You know what I mean? Yes, it's beautiful.

**Q:** Well, when you first moved up here, where did you go to do your **grocery shopping**?

**A:** Well, there was an A&P down on the corner of, when you're going down Blawnox, oh, what the dickens was the name? An A&P. No, that ain't where we done our first shopping, there was a, we used to call him the fat butcher. (Laughs) He was down here off Freeport Road then. And that's where we got our groceries then. You went and got them. You walked down and you brought them back. You didn't have a car. (Laughs)

If we wanted to go to the bank, you had to go down the river, you walked. There was a path, what you called the Chicken Path. You had to go down to the river, and get on a ferry boat. And you went across the river for a nickel. Then you got off and you go up into Verona and go to the bank. That's where you had to go if you wanted to do any banking.

You didn't have a car. You walked, you carried your groceries. But then later there was a guy come along, can you imagine buying meat off of a truck that was riding around in (the sun)? (Laughs)

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There was another guy that would come around and take a grocery order. And they'd deliver groceries that way.

(We) raised so much of our own things, we always had a big garden. And you canned it. You didn't throw anything out, you canned it. My two boys, they were the older ones, and they said they were sick of peaches and chicken, we raised our own chickens. (Laughs) We raised the chickens, and you canned the peaches. You never thought anything of having a hundred jars of peaches and a hundred jars of tomatoes and that kind of stuff. But you had your own food. You made your own sauerkraut. But, all summer you eat out of your garden. We had the garden in the back and it was quite a thing.

Q: Was the **garden** good? Did they grow well up here? Was the soil good?

A: Oh, yes. But, you spaded it. You didn't have anybody to come in and plow it, you spaded it, because it wasn't big enough for anybody to come in with a horse and plow, you know, to plow it up. You spaded the whole thing. You'd grow anything. (We had) lettuce and stuff all in the Spring and tomatoes. Tell it to those kids now and they say, "What?". (Laughs)

Q: What about your **clothing and durable goods**, where did you go to buy those?

A: Well, if you wanted anything, wanted a pair of shoes or anything like that, we'd have to go to Sharpsburg. That was the only place really. (Ottenried's) were down in Sharpsburg. And then there was another clothing store, like a woman's, that's where you went. And, of course, at that time, you would go to, where did you buy two suits, I forgot it. Richmond's? Yes, Richmond's. (Laughs)

Q: Where was Richmond's located?

A: Well, I think they were over in East Liberty. I'm pretty sure they were. But you got on the streetcar. We'd have to go over and change streetcars, now how the dickens did we get over there? To East Liberty? It wasn't the bus, that's for sure. It had to be a streetcar. I can't remember now. How the dickens did we get over there?

Q: Where did you pick up the **streetcar**?

A: Oh, we got on the streetcar down here and we'd ride down to 31st Street. And get off and change busses and then go get an East Liberty, go the other direction.

Q: Oh, you'd have to go down across the river and back up again?

A: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Q: I see. Because the Highland Park Bridge was not there.

A: No, oh, no, no.

Q: Was the **Hulton Bridge** there at that time? You said they had a ferry here, but did they have the Hulton Bridge?

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A: Yes, yes, there had to be a Hulton Bridge there. But I think they remodeled, I think they did it over.

Now, I'll tell you a big one. You won't believe me this one if I tell you. My dad raised vegetables and my mother sold vegetables. He had a horse and a wagon and she would take the stuff and sell it so she could buy groceries. Dad raised strawberries. And she would sell strawberries. Lots of strawberries. Then when she couldn't sell anymore, she would go to the fellow that sold the fruit, fruit store, you know, then she would go there and she would swap him strawberries for fruit that we wouldn't have at home like bananas and oranges and stuff like that. Anything that she had she would swap him. But you sold strawberries then three quarts for a quarter. Dad paid the kids 2 cents for a quart for picking them. (Laughs)

Q: And where would she go to swap these?

A: Over in Verona. So there was a bridge across there then! There hadda be otherwise she couldn't have got over there. When you didn't have a horse and buggy to go over with you went across on the ferry.

Q: What kind of **entertainment** was there at that time for adults? Did you have any theaters or was there anyplace you usually went out to?

A: Well, if you went to the theater you had to get on a bus down here and go into the Lyceum Theater and that's the only one I can remember right now. It was down on Liberty Avenue.

Q: Was there a theater in Blawnox at one time?

A: Oh, sure. Myra Boyd had a nickelodeon, that's what we called it. (Laughs) Do you know where the music store is across the street from Witas'? Well, in there, that was the nickelodeon. And one of the adults' entertainments was to play cards. And Lyd and Jim Combs, this was Harry's aunt. Lyd was Harry's aunt. They would come up here and we'd give the kids a dime to get into the nickelodeon, a nickel for popcorn and the kids would go down and go see Myra Boyd's, but that's when they were silent and she played the organ or piano, just to make a little bit of noise, you know. We did have a car then, at that time and Harry'd take the kids down, then when it was time for the kids to come back, he'd go down and bring the kids back up. But the kids always had something to do. They entertained each other. They'd get together and play.

I told somebody the other day there was a woman that lived next door to us, Glenshaws, lived, not in this house, the one above that. And we had this big stretch of our lawn here, and the kids would come here to play ball. They were allowed to play ball out here in the front yard, you know. Of course, once in a while they broke a window, but that was all right. But if the ball happened to go over in her place, she'd come out and get the ball and wouldn't give it back to the kids. (Laughs)

But, they entertained themselves. They played and they made ball teams. And, well, they just would come and play. In fact, I had a visitor last week, maybe you remember the Humeses? Ken Humes and Adelle? No? They lived over here on the other street. Their kids would come over here and they'd get all dressed up in something, in my clothes or something and have a play. They played jacks. Just entertained themselves.

Q: Were there community association type of activities?



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A: Yes, everybody knew everybody. In fact, for a long time everybody was related to everybody. (Laughs)

But, everybody knew everybody. A very, very, very neighborly, yes, very neighborly. I think one of the biggest tragedies we ever had on this hill, Freddy Roberts, you know who Freddy Roberts is? Well, they lived down on the corner as you come around the, the house right across there. It was Easter time, time for Easter baskets. And Freddy Roberts went up to the, when you went up their house at the end of the hall they had a place for storage place, for put things in there that you want to put away, your Christmas stuff and all that. And Freddy Roberts went there to get an Easter basket. And he had a match. And he dropped the match. And if you don't see that house go up in flames. I called down Blawnox or somebody, told them about the fire. Well, you know where they had to try to get water for that? They had to drag the hose clear down around the road down by the river to pump the water up to try to put the house fire out. But, it burnt to the ground. But they finally got it rebuilt again. And, that was one of the biggest tragedies we ever had here on the hill. But, years ago everybody knew everybody. Everybody was neighborly, good neighbor, you know what I mean?

Q: Who did you **buy the land from** to build the house?

A: We bought these, now wait 'till I get this straight, we bought these lots, no we bought them lots. We have a hundred foot frontage. The lots were 25 by 115. And we bought those lots from Blackham. Cy and Emma Blackham. Then we heard by way of the grapevine somebody was gonna buy these lots. And I run down over the hill and I said, you can't do that to us, we're gonna have to have those two lots. (Laughs)

So, that's how how we got the fifty foot frontage, because we didn't want no new neighbors, no neighbors close. (Laughs)

At that time, the first two lots we bought was 500 dollars for the two lots. And the second ones we paid five hundred and fifty dollars. You know what they're worth today? (Laughs)

Q: So, you have actually 4 lots you're sitting on?

A: Uh-huh. I have the four, my frontage is a hundred feet. And, of course Blackhams and us were very, very good friends and I said, you can't do that. Well, we bought them and paid for them and they was ours then. Harry says, "I don't want no neighbors like that." (Laughs)

This was nothing but a locust, well that's what they called this when we bought it. It was a locust grove. It was nothing but a bunch of locust trees. And it was a big job to get rid of them.

I'll tell you who else had a lot of ground up here was Lydia Boyd. They used to have a, remember the big stone house that was at the corner, they tore it out when they put the road through, down when you make the sharp turn?

Q: At the horse shoe bend?

A: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. They had a great big beautiful house built out of stone and they had to tear it down. Then **Myra and Dave Boyd** built the house right in the corner there. I don't know who owns it now, but that was Myra and Dave Boyd's place.

But, now I'll tell you another good story. You won't believe me if I tell you this one, honest you won't. I was on the board over on the Presbyterian home. It was new and I went over there. I was on the woman's executive board over there. And I walked down around the road and Myra Boyd says, "Where you going?"

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I said I can't talk to you, Myra, I'm going down there because I'm getting the streetcar down here and I have a taxi to meet me up in Harmarville, at the bridge, because I'm going up the Presbyterian home, there's a meeting up there, now. I'll see you later.

"Stop in."

So, I went on my business and then I called her and I said I'll come down whenever you want, "Well, come on down I want to talk to you", and she says, "I want to know what you're doing, what this Presbyterian home is". And I explained to her exactly what it was. Then at that time it was just for Presbyterians. Now it is for any denomination, nothing has anything to do with it. If you don't have the money then they take you over there and take care of you anyhow.

But, anyhow, she liked that idea. "That's interesting, I like that."

Well, Myra, it's good, I said, I'll keep on telling you. Dr. (Ticher), he and I were quite good friends, he was building the place, and I said, I'll ask Dr. (Ticher) some of these questions that you want answered, but I can't answer. When they built the place they put a plaque in, you know, who was there, my name's in the cornerstone over there.

And believe you me, when Myra Boyd passed away she left 37,000 dollars to the Presbyterian home! (Laughs)

And it's a wonderful place believe you me. It's not the nicest place to go unless you have somebody over there. I went over there for years, my sister-in-law was over there for 8 years, Vi Roberts. And, I went over there often, Rosa Luther, she drove, I didn't drive at that time. And every Sunday we'd make it our business to go over to the home. It's nice to go to visit the one's that's well, but I have a, Erma (Mosca), they used to have a drugstore down Blawnox, the (Mosca) Drugstore, Herb (Mosca), Willis (Mosca), Chuck (Mosca), and Erma (Zoszi), she was over there for 18 years, and now she had a stroke and she's quite ill, but she's been over in that home for 18 years. She's a little bit older than I am. She's 92. (Laughs)

Q: Were the Boyds the oldest family up here?

A: The oldest family? Me. (Laughs) Mrs. (Traeger's) been here for quite a while. I don't know if you know Jean Bier, do you know who Jean Bier is?

Q: You're talking about the people that are here now?

A: Yeah, well Jean Bier, she's the secretary, I guess, for O'Hara Township building down on Fox Chapel Road. That's where Jean works, but her mother, they built the house down below here. Bill (Traeger). Bill and Frieda (Traeger). See who's the oldest one's here. Me! (Laughs) They built after we did, the (Traegers). Grandma Van Horn's house, that was there. That house was there. Then the other one next door wasn't there, then the one above that was there. Oh!, I'll tell you what we had here. We lived in it. When we were first married we lived in it. Right at the corner, as you came around the corner there, we had an honest to goodness log house. It was built by logs with the mud, mud logs in it. We had a kitchen and a living room and then we crawled up in the loft to sleep upstairs. (Laughs) But that was when we were first married, yes.

Q: That was right down here?

A: Right at the corner there. Of course there's nothing there now. They tore it down and those people bought it and they tore it down. But, one of the older homes here is Cooks. Gibbons live in it. She was an adopted daughter, Ann Cook adopted her, she was a maiden lady and she adopted Ruth and that house was much older than this house here. And, now the one where

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Grandpap (Moyses), they remodeled that, you never know that it was an old house, because they remodeled it and fixed it up.

Q: And they were all in this area here?

A: Down over the hill, down over to the Freeport Road and then, see they came along and put the highway, what do you call that here?

Q: The Bypass.

A: Bypass. They put the bypass in, well if I tell you this story you won't believe me now. (Laughs)

We could go out here and walk down and then Powers Run Creek was there see and then we could go up over, and that's where the (Novosols) and the (Stotaks) lived there. The kids would go swimming, my boys and other boys would go swimming. In fact, we went with them to help them build up, take stones and then take sod and stuff and build them up a swimming pool, you know. So, they could go out there and swim. It was a pretty good size. It was enough so that they could paddle in and slop around in, you know.

Well, my brother, my oldest brother, Chris, he had a camp up on nine mile island up here. And we were invited up there for a holiday and all the relations, everybody was invited up to Chris and Anna's. And so we went up and, of course we didn't have classy swimming suits like they have now, the kids wore shorts, you know, that was it. So, I said to them that Chris says you can go down and play on the river, you know. And I said, well, somebody has to go with them. Because, I don't want those kids out in that water by themselves.

Well, somebody went down and those kids got a little more brave, and brave and I got a little more nervous. Dad was playing cards, he wasn't paying too much attention to them, and after a while Chris said to me, "Who, what are you talking about, your kids can't swim?" He says, "Look at them". Here my kids had been going from their pond down there, down the creek, down to the river and swimming. (Laughs)

\*\*\*\*\* Break in conversation \*\*\*\*\*

A: When we lived on top of **Powers Run Hill**. I used to sled ride down Powers Run Hill.

Q: Oh, do you mean down the old road!

A: (Laughs) You didn't have to watch for no automobiles, I'll tell you.

Q: When you were living over on Powers Run, was that very crowded then?

A: No, no, no, no. There was only, well there were all farms out there. We lived in a house on the top and there weren't more than 6 houses clear out to the crossroads.

And then you got into the place where the Powers had the farm, Potter Powers and Walt Powers and they all had big farms out there. And, so it was that was all farm(ed).

Dad moved from Powers Run Hill out to, McPhilemys owned the farm, that we rented. It was seventy two acres, and they rented this farm, and that's where Dad went into the big strawberry business. He rented it and he thought the boys was gonna stay at home, but the boys wanted no part of farming. So, they both became carpenters and that left Dad with his 72 acres. And we were very, very good friends of a Doctor Marshall in Aspinwall. Senior Marshall. And

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the place was put up for sale, for 5000 dollars. 72 acres. And Dr. Marshall said to mother, "I'll buy that for you and you can pay me back as you want to".

My older sisters worked for Dr. Marshall and he liked Marie and Margaret and he thought they were pretty nice gals, and that they done housework. And, he said, "I'll buy that for ya". But my mother was, "No, sir". Dad would have, but mother says, "No, sir! No, sir. No, sir". You know what it sold for, don't you? (Laughs) The last I think was what? Twenty thousand an acre or something like that. I know you think I'm touched, but that's the truth. (Laughs)

I'll tell you another big story, going back out there. Across the road from us there was a man by the name of Hanlin. And he had horses. And people would come from town out to ride horses, you know, back then, and he would board their horses for them there and these people would come out and ride their horses around every place. So, somebody's horse had an accident. And, they were gonna shoot him, can't do nothing. He tripped or something and something happened to his, well I would call it an ankle, I don't know what a horse's is, but anyway, he hurt his leg.

And, Mr. Hanlin said to Dad, "If you want this horse you can have him. I hate like the dickens to shoot him".

And my dad says, "Oh, I'll take him". He limped terrible. It was one of his front feet. So they brought him over and they didn't even bring him clear up to the house. He kept him out in the yard, way out in the yard. So Dad, he took the horse. And, now what he put on it, I don't know. But the horse was poultised with something. He had this horse's leg all wrapped up and fixed and kept him in the barn and that horse got better! And by the time, things were gone a pretty good on the farm and we got the nicest buggy. Most beautiful horse and that buggy. Now that was way out there and we had to come to Sunday School to where to old Boyd School House was then. It was right across from where the high school is now. It was across on the other corner. In fact somebody made a house out of it. Anyhow, that's where we had to come to Sunday School. And we were all smart. Oh, boy, we had a most beautiful horse. (Laughs) Because, my dad could take care of the horse. We got the horse for nothing. Then we bought a buggy with red wheels on it. We could pull up there and tie our horse on a post, you know, and go to Sunday School. And another thing that was a great thing, my dad was a good guy. In the winter time, people by the name of Browns lived up going up Fairview. They lived like on the side and Dad would hitch up the horse, not that horse, other horses, and hook them to a sleigh, sled, that had the seats on it, you know, when it was snow, and he'd pick up all the kids and bring them in and we always said the, you know, when the horses would run in the snow they'd get snow in their, in their hoof, you know, and we'd say, "Oh, look at the horse is throwing snowballs! (Laughs)

**Q:** Were there any **horses up here on the Hill?** Livestock or anything?

**A:** Oh! I think a Mr. Rice up here had a horse one time.

Oh, I know. There was an old, a guy by the name of (Rott). He had a horse. But, that house was way back, way, pret'near down over the hill there.

Mary (Rott), and I don't know the other, 'cause I know we used to go over there and pick blueberries. Oh, the place was full of blueberries, and blackberries. Picked anything you could see. Oh, Dad and I went out and picked mushrooms. We didn't think about getting poisoned, we just ate them. (Laughs)

**Q:** What was up by **the reservoir?**

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A: Nothing. Why they called it the reservoir, well somebody said they were gonna pump water up in there to make water. But see, then Holland bought it. Then they got to calling it Holland's Hill, and of course then he sold his (property). I don't know how (many) houses (are) over there, but now they're not allowed to build any more. Well, it's all stone and they're afraid they'll knock the stones down to the main road. So, that's closed off, they're not allowed to build on there.

I'll tell you one, who the dickens was it. This girl across the street here. Sue was driving up Powers Run. And some of the kids was playing up on top of the hill up there and they rolled stones down over the hill. And Sue was going along and one of them, thank God it hit just the front of the car. But, that's how close an accident could happen from there. Yeah.

Q: I remember when I was a kid, down over the hill from where the reservoir was, there was the remains of an old house. A foundation. Do you recall anything being back in there? It was hanging on the cliff.

A: That was some guy lived in there, didn't he?

Q: I never could find out.

A: I never did either, to tell you the truth. He seemed to be a loner. Nobody seemed to know who the guy was. Never. See now, of course, you know, that's a ball field they got up there now and kids go up there and have a good time, it gives them something to, they really don't have any place around here to, like the kids used to. They have to go up there, there's no place else for them to play. Of course they have so many school activities and now they don't need it. (Laughs)

The Murdocks lived down here, they were an old family, but they're gone. Olsons. the Wards were an old family. There's none of them around any more. Maybe, the old Ward, Mike Ward? Well I'll tell you the only one of them that's left, was she married to Bier, Walt Bier? Walt Bier's wife lives right up the, above here. That's the only one of them.

Q: Did you tell me what your husband did for a living?

A: Yeah, he worked **Blaw-Knox**. He run the lathe in Blaw-Knox. He was a machinist in Blaw-Knox.

Q: Did most of the men around here work in the Blaw? Blaw-Knox?

A: Yeah, see that was, what the dickens was that called before when Blaw-Knox came in? Where the dickens did they come from? DuBois, no, was it DuBois? I think it was, I'm not sure about that, it might dawn on me later, yes, I think it was DuBois. See that was Hoboken before, you knew that, and then they changed it to Blawnox because the mill came in there to go into business.

Q: Was that mill there when you first moved in here?

A: No. Oh, no, no, no, no, no. Harry worked over on Penn Avenue at, oh I can never tell you what the name was.

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Something come into my mind, what was it? See we had to go up the Post Office and get our mail. If you wanted mail we had to go down to Blawnox. And then Harry Gillan lived couple houses up here and he says, "I think this is terrible, we're gonna have to have a Post Office or have a mail delivery". And then they started to deliver the mail. But you had to have your mailbox out front. They (would) just drop it in, you know, drop the mail out there.

Q: When did they bring the **telephones** in?

A: Telephone? I don't know.

Q: Were they here when you moved in?

A: Listen, when I was a little gal, this was before I was married, Mother and Dad, they built the house down on East First Street, the Olsons had the house and I don't know who lives in there now. Ed Bartlett lives across the street from them (where) the Humes lived there then. Mother and Dad built that house in 1910. My brothers and sisters decided they, Mother and Dad, needed a telephone.

Well, so Mother got the telephone. And, you come down the steps, and the telephone was right at the foot of the steps again the wall. And, the telephone rang and Mother answered it and it was my brother that was calling home to test her, you know, and she picked up the phone and she says, "There's nobody here". (Laughs)

But, now I want to tell you, when I was a kid, lived in that house, and we wanted to use a telephone, there was only one telephone. The Blackhams lived on, coming up off down there, the Blackhams lived in a big house down there. You had (to) go to Blackhams if anybody got sick and you wanted to call the doctor, or you had to go down to the waterworks to use the telephone if you wanted a telephone, that's how many phones (there) was around here. (Laughs) When you got a telephone, you was getting rich, I'll tell you. (Laughs)

Q: What about a **doctor**, if somebody got sick, who would you call?

A: Well, we had to call a doctor in Aspinwall, Dr. Marshall, the guy that was gonna buy the farm for Mother. And oh my, he had a car! When Dr. Marshall come with his car, just a one seater, you know, and he would come to the house and, of course, don't tell the Marshals I'm talking about them, he had two sons was doctors too. But they'd say, "Well, did he give you pink pills?" (Laughs) I think at that time it would be the same as like aspirin would be like now, you know, "Did Doc Marshall give you pink pills?" (Laughs) Yeah, but, well, I'll tell you, he brought me. (When) we lived up on Powers Run Hill, he came in a horse and buggy, that wasn't car. And he had a horse and buggy, that's the way he drove from Aspinwall up. (Laughs)

Q: Well, if you had to go to a hospital, where would you go?

A: When babies was born?

Q: Well, did you have your babies in a hospital?

A: No! No, no, no, no. In fact, Doctor senior Marshall's sons brought my babies.

Q: And that was here?

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A: Yeah. Uh-huh. Yeah.

Q: But, if you got sick and had to go to a hospital, where would you go to a hospital?

A: Well, do you know what? There was no ambulance. My sister, she passed away now about six years ago, Anna Combs. She lived back here on the Neilson Avenue. Anna got real sick. She was very sick. And they had to put her on a cot and carry her down the hill, and they put her on the train to take her into North Side to the hospital on the north side. (And) she had a broken appendix. No, you didn't have no ambulance and no paramedics or this and that and something else. Which, I think a paramedic needs a lot of patting on the back. I think those guys are very, very good.

But, that's the way Dr. Magee came to town. No, Dr. Foster came next in Blawnox. Then Dr. Magee, yeah.

Q: Where were they located at?

A: Well, Dr. Foster, in Blawnox there used to be two fruit stores. One was Pappy Lange. He was on the lower side of the road. That's where you had to go to get your mail, Pappy Lange's store. And then Haley's had a store on, (as) you're coming down off of Blawnox hill on the right hand side of the road there George Haley, they had a store. And then there was another one, what the dickens was their name? On the other side. And that's where Dr. Foster was in there, right beside that.

What the dickens was those people's name? Because I can remember them so well, they had a little bit of everything. You could go down and have shoes for the kids and this and that and I'd go down there and get a new pair of shoes, but what the dickens was her name? I ought to have Mary Jane Roach here to help me now.

Anyhow, she was real sick. And somebody wanted to give her, make a liquor tottie and, no sir!, she'd die before she'd drink it. (Laughs) She got better, though. (Laughs)

But, then Dr. Magee had an office when you go into Presbyterian Church, he had a little office there, and then they have a house across, the big yellow brick house where Edna lives. Right straight across from our church, that's where his wife lives there.

Well, let's see, our church bought the house where Magee lived. Our church bought it and that was our manse for a long time after Dr. Magee died and Edna lives down there now 'cause (I) was just talking to her the other day and she says, "I ought to get out of this place". I said, where can you live for that cheap to rent when you only have to pay taxes? (Laughs) Where can you, isn't rent terrible? Oh! Look at it, two rooms down through Blawnox or Aspinwall, three rooms, three hundred dollars a month. No. I'll pay taxes and live here. (Laughs)

I worked out at **Kerr School**. I run the cafeteria out there, the first one they ever had. And I said to Dr. Cober one day, he was the principal out there then.. And I said, gee, they're fixing the road down below our place. My kids are all gone. That's when they put the new road down here and I said to him, I think maybe I'll get some of them guys (and) rent a couple (of rooms) out. I got that house (to) myself. "You will not!", and I said, who are you to tell me what to do, we were quite good friends. And he said, "I'll get you somebody to stay with you if you want". I said, I want somebody in the house. I said, financially I can use it and I'd like somebody in the house. Well, he got me school teachers. I had school teachers for years. They would come in and they'd get their teacher's training, 8 or 10 weeks or (so), it would be in and out and in and out, sometimes I'd have three at a time. (Laughs) Then I got one to stay permanent then, Tom Hopkins.

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You remember Tom Hopkins? Well, I had company and we were sitting in the living room and somebody came to the front door and I went to the front door, "Mrs. Van Horn?"

And I said, yes?

"Don't you know me?"

No.

"Can I come in?"

Well, I said, well, I guess you can come in, but I don't know who you are.

"Well, these, this is my son and daughter, two daughters and my son."

The spitting image of him.

He said, "Did you ever see Tom Hopkins?" (Laughs)

He looked in the telephone book and he got my telephone number and address, and he said, "You haven't moved and I couldn't go (back)". They live in Arizona, and he said, "I couldn't come back without coming to see you".

Two beautiful daughters and a boy, big tall people like they are.

But I had all school teachers. School teachers, school teachers, and of course, I got to know them. I think I got a better education by working in a cafeteria, I'll tell ya. (Laughs)

They had a teacher's room where the teachers would come in. Well, the nurse had to take that over, Gladys Hennigan had to take that over because she needed a room. Well, I made a big pot of coffee every, we got it ready the night before so when the teachers came, we could plug the coffee pot in, so the teachers would have coffee to drink. And, then they couldn't smoke anyplace only they'd sneak into my stockroom to smoke. (Laughs) (When) they'd have to have a smoke or a conflag. This one would be mad at this one and what happened here and what happened someplace else, I knew all that was going on the school, I'll tell you.

But anyhow, one day Fred Haig, do you know who Fred Haig is? OK. Fred Haig came from Mount Lebanon to teach and they hated him! They just, "Ooh", and they'd come in and their teeth would be, "Who does he think he is?", and I got all these stories, "Who does he think he is?". Well, one day Fred Haig come into this, the room and he said, "I'm gonna shut this door", and I said, now what did I do?

"It ain't what you did, it's what I want you to do".

I said, well, OK. I said, if you say it.

I was counting money, I had to tab my money everyday after lunches was over. He said, "Will anybody come in here?"

I said, they'll tap if the door's closed. I don't want them in there and, he said, "I want you to tell me something. What am I doing wrong in this building? They hate me!". He said, "They just have no use for me".

And I said, well, now I'm gonna hand it to you, if you like it, all right, but, if you don't, I'm gonna hand it to you. I said, when you decide to forget where you taught and keep saying, "This is the way we done it in Mount Lebanon". I said, when you forget that you taught in Mount Lebanon and that you're teaching these teachers here, I think you're gonna find a difference.

"Well", he says, "do you think that's wrong?"

I says, I know it's what's wrong because they'll say they have their own way before you came here and you're trying to put something all together different across to them and I said it was going real good. And I said, you're trying to change the whole thing and he said, "Well, I'll try it".

You know in a week he come back and he said, "You was right". (Laughs) "You was right", he said. I said, that's what made them so mad, because you was always telling them what to do.

And what with Pavlovich, do you (know) Pavlovich that was over at Kerr School? He's there now! (Luke) Pavlovich, he lives up on Powers Run hill. Well, I left when he was there,



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they throwed me out, I couldn't stay anymore. I was seventy, they left me work over there 5 years, I should have retired at 65, but they left me stay 'till I was 70 and then they said, "You have to get out". (Laughs) You gotta move.

Q: Pavlovich was the principal?

A: He was principal too.

Q: Now, when I was there Haig was the principal.

A: Haig, oh, well, this was after Haig. But, he come in there one day and (was) marching around the side into the cafeteria.

"What's all the noise in here?"

I said, what's the matter with him? Sure, the kids was talking, they was laughing, you know. And I said to Florence Grubbs, I said, Florence, take the money over here, I want to go out and see what's going on out here and I went out and I said, what's the trouble?

He said, "Well, listen to them talking. Listen to the noise", he says, "they're pushing food back and forth to each..", you know, what kids would do, you know. And I said, listen, you have those kids when you have them and I have those kids when I have them, and they have to keep quiet but if they want to talk, they're not hurting a soul. I said, they come get their food and they can't enjoy it if you're gonna make them sit there like a bunch of dummies and just eat and look at each other. I said, they need some relaxation in between their classes. Well, OK. So, that was that.

He says, "OK". That ended it. (Laughs) He never said another word after that. But he was gonna come in there and upset my whole cafeteria business and you know kids don't wanna sit there and just eat. No, no.

No, that was a great place. I worked there for 13 years. (Laughs) Was there for 13 years and I said that's where I think, I learned so much from the other ones that come in there and we'd talk, you know. Talk, talk, talk. But, I knew enough to keep quiet. I was just telling, I don't know who I was talking to about the, uh, Gladys Henninger over there.

Oh, I know what it was. We were talking about welfare. When they'd have 4 or so many or more than a certain, then they were allowed free lunches, you know. And, it would have to be investigated. Well, we had a couple families that was pulling a fast one.

And Gladys come in one day and she says, "Come on, you're going with me".

So, we went down over Kittanning Pike. I think it was down in there someplace anyhow, yeah. And you never saw such a mess in your life! I had 4 kids on the free lunches. Of course lunches at that time was 35 cents a piece. Well, you never saw such a filthy place in your life! And they were, him and her was there, drunk as a ...(?)..., beer bottles, whiskey bottles, everything, all over the place. Kids, come half dressed in school. Those are the kind of things you had to go out and, investigate, you know, to see whether they should have it or whether they shouldn't have it.

Then one day Gladys come in to me and she said, "Is your washer empty?" I had a washer and a dryer to do towels and the stuff up and I said, well, it isn't quite yet.

And she says, "I don't care what you got in it, get it out of there, because", she says, "I have two kids here that smell to high heaven". She undressed those kids, brought the clothes in and put them in the washer and she gave them a bath in her nurses room and I washed the clothes!

No, but it was an education, believe you me. Yes, sir, that's like, I was supposed to order my stuff from, there was a fruit store down off Freeport Road, that's where you're gonna buy your vegetables and stuff like that. And I said, well, that isn't what I made arrangements for. We had

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made arrangements to get them from Stumps. Lou Wagner, not Stumps, Lou Wagner down at the foot of the hill, he had a grocery store and meat and this and that and something else and besides, of course at that time the government bought a tremendous lot of stuff. See they would have to send the school truck, who worked on the truck at that time? Charlie, Charlie, Charlie, Charlie, Charlie, Charlie, Charlie, from the bottom of Blawnox. Snider. Snider was the one and, Charlie Roach and (Charlie) Snider. They would take the school truck and go into town and get all this stuff. Cheese and, well, you name it, they had it. We got big pieces of cheese, anything you could think of. Loads of stuff. And then I had to buy what I needed, the meat, lots of meat and stuff. In fact, I had to buy another refrigerator. One wasn't enough, I had to get the second refrigerator to keep the stuff, and they would bring this stuff in and of course everything was in the tin pack, tin, big cans, you know, like that. And what you couldn't get to eat out of those things, I'm telling, chicken! And, well all the butter, all the cheese, all this and that and something else. And, it was interesting. (Laughs)

But, old Charlie Roach was, they was some guys, they'd go into Pittsburgh and haul all this stuff out. Oh, I know another fast one I pulled on Pavlovich. He had an aircondition(er) put in. Well, I had to have a window taken out to make room for another refrigerator. And, Haig didn't like it because, no, that wasn't Pavlovich, or was it Haig? Oh, that was Haig!

He couldn't have his air conditioning because, (Laughs), I had the window taken out so I could get a big door put in there to get this refrigerator put in there. And, he didn't like that. (He thought) that was a mean trick. I said, that's tough.

Oh, another, Gladys Henning, no, it wasn't Gladys Henning, it was somebody else. She was a secretary. Taylor, I think, was her name. Yeah, Taylor. She wanted a lot of fish. And she wanted me to buy them wholesale. Of course, I could buy them wholesale when I was buying the stuff, see.

"Get me this and get me that and get me something else", well, I got it.

And the refrigerator went bad and they called me, "You'd better come over and see this". (Laughs) "This stuff's all rotten". Jim Santelli, did you remember Jim Santelli? He was custodian over there. Jim says, "(It) smells to high heaven over here, you'd better get over here. (Laughs) Oh!, we had lots of fun! Lots and lots of fun!

**Q:** How did you get into that job?

**A:** How'd I get it? Well, to start with I raised 6 kids, you had to feed them. Then Dorothy Olson, down over the hill here worked for a camp up above Harmarville there. Deer Creek Camp, they called it. And there was a bunch of people, majority of Jewish people had a day camp up there. And there was about 200, on the average of 200 and 2 hundred and fifty, whatever kids would come. Just for a day. They were there from nine 'till, they left at three thirty or four o'clock. And some way, I don't know how Dorothy got the job, but then she needed somebody to help her, so I got in with that. Well, then Dorothy had to quit, she got sick and had to quit. So, I got the job. Well, we just cooked one meal a day for those kids, five days a week. So, I got that job and that gave me a little bit of training.

Then my son, Roy, he opened a boy's camp up in East Hickory. He lives in Titusville. So Roy open this cabin, he says, "Mum, how about coming up and work?"

So, I went up to work for Roy. I was there 2 years. But I heard about this job coming over at school, so I sent an application in. And, in the meantime there was something going on over at school, I don't know what it was, and Dr. Cobert said, you have a milk bill here, Oh, it was, it was something that I had to do with the P.T.A. And I ordered this milk from Meadow Gold. And, he said, "There's a bill here for that".

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I said, OK, I'll take care of that. And that's when I heard what they were gonna do. This was just a teacher's affair, they had. And I had Marge write me a letter, the experience I had, from Roy's camp and Deer Creek, and working at, I used to cook for, couple times a year, for help cook down at the church, big dinners for the church, you know. So, anyhow, he called me and he says, "I'm sorry but, I don't think I can do anything for ya. He wanted me to pay this bill and I says, OK. And he says, "I'm sorry I can't do anything for you".

I said, well if that's it... About a week later he says, "Would you come over here as fast as you can?" (Laughs)

I didn't have a car then. So I called my brother-in-law and I said, Jack, take me over to (Kerr) school. I got the job, just like that! And that's where it was. And you know the funny part of it is you can go out and, now I wouldn't have known you from Adam, you possibly knew me from, you know, from myself. But, how many kids you run into now say, oh, Mrs. Van Horn, don't you remember me? (Laughs)

I was down Witas' one day and Ed Boyle, and I don't know who the other one is, one of the teachers. Anyhow, Ed come up to me and he said, "How old are you?"

I said, who wants to know? It's none of your business how old I am.

"Well, I got 5 dollars bet down at the other end of this store on your age and I know how old you are", he says.

Well then, how old am I?

He said, "Well, let me see, you had to quit when you were 65". He said, "You had to get out of there when you were 65", and this and that and something else and he said, "How old?".

I said, well you just bet how old I am.

And he said, "Well, you're 68". You're this, you're that or something else and whatever. I kept saying, well, you better go up a little higher.

"Oh you, what are you talking about?"

You better go up a little higher. Well, that's when I was 80.

And he said, "You're kidding me!" He couldn't, he says, "You had to get out of there when you was 65, I know that much".

I said, you think so, but I happen to be 70 when I got out of there. (Laughs)

I've been very, very, very fortunate. We've had a lot of sickness in the family but they've all seem to get along pretty good. You can only expect so much, you know.

But, I think I got a bigger boost up at Roy's camp because he had this camp and that was altogether different. You cooked three meals a day. (Laughs)

{End of First Interview}

Q: You were **married** at the Methodist church?

A: Methodist, you're right, yes, yes, yes, yes.

Q: Where did you get your wedding dress?

A: I didn't have anything special.

Q: Was that usually the case at that time?

A: Yes, yes, yes. You didn't have anything special, you wore your dress that you wore on Sunday.

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(I) was talking last night about clothes, we used to have a outfit we kept for every Sunday, we'd wear that every Sunday, you didn't wear that during the week. That was your Sunday Best. That was it. Didn't have no washers and dryers to fuss, run down and do it, put it on and wear it. It was different. Yes.

Q: Was all the clothing at that time either cotton or wool?

A: Oh, yes. Oh, definitely. Yes, but you could wash them and boil them and do almost anything with them but not all this fancy stuff like we have now.

Q: How did you **meet your husband**?

A: Oh, we went to school together. Down in the old Montrose School. We lived down, I don't know who lives in the house now, across from where Bartletts live. And Harry lived down the old plaster works house.

Q: When they went to bury somebody, I'm talking about when you were 10 or 20 years old, back in the early days, where was the cemetery? What **cemetery** was used in this area?

A: Up Kittanning Pike, is that Greenwood?

Q: Oh, on the other side of O'Hara?

A: Yeah, on the other side of Sharps(burg), up Kittanning Pike, it's Greenwood, it's on the left hand side, right below Kerr School. You know where Kerr School is?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, that's the cemetery down, you could look out the school, down in there. There was a Catholic one down, up right out of Sharpsburg. That was on the right hand side and this was on the left hand side right below Kerr School.

Q: So, there were no cemeteries in this end of O'Hara or Blawnox?

A: Not that I ever knew of, no.

Q: No little cemeteries anywhere?

A: Uh-uh, uh-uh, no. When my husband died, he's up in Deer Creek. That's up above where Gulf used to be and up around in there.

Q: That's quite a ways from here.

A: Yes. No, there was none closer. At all.

Q: I wanted to take you back on a little trip in time, to when you were 13 years old.

A: Well, I lived in my house down over the hill, the Olson house. (Laughs)

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Q: OK, now obviously you know the name Van Horn, Harry and Agnes, and their son Harry, who was 15.

A: That was my husband.

Q: They were living where, at that time?

A: Well, down on, across Boyd Avenue, goin' down the hill, they called it the old plaster works house, it was down, now there's some kind of a machine shop or something, but it wasn't too far back, but it was the old plaster works house. The plaster works was in that territory there someplace.

Q: So you're talking about down Boyd Avenue.

A: It wasn't across the rail road track. It was on th(is side). It was between Freeport Road and the rail road track.

Q: OK, let me try some more names. John Combs, he would have been 27 years old when you were 13.

A: Combs!, Ohh, John Combs! (He would) have been my brother-in-law. (Laughs) He married my sister, Anna.  
Now I'll tell you who, (do) you know Grace Martineck? Well, that's Grace's grandmother! Anna Mae Cable was my father's daughter. My sister was Anna, she married John Combs. John Henderson Combs. John Henderson Combs and Anna, (well) Anna Walder.

Q: Do you know where they were living, where their parents house was?

A: John Combs lived, wait 'till I try to tell exactly where it is, approximately across the street, from where Witas' beer place is now.

Q: Well, that whole section that's now Blawnox, that was Montrose at one time, wasn't it?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Toward Cable?

A: Oh, well I would say yeah, down that far but see the whole thing used to be O'Hara Township and then they took O'Hara Township and made Blawnox out of it when Blaw-Knox moved down here from up in DuBois, didn't they come from DuBois or Brookville or some part of the dickens there. Up in that place, when Blaw-Knox moved down there then they changed it to Blawnox.

Q: That's when a lot of these people moved down with it?

A: Yeah, when all these people come for, when the Luthers over there and all these people came.

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Q: What about Eiffler? Now, I have a John, 42, his wife Mary, and a son John H. that was your age, 13.

A: Oh, (Laughs) yes. Now wait I have to think. The house is there yet. It's down on Freeport Road. On the right hand side {heading into Blawnox from Montrose}there's a white house and then that's where John Eiffler lived.

Q: How about Charlton? A James and a Margaretta. They had a daughter Norma that was 16, a son James that was 15 and a son Frank that was your age too.

A: The name registers but I don't think I knew much about them. I remember, but I can't remember just who they were.

Q: Gunderman, John.

A: Oh, my goodness. (Laughs) Well, they lived in the big house after you passed, where I'm trying to tell you, where Eiffers lived. It's a nice, great big brick house.

Q: That is also between where the Sunoco is and where Witas' store is?

A: Yes. There's only two houses there, the John Eiffer house and then the (Gunderman). Gundermans lived in there and they run a hotel down across the rail road tracks, right above where the water works is down there. Gunderman's Hotel.

Q: Do you happen to know if it was possible that Eiffers lived on Powers Run, before they moved to Freeport Road?

A: No, (not) as long as I could re(member)

Q: You had mentioned the old Cornelius house. Did you ever know Cornelius? There was a William Cornelius.

A: Oh, I didn't know those, William Cornelius.

Q: You said that you had lived in the old Cornelius house. Where is it?

A: You know where Bartletts live?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, right beside Bartletts. We lived in there and we moved from there up here. We built this house and moved up here. I know it's old. I tell you they built mother's house in 1910 and that house was old then. (Laughs)

And the one that Bartletts live in, too, see that was an old house, that was the Blackham house, the Blackhams lived in there. Cyrus and Emma Blackham. She was a Boyd. Emma Blackham was a Boyd.

Q: They had a son that was your age.

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A: Yeah. Boyd Blackham. (They) called him Boyd Blackham. He was the first guy that had a hardware store down in Blawnox. In where Cicolos are now.

Q: Now who were the other Blackhams, there was a Charles.

A: Well, that was a son. That was Charley Blackham. Charles. He lived in the house right beside the Cornelius house. Right smack beside that.

Q: There's also two family of Moyes, George Moyes.

A: George Moyes? Well George Moyes is the, oh what's her name, (Pause) (Laughs), related to me, darn it, Elsie Moyes is the wife. He's got an odd name. Zigarovich! Elsie Moyes lives in the Moyes house now. That was Grandpa Moyes', George Moyes. They've remodeled it and fixed it all up. Well, see there's this Moyes lives over, is it Ed Moyes? Over around where Dorothy Nix lives? Yeah, it's either, is it Bud? They live over there right below Dorothy Nix. Ed Moyes. See, they're my husband's second cousins.

Q: Everybody's related...

A: Oh, (Laughs), oh, listen, it was related so bad, it was always, "Don't you talk about anybody, because (everyone's related to everyone)"  
(Laughs)

Q: Did you know Dennis Cook?

A: Oh, good grief! Gibons, do you know Sam Gibons? Lives right here. Across the street. There's a set of lots in between us and them. And they're over on the other street {Riverview}.

Q: Oh, that's the big white house, the old white house here?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Coming down Riverview?

A: Yeah, yes. Well, they're on two streets there, the house faces Riverview and then instead of an alley it's a street, it's Neilson Avenue, and that's where Sam and Ruth Gibons live, Danny Gibons, didn't you know Danny Gibons? Mike Gibons?

Q: No, I didn't know them. They must have been older or younger than me.

A: Well, that's where they live, Sam and Ruth. There was Ella Cook and Mabel Cook and Dennis Cook. None of them ever got married. She was an adopted daughter, Ruth Cook, Ruth Gibons.

Q: And then there was a sister Emma. To Ella. That's what it says here.

A: I only knew Mabel and Ella.

Q: Yeah, it says here she was a stenographer.

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A: Well, that was possible, those gals had to walk down the hill and they always wore spikes in the winter time so they wouldn't slide they'd have spikes on. (Laughs)

Do you have the Wards in there?

Q: Yeah, Louis and a Jeannette Ward.

A: Jeannette Ward lived, the next house down, that was the Ward's house. After you passed Gibbons, going down.

Q: So, they were on Riverview, also.

A: They were, uh-huh. Yes, Louis and Mike, Eugene and Martha. Martha Ward lives up here. Martha Ward was married to Walt Bier.

Q: Well, the only other ones on here then are the Boyds.

A: Lydia and Myra and Dave.

Q: There's an Agnes, too.

A: Yes, Agnes.

Q: She might have been 5 years older than Lydia.

A: Oh, yes, yes.

Q: Was she a sister to Lydia?

A: Yes, she was never married. Lydia was married.

They tore (down) the house that she lived in. (It) was when you come up the old road, was torn down when they put Freeport Road through. It was out on the (bend). They had the most beautiful built, it was all stone, the house was gorgeous, when you're going down River Road, you know, that's all Clifton ain't it? Right through there {the horseshoe bend}, in there and that's where that house sat on the cliff there. It was absolutely, absolutely beautiful, just gorgeous, I know because I cleaned it. (Laughs)

They tore the brick house down, too. The Blackham house. Blackhams had a beautiful, big brick house. They built the house and had cement steps from the old Freeport Road up to, oh, gosh, I think there was something like 20 steps you'd have to walk to get up in there. But, when the new road came through they took it out. Right across from where Alice Vogel's son lives. Huck.

Q: Do you recall at all a road that ran past the Boyd's house and then up across the hill?

A: (Pause) Now, wait 'till I think. You'd come into Boyd's house. (Pause)

Well, now, there is a very big possibility, yes, and it went up to the res, no, the reservoir was... (Pause) Yes!, it did. Yes it came up passed there and up below the reservoir there, you



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could walk up under the reservoir, that's where we used to go see our shootin' crackers and things.  
(Laughs)

Q: In other words, it was a road that ran from the horseshoe bend around the hill and up near the reservoir, but towards the river on the river side of the reservoir.

A: Uh-hum.

Q: And where did it go to, do you know?

A: Well, it come up over there and they'd drive up there with horses.

Q: Did it go down the other side at all?

A: No. No. Uh-uh.

Q: Never did?

A: Uh-uh.

Q: Now, when that road was in there, was there still a road down where Freeport is?

A: Oh, yes, yes, uh-huh. Drove it with horse and buggy. (Laughs)

Q: Oh, let me ask you a couple of questions about over on **Powers Run**. There were a lot of Powers over there, of course.

A: I know. Walt. Oliver Powers. Tom Powers. Yeah, up by Powers Run Hill. I know exactly where they lived, Oliver Powers, Tom Powers. Of course those places are gone, torn down.

Q: Well, these people were all the same family, were they?

A: Uh-huh. My kids, they went up there to pick strawberries. They raised strawberries and they'd go up there to pick strawberries and they'd get 2 cents a quart picking them! (Laughs)

Q: Well, let me go on. McRoberts?

A: Sam McRoberts?

Q: Yeah, Sam McRoberts, then there was a James and a Mary. They were all about 20 or 30 years older than you.

A: Yeah, they lived, do you know where that house, oh what the dickens is their name? Across from the high school. If you look across, that's the family that have, I don't know how many, how many bathrooms. Oh, it's a huge, big house, on the right hand side goin' out, it kind of sits on the hill, and they have, 8 girls and 2 boys, and they all had an automobile and, it's a doctor.

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The McRoberts lived on that piece of ground there, and we had a big dog, we lived out further in the country, at that time. And, we had a dog that would follow us around and Dad was driving my older sister to school and the dog went up in the yard and he shot the dog! Yeah, and I can remember that so well, (old) Sam McRoberts shot our dog.

Q: What was your sister's name?

A: Anna, Anna Walder, that's Anna Combs, she married John, the one I told you before, she married John.

Q: She was 7 years older than you?

A: Uh-huh

Q: And you had a brother, John?

A: Yeah. A brother Chris.

Q: OK, yeah.

A: Uh-huh. And a sister Margaret, and a sister Marie. They were older. I was the baby, so you know (laughingly).

Q: The particular page I have in front of me right now is from 1900. So, at that time you were 2 years old. You were living on Powers Run and right down the road is a Lind and a Weikel and a Hawkins.

A: Hawkins, oh, yes. I knew the Hawkinses, they went to school (with me), Ada Hawkins, John Hawkins. Ella Haw(kins), was it Ella?

Q: Exactly where were you living on Powers Run?

A: I was living on Powers Run Hill where the, there's a store there now. That's where the house was.

Q: Right as you go under where the bypass goes over now?

A: Yeah. Uh-huh. That was what, where we lived in there, uh-huh.

Q: And these people, Hawkins lived where?

A: Well, they were over on the other side.

Q: Other side of the street?

A: On the other side of the hill. The Hawkinses was over on the, where the dickens, where like the school house is, they came in on that road, that direction.

Q: Did you know anybody by the name of Preger?

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A: Prager, yeah, Ralph. Ralph Prager. Yes, yes, yes, Ralph and I can't think of who else was in it, but I know Ralph,  
Do you happen to have anybody on there by the name of Federkeil?

Q: No, I don't think I've seen that name.

A: I just wondered because, they lived up on, well if you went out to the crossroads, they lived up on the hill. He was a constable. (Laughs)

Q: You're talking about way out Powers Run?

A: Yeah, uh-huh. Andy Federkeil.

Q: Andrew Federkeil, Mary's his wife?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Harry a son? Another son...

A: What's the other son?

Q: Andrew, and George and Harry were his sons, and he had a daughter Mary and Elva?

A: Uh-huh.

Q: Now, right next door was, to them was a fellow by the name of George Gloss. Now, he was an older fellow, he was in his 80s when you were 13.

A: Yea, he was a real (old), I never saw him or anything, but he lived up there though.

Q: He is my grandmother's grandfather! He's my immigrant ancestor, George Gloss.  
That's getting out quite a ways, I think that might be in Harmarville now.

A: You went up a hill and then turned to your left to get to where they lived up on the (hill and) it would be so in Harmar Township, yes.

Q: We've talked about the list of people who are listed as living in Montrose Village in 1910. Asdale.

A: Asdale, oh, yes. Mary, Lydia, Bessie. Mary was the mother, then Lydia, Bessie. I'll tell you where they lived. Where the house was. Do you know where, uh, McRandell lived? Well, it was, it was squeezed right in there.

Well, they were both maiden ladies, they never got married. Of course, I didn't know the mother, but I knew the (daughters).

Q: Clawson?

A: Clawson? Gordon Clawson?

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Q: Now, this is a Thomas and Jennie.

A: Don't give a son by the name of Gordon? Gordon Clawson?

Q: Yes, a son Gordon, just about your age. A year younger.

A: They lived down around when you're going down the sharp corner here, their house was down in there, when you go around River Road then on that street. Their house was torn down, too, when they the one son.

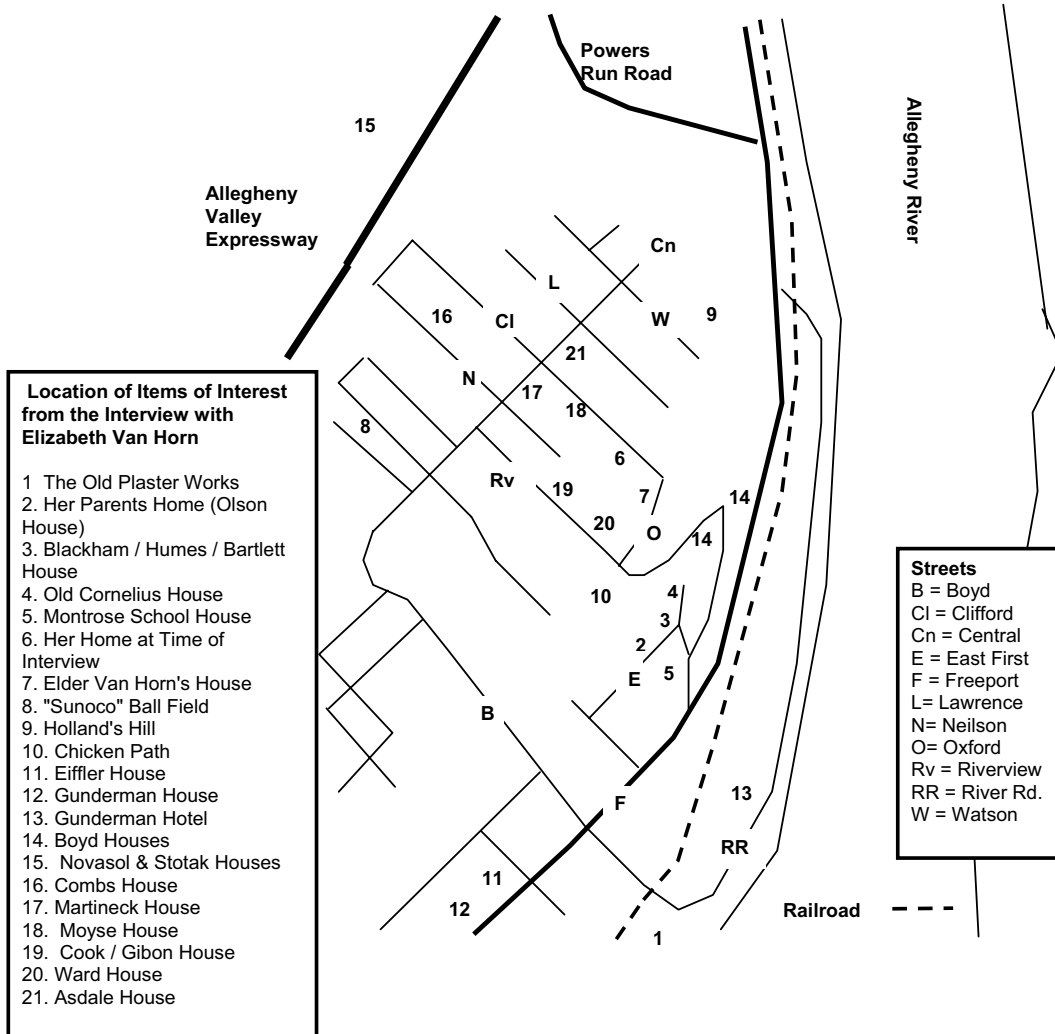
A: We call(ed) him Dutch Eiffer, he was Dutch Eiffer. His mother was very proud of her only son and she wouldn't send him to school here, she sent him to North Side to school, so he didn't loaf with the kids, you know, like the rest of them (did loaf). But, his dad died and then his mother died. And he was left quite a nice sum of money.

But, you know, what we all thought it was so funny, we always thought Dutch had so much money. Dutch was a big shot, you know, he had a car and that.

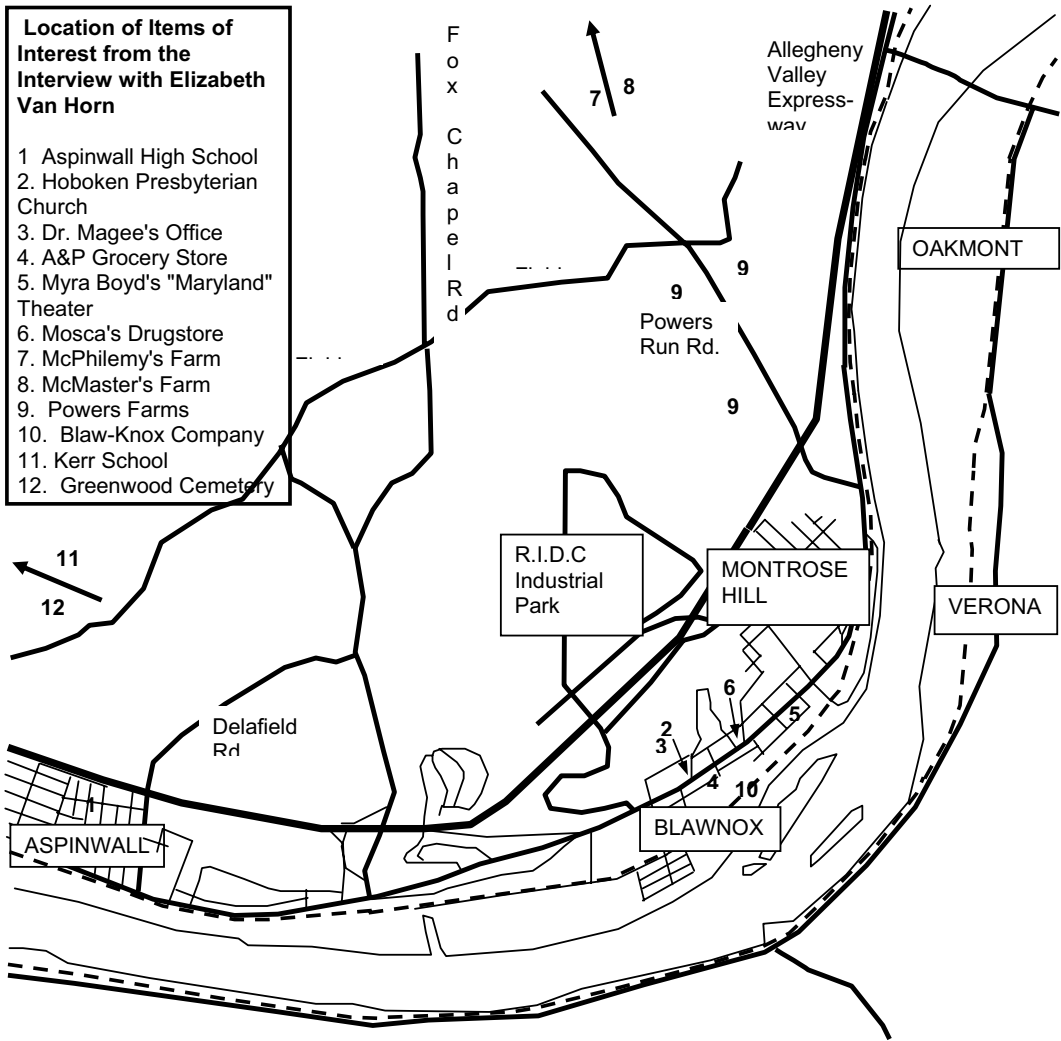
Well, he went through his money like water. And one day he came up here and he said, this is when car, carpet, electric carpet sweepers just came out, you know. And he came up and he said, "Hey, Harry, I need some money, I'll give him my sweeper for 10 dollars". (Laughs)

Well, I don't know how long we had that sweeper. There wasn't a thing wrong with it, but he, he just needed, he just went through his money. (Laughs) And the thing was, his mother was so, they would walk miles so they would save carfare. And when Dutch got it, Dutch got it. (Laughs)

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**A Glimpse at Life on Montrose Hill and Surrounding Area  
In the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s  
An Interview with Jim Murdock**

This is an edited transcription of an interview with Jim Murdock from November of 1998. Dan Nowak was both the interviewer and the editor. The interview took place at Jim's home in Penn Hills PA. Jim was born on Montrose Hill in 1923. Editor's notes are shown in {brackets}, probable missing words (due to difficulties hearing the tape recording) are filled in in (parenthesis).

Q: What was the address of the house where you grew up?

A: We didn't actually have an address. For a long time it was just, General Delivery, Blawnox, Pennsylvania. Then after a few years, I found out we lived on Oxford Avenue. And our address was: Murdock, Oxford Avenue, Montrose Hill, Blawnox PA. So, actually we didn't have a house number, as far as I know.

Q: Did your parents **own or rent their house**?

A: They owned it.

Q: Were they first generation up there?

A: Yes, I would say.

Q: Your grandparents weren't up there?

A: No, my grandparents lived in Lawrenceville, that's where my dad was born. My mother was born in North Side. My dad went in to the Army in 1917 and he came back in 1918, I guess. He loafed around with my uncle, Bill Troeger. And, my mother, Elizabeth Troeger, was a brother of Bill and, like I say, they got together and they were married in 1920. And they lived in John Warton's old house for 2 years, I believe. Then they bought the big house on Oxford Avenue.

Q: Who were the people that you most remember when you started to play outside?

A: Well, across the street there was the Longs. Raymond Long was one of the fellows I played with. Fred Roberts was my buddy. He's only about 2 months difference in age, and we loafed around together until we got married, 'til we went in the Army, anyhow. And on the corner was the Marshalls. (?)sty Marshall, he's about 2 months older than me. And, we had Junior Roberts, his first name is Elmer, and Bill Roberts, his brother. Clyde Everson, Richy Everson. And, one of the Moyses boys.

Q: Did you have any **relatives on the Hill** then?

A: Yeah, Bill Troeger and their children were Jean, and Betty, her name is Ireland now, and Billy Junior.

Q: Where did you play as a child, say 10 years old?

A: Well, on top of the Hill we had a baseball field that we played in.

Q: Where was that?

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A: It was on top of the Hill. I don't know the name of the street, it's been so long. But, Martineck come along and built a house on it. {This lot would have been at the south-east corner of Central and Clifford.} So, we had to move it. Dave Boyd owned most of the land up there. So, we moved our ball field over to where they had an old tennis court. As you get to the top of the Hill there it was on the left hand side. Then, somebody come along, I don't know who, and build a house on there (laughs), so we had to go out on Workhouse property then. And, build an old ball field to play. And, each of the kids donated canned goods and stuff and we had raffles every year, made money to buy our balls and bats.

Q: Were there any places on or near the Hill that were **off-limits**?

A: No. None. The only place would be the pumping station, Siscohana pumping station up there, but they had that all fenced in. They couldn't get anywhere near there because of the fence. But, everything else, we could go anywhere we wanted, do anything we wanted.

Q: **What did you play?** You mentioned baseball.

A: Yeah, we played baseball, softball. When we were kids we stayed out at night and play relievo, kick the can. Kids games.

Q: Were there any bullies in the neighborhood?

A: No, I would say there wasn't really any. No, I don't think there was.

Q: Were there any other problems?

A: Well, during the Depression, everybody was out of work, you know. I think my dad was the only one that was working. He was a prison guard at the Workhouse over there.

Q: Now, when you were growing up, let's say before 1950, were there any houses on the top of the Hill at all?

A: No. Well, on the top, just along the one street and down the middle street.

Q: On Clifford?

A: Yeah.

Q: Were there any on Clifford to the north, towards Powers Run?

A: No, no, uh-uh.

Q: There was nothing from Clifford over towards the river?

A: No, there wasn't.

Q: It seems there was one house in there at the top of the hill, do you remember **Asdale**?



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A: Oh, yeah. Asdale. She was my Sunday school teacher, Bessie Asdale. And then, in front of her house was McRandell, yeah.

Q: So, Asdales was right beside McRandell's?

A: Yeah, uh-huh. It's been gone for quite a while.

Q: Was there anything that you could do on the Hill that was special, unusual or even unique for it's time?

A: No. Not that I can think of. We could do almost anything, I mean, if we did something wrong, we'd get punished. We'd get the old cat-o-nine-tail (laughs), but there wasn't anything unusual or anything unique that we did.

Q: Did you remember any **hucksters or ice cream or "sweet treats" vendors**?

A: The ice man would come around everyday. And we'd steal chips of ice off his wagon. He had a horse and buggy. And, he'd holler at us and we'd run.

Then, Stanley Kutman, I think he was the first traveling ice cream vendor. He got an old Chevy with a rumble seat. He took the rumble seat out and put an ice cream freezer in there. It run off of his car battery. And, he come around and sell ice cream. Then later on there was another man come around with a big truck full of groceries. And, he'd ring his bells, you know, and all the people would go out, just like a regular store. He had all kind of groceries and everything you needed. You didn't have to run down to Blawnox store everyday, you know.

Q: Did you have a **curfew**? When was it?

A: Yes. My mother had a pretty powerful voice. When she called, we had to go (laughs). It usually was around 10 o'clock, school night. (On a) weekend night we could stay out a little longer, but we had to be in the house by dark.

Q: Did you go to **indoor theaters**? Where?

A: Yeah. Down in Blawnox there, on Freeport Road, Davie Boyd had a theater that had decent movies. I remember the first time I went, I guess maybe I was about 3 years old, there was a serial on of one of the Cowboys or something, you know. And my brother, he's older than I was, he took me down. He said, "Come on, we'll go down and watch the serial". I couldn't figure out how we were gonna have cereal when I didn't have a cereal bowl (laughs).

Q: You walked down to it?

A: We walked down, yeah. Yeah, anyplace we'd go, we had to walk.

Q: Did your **family have a car**?

A: Well, our first car was in 1932. My dad got a 1932 Plymouth. And he drove down to Virginia to visit his brother and we went to Indiana to visit my mother's brother. But, locally, no, we didn't drive. We walked everywhere.

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Q: Did your family go to **drive-in theaters**?

A: Yeah, I went to a drive-in theaters, one in Harmarville there. It's long gone now.  
Mostly, for entertainment, I went roller skating. I was a roller skating fan.

Q: Where did you **skate**?

A: Down at the old National Park there on Freeport Road. Logan was the name of the proprietor at that time.

Q: I've heard about that park. Now, what all was in there?

A: Well, it used to be a regular amusement park. They had Ferris wheel, they had roller coaster. Where the roller skating rink was there was a dance hall and, I think, a pavilion. I don't remember going to there riding any of the rides, because I guess I was too young. But, I'd seen pictures of it. My mother and dad, they talked (about it).

Q: They closed it down when you were young?

A: Yeah, very young. But then, they kept the pavilion and turned it into a roller skating rink.

Q: Now, where exactly was it located?

A: Boy, that's hard to say. It was on Freeport Road. I think there's a lumber company in there now. Do you remember Dinty Moores? It was right across the street from Dinty Moores. After we'd finish skating, we'd go to Dinty Moore's.

Q: Did you remember any **food items delivered** to the house?

A: Milk was about the only thing that was delivered. Rick's Milk Company. Sometimes we'd get Meadow Gold. They would deliver it. That was about it. Newspaper was delivered.

Q: Did your family have a **vegetable garden**?

A: Oh, yes. Dad, he planted about, oh I'd say about three-quarters of an acre. (It) had all kind of vegetables, corn, potatoes, squash, you name it, tomatoes (laughs).

Q: Did things grow well?

A: Oh, yeah. Very well.

Q: Did you help with the garden?

A: (Laughs) that was half our job, digging the ground up every Spring. (Laughs.) Pulling the weeds out, yeah.

Q: Where did your parents take you if you needed to **see a doctor**?

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A: Well, when I was born there was (a) doctor, I can't think of his name, he lived up on the corner. I was born at home and he helped in the delivery.

Q: He lived on the Hill?

A: Yeah. (Do) you know where Roberts' live? Across the street on the top, that little wee house. Donnelly, Doc Donnelly was his name. Then, when he left, or went out of business, we went to Dr. Magee in Blawnox.

Q: What was the **closest hospital**?

A: (Pause to think) St. Francis it would be.

Q: Apparently you never went to the hospital.

A: No, I never did.

Q: Who was **your dentist**?

A: What was his name now... Ambrose, I think.

But, anyhow, it was a funny thing. I was about 8 or 9 years old when my wisdom teeth started to come through. And they were bad. And I had to have them pulled as soon as they broke the surface. And he didn't use any novocaine. I don't think they had novocaine then. But, boy, that first tooth he pulled., I clamped down on his thumb and I almost bit his thumb off!

Then when I was drafted, I went downtown to have my physical, who was the dentist that examined me? Ambrose!

So, I asked him, I says, you have a big scar on your thumb there? And, he says, "Yeah", he says, "I almost got it bit off. I says, I'm the one who did that (laughs). He says, "Murdock, Murdock, yeah, I know now (laughs)".

Q: Did you or your **family swim**?

A: Yes, we went down the river almost every day. It was dirty and filthy but we went swimming (laughs).

Q: Did you or your family **hunt or fish**?

A: Yeah, uh-huh. Did a lot of rabbit hunting. Out on the Workhouse farm out there, the property.

Fishing, we'd fish at the river, catch catfish, and bring them home and throw them in the garden. I'd do that, I wouldn't eat them. Although, occasionally I'd clean it and put them in a frying pan, wrap them in crumbs, you know.

Q: What **chores** do you remember doing?

A: The dishes. We took turn doing the dishes. We had to scrub the kitchen floor. Every Saturday. Weed the garden. Cultivate it. Dig it up in the Spring. Paint the house. It was an old wood house, we had to paint it every year and that was part of the job. That's about it. They didn't have any lawn, no grass to cut.

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Q: Did you receive an **allowance**?

A: No.

Q: Did you do anything on the Hill to **earn extra money**?

A: I had a paper route. I delivered the Post-Gazette.

Q: At that time you must have had the whole hill?

A: Yeah, The whole Hill, (and) down along the river.

Q: How many houses?

A: Oh, heck, I never bothered to count (laughs).

Q: Did you have an **after school or Summer job**?

A: Occasionally, yes. We went out to, Potter Powers, he lived up on Power's Run Hill there and he had dairy cows and he had a little farm. He didn't have too much. But, we picked cherries and strawberries and cleaned out his stalls, his milk stalls.

Q: Well, Powers Run was a lot of farms at that time, didn't it?

A: Oh, yeah. It was all, practically all farm.

Q: Where did you go to **elementary school**?

A: Montrose Elementary School there, sit up on top of the hill. It's torn down now. O'Hara Township.

Q: Between East First and Freeport Road?

A: Yeah, uh-huh, yeah.

Q: What is the first scene that pops into your head when I ask you about your grade school?

A: The desks. We'd sit on the front of the desk behind and then we got our desk and somebody else would sit on the front of our desk.

Q: How many grades were there?

A: Eight.

Q: How did you get there?

A: Walked.

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Q: Was the **Chicken Path** there at that time?

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you remember any of your **teachers or principals**?

A: Yes, we had a reunion here a few years ago, everybody that went to Montrose School, and my first grade teacher, Miss Shade, was there. She was 86 years old.

Then, my fifth grade teacher, Tom Powers, got killed in an automobile accident during the War. He was home on leave and going back to camp.

And Miss Tates. Miss Shade, did I mention her? Miss Miller, she was a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. I forget the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers.

Q: Were they good teachers?

A: Oh, yeah!

Q: Are there any **special friends** that you still think about or even see?

A: Yeah. Well, like George {Dolhi and a group from Blawnox, the “Second Wednesday Men’s Lunch Club”}, we get together once a month and go out for lunch.

Q: But, they were from Blawnox, were they not?

A: They were from Blawnox, yeah. I’m the only one from Montrose Hill that joined the group. Jim Panza, I belong to the same VFW that he does, and he invited me one time, “Come on over and join us”, so I did. It’s very pleasant. We have fun talking about old times. What we did. What we shouldn’t have done (laughs).

But, as far as the people from Montrose Hill, no, I don’t loaf around with any of them. They’re all gone now. Fred Roberts, he still lives up there. I promised myself more than once to stop in and see him, but I never get around to it.

Q: I want you to imagine yourself **in your house, at 10 years old**. It is a warm Summer afternoon. There is a nice breeze blowing. What are you doing?

A: In the house?

Q: Would you be in the house?

A: I would think (not), because as soon as school let out, off come our shoes and off come our shirts! (Laughs.) And, well, in the house on a Saturday, I’d probably be scrubbing the kitchen floor, but, we spent very little time in the house.

Q: If I were to ask you to walk out of your house, which door would you be most likely to use?

A: The kitchen door.

Q: That’s the side door?

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A: No, that's the front door. Anybody that comes or goes has to come through the kitchen. We had the kitchen and the dining room though, as you were coming in, the kitchen and the dining room was to the left, then upstairs was the living room.

Q: If I ask you to walk over to your front door and step out, what do you see?

A: Well, the house across the street (laughing).

And, the river. Hills across the river. And, let's see, across the street from us was the Longs, and next to them on the other side was the Mayeris, and another family. There was two families living in that house at that time but I can't remember the other name.

Q: Are there any kids around?

A: Yeah, oh yeah, Yeah, a lot of kids.

Q: Was the neighborhood noisy?

A: Not excessive noise. When we were outside playing, yes, you know, like kids would holler and shout, but there was no excessive noise.

Q: Do you recall any particular smells such as flowers, smoke, fumes, cooking?

A: Well, flowers. My grandmother lived with us and she had flowers all over the place. But, one day the old refrigerator went on the blink and smelled sulfur for a few days. But, that's about it.

Q: Was there much traffic?

A: Not too much, no.

Q: If you now get an urge to take a walk, which direction will you head?

A: I would probably go up the hill in the north-east, I guess. That was the closest, right to my friend's place (laughing). Travers, him and I, we played together all the time.

Q: Where did you go to **high school**?

A: Aspinwall.

Q: And that was starting in which grade?

A: Ninth grade.

Q: What is the first scene that pops into your head when I ask you about your high school?

A: Well, I remember the drug store that we always went to whenever we got breaks. And, riding a bicycle down to Aspinwall.

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Q: From the Hill?

A: Yeah.

Q: How long did that take?

A: Oh, maybe a half hour, 45 minutes. There wasn't too much traffic. You didn't have to worry about automobiles.

Q: What did you do in the winter then?

A: Took the bus. Walked down the bottom of the hill by way of the Chicken Path, and waited on the bus there. It was a dime to ride to Aspinwall.

Q: Do you remember the **bus company**?

A: Harmony Short Line. They used to have the street cars running up there, but they took them off before I was old enough to go any distance from home (laughing).

Q: So, by the mid-thirties the streetcars were gone?

A: Yeah.

Q: They still had a street car up as far as Aspinwall?

A: Up through Aspinwall and then you had to change at Aspinwall and get another streetcar {bus} up to New Kensington.

Q: Do you remember any of your **teachers, principals**?

A: Miss Reed was an English teacher. Barnsworth, he was the Science teacher. Miss McCrum was the Math teacher. I'm trying to think of the football coach's name... (laughs).

The kids from Blawnox went to Aspinwall, the kids from Aspinwall went to Aspinwall, the kids from Montrose Hill went to Aspinwall. Where all else did they pull from? Did they pull most of O'Hara Township into Aspinwall?

Well, yeah, they they did. That was the only high school. A lot of them went to Springdale because that was the next closer town.

Q: Like, up on Powers Run, it was closer to Springdale?

A: Yeah. But, a lot of Powers Run, when they removed the school up on Powers Run, when they tore that down, all the kids from Powers Run came down to Montrose Hill School. By bus. That's where they got their first school bus.

Q: Was that the **old Boyd School** that was on Field Club Road?

A: Right. Uh-huh.

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Q: So, then after that they went to **Montrose School**?

A: Yeah, uh-huh.

Q: Well, when you were in O'Hara Township did you have a **high school** that you had to go to, or did you have a choice?

A: No, we had a choice. Go to Aspinwall or Springdale. Whenever we made our choice, what ever one you went to O'Hara would have to pay.

But then when we first came back from California in '87, I went over to Aspinwall to see the old school and it's no longer there. They tore that down.

Here a few months ago our shop teacher, Troutman, no Trout, no, his name was Trout... I cut an obituary out of the paper, for him, 101 years old. I sent it to my brother.

Q: Were they good teachers?

A: Yeah, I think so. Very good.

Q: Do you remember any **school activities**?

A: Uh, football. I played football. I didn't care for basketball.

In grade school I was playing the violin. I was fairly good at it. But, when I went to Aspinwall they didn't have no string instrument (orchestra). Everything was brass so I just dropped it.

Q: Just a band rather than an orchestra.

A: Yeah.

Q: What year did you graduate?

A: Well, actually, I should have graduated in '43, but I was drafted.

Q: Oh, is that right? They didn't let you finish?

A: They didn't let me finish, no. But, after I got out of the Army then I went back. They give me a diploma.

Q: Where did you **hang out**, outside of school, when you were in high school?

A: When I wasn't in school, mostly at the roller rink. Dinty Moore's. That's about it. Occasionally we would go to Springdale or Cheswick.

Q: What was Dinty Moore's like?

A: It was a regular restaurant. It had a bar, not a drinking bar, but there was stools to sit down or else you had a booth. You sit in the booth.



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Q: Was it fancy?

A: Uh, not as restaurants are today, no. It wasn't that fancy.

Q: Was it home cooking?

A: Yeah, oh, yeah.

Q: Did they have music there?

A: Yeah, they had a juke box. Any time you wanted, just go up and put your nickels in the juke box.

Q: You said there was a drug store in Aspinwall you hung out at?

A: Yeah, uh-huh.

Q: Where was that?

A: It was on Brilliant Avenue. I think it was Brilliant Avenue Drugstore. It was right next to Humes Ford Company there. I guess it's still there, I don't know. I've been over there a couple times but I never stopped to go through.

Q: Now this was on the same side as Humes, so this was not Bard's?

A: No, no, Bard's is different.

Q: If you were to picture yourself back in your senior year of high school, at 8 o'clock on a Friday or Saturday night in the early Fall, where would you be?

A: I'd probably be home. Or else went to a movie.

Q: With whom?

A: My girlfriend at the time. I ended up marrying her. But, after 10 years, she passed away. Left me with one child.

Q: Did you do things such as **hanging around or shopping in Blawnox**?

A: Oh, not too much. About the only thing we would do was go to the grocery store. If my mother would need anything. She'd give us a penny to walk down and get a quart of milk or a loaf of bread or something. Then we was allowed to spend a penny on a piece of candy (laughs).  
I'd go to the theater down there, at least went once a week.

Q: Did you do things such as hanging around or **shopping in Cheswick, Springdale**, up the river?

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A: Well, we went to the auto... they had a racing track. They had a race track in New Kensington at one time. And we'd usually go up there on Saturday and there would be about 5 of us would bum our way up and... watch the auto races.

Q: Did you do things such as hanging around or shopping **in East liberty**?

A: Uh, very seldom. About the only time we'd go to East liberty was if my mother would take us to do any shopping.

Q: Did you do things such as hanging around or shopping **in Aspinwall, Sharpsburg, Etna**?

A: Sharpsburg anyhow , we didn't do too much down there.

Q: Did you go to town (Pittsburgh) often?

A: Yeah, we'd go in maybe once or twice a month. The way my mother was, she was a shopper. She'd start out at Woolworth's, and price some merchandise, then she would go to Gimbals and price it and she would go to Kaufmanns's and then she'd go to Frank and Cedar's and then she'd end up back at Woolworth's buying what she needed (laughs).

Q: How did you get there?

A: Bus.

Q: What is your profession?

A: Well, I worked 16 years on Moncon railroad. And J&L. We serviced J&L Steel. And, I got tired of being laid off. So, that's when we packed up and went to California. I worked in Fremont, General Motors Assembly plant for about 3 months. Then I got a permanent job with Sears, Roebuck in the warehouse. Retired from Sears. In 1986.

Q: When you were growing up on the Hill in the 1930s, were the kids on the Hill were significantly involved with smoking?

A: They were. But not drugs.

Q: What about alcohol?

A: No. No alcohol. Uh, we used to fool around with dried cornsilk.

Q: Smoking was the big deal?

A: Yeah. One kid there was smoking all the time. He rolled his own. Anytime you wanted a cigarette, you asked him. But, there was no drugs of any kind. No marijuana. No speed or whatever else they call it.

Q: Did you worry about Hitler in the late 30s?

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A: No, we didn't talk about it, but whenever we heard something on the radio, read about it in the papers, my grandmother was German, and I'd go up to her and tell her, well, what do you think of your Hitler now? She'd say, "Acht, he ought to be killed, he hanged" (laughs).

So there wasn't too much talk about the situation, like there would be today, over in Iraq, you know. The only thing we knew was what we read in the newspaper or heard on the radio. But, I think it was late 30s, they was starting to talk about going to war. Roosevelt was trying to stay out of it.

Q: Do you remember doing things to aid the War effort?

A: No, because I was in high school then. At lot of the fellows, I know they enlisted. The ones that were able to.

Q: And then you were drafted?

A: Yeah.

Q: What branch of the Service were you in?

A: Engineers. The Army.

Q: Where did you serve at?

A: In England. Was in a supply depot.

Q: Do you know anyone that was killed in the war?

A: Yeah, Novosol. Was it Novosol? Yeah, it was Novosol. Then there was a couple from Blawnox, I just can't remember their names.

Q: Did you ever worry about us winning the War?

A: No. Never had no doubts at all, no.

Q: Are you glad that your parents chose the Hill to raise their family?

A: Well, I don't know. I cannot honestly answer that question because I don't know what brought them to the Hill. My mother lived out there right next to Skotaks. You know where Skotak lived?

Q: Back in the woods there {to the north-west of Marshall Avenue, towards Powers Run Hill. Now on the other side of the Allegheny Valley Expressway}?

A: Yeah, they had (what) we called the Black Barn. I don't know if you ever heard that? Their house burned down. And then they moved in to the Hill. After my mother and dad were married, they lived in, my mother said, if you gonna marry me, you have to take my mother (laughs). So, he did. And, Bump Blackham was the fellow that built their house. Where they lived on Oxford Street. Yeah, I've heard it said that that house was built out of flood debris that came down from

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the Johnstown flood. A fellow was telling me that. He said he saw the men carrying them big timbers up out of the river, haul them up the Hill.

Q: If you were on the Hill in the 1930's how many streets were there? Was Central Avenue in yet?

A: Yeah, there was Central Avenue. Riverview going up and Central Avenue, then the one coming down, I don't remember.

Q: Neilson?

A: Neilson. Then Oxford Street coming back down to meet Riverview.

Q: So, if you started at your house at the bottom of the hill (on Oxford), and went up Riverview, there were houses along Riverview?

A: Oh, yeah. Well, let's see, on the corner {of Oxford and Riverview}, right hand side, was Marshall's, then Warton's, then Ward's, then Cook's, then Roberts', another Roberts, Everson's and, I think, John Moore. Then on the other side was Triffry, Reuther. There was another house in there, too, but I can't remember...

Q: Those were all on Riverview?

A: Yeah.

Q: Well, what was on the top of the Hill once you got up there?

A: Well, on the other side of the street there was a new house, I don't know who lived in there.

Q: Well, down Neilson there were some houses, right?

A: Yeah.

Q: Were Cables down there?

A: Cable, yeah.

Q: Were Vogels on it?

A: No. Later on, I think, there were some Vogels down there. John Ecker lived back in there. They tore his house down when they built the Freeway through.

Then there was Moyes on top of the (hill), on the corner.

Q: And then there was Asdale up there.

A: Yeah.

Q: There wasn't much past Asdales was there?

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A: No. Going down the hill there was. Going out that way there was nothing.

One time, oh, before I was even born there was a reservoir up in that area. Indians built a reservoir. Where the water come from, I don't know. It was a stone, built out of stone... circle... I would say the diameter of maybe 50 yards.

Walders lived down there. Neilson, they lived on the right hand side going down, the last house on the right, there was 2 families. Combs. They were related to the Walders.

Q: This is 1920 Census for Montrose Hill. Let me read some of the names. what about Julius Kreig?

A: (Indicates no.)

Q: Albert and Nan Humes?

A: Yeah, uh-huh.

Q: Now, I was told she used to teach at the school.

A: She may have. That was before my time, yeah.

Q: Then there was Harry Van Horn

A: Yeah, I knew Harry well.

Q: Troeger?

A: William Troeger married Frieda and had Jean. Right, and Betty and Billy. That's my aunt and uncle.

Q: And then there's Dennis Cook.

A: Yeah.

Q: George Moyes.

A: Right.

Q: John Prager?

A: Prager. Now, that name sounds familiar, but...

Q: Lydia Asdale.

A: Uh-huh. I remember her.

Q: John Combs?

A: Yeah, I remember him.

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Q: Anton Skotak?

A: Yeah, Tony Skotak.

Q: And, they lived back in the woods?

A: Yeah, back in the woods. Now, my mother's place... my grandmother's place was right next door to them. Before it burnt down. They had a farm.

Q: Albert Jindra or Yindra?

A: Yeah, Jindra

Q: Now living with him was Nicholas Novosol who was a son-in-law.

A: Yeah, uh-huh.

Q: So, they must have had a little community back in there?

A: They had 3 houses- the Jindras, the Novosols and the Skotaks. Were just all together. Then, the Troegers out there.

Q: That's everybody that's listed as being on Montrose Hill in 1920. Then they had a couple... then they went into Powers Run...

A: You don't have a Murdock there? I think they moved there about 1920.. They were married about 1920. Maybe they didn't get in there until '21.

Q: Oh, OK...here's Freeport Road...Bayne?

A: Yeah, uh-huh.

Q: Martinek, Emil, Lydia, Emil, Jr.?

A: Yeah, they built that big house up on our ball field on top of the Hill then.

Q: Eiffler?

A: Eiffler. Yeah. John Eiffler.

Q: Where was John Eiffler's house, do you remember?

A: It would be the first house over the border on the right hand side, going down it would be on the left side.

Q: There's James Combs, he was down on Freeport.

A: Uh-huh.

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Q: Alexander Murdock.

A: Yeah.

Q: And, this would be your father. He's 22 years old so he was born 1898, 97, somewhere in there?

A: 1897. Oh, they just came over in 1891.

Q: Ecker.

A: One of the Eckers had the ferry boat down along the river. Had a float down there and anytime you wanted the ferry you got a hammer hit the old brake drum. It would ring like a bell. He'd come across and pick you up. Take you to Verona.

Q: Oh, is that right?

A: Uh-huh. I think it was about a dime. A nickel or a dime... a ride.

Q: Well, there's a Vincent Long here.

A: He lived right across the street from us. {On Oxford, Montrose Hill.}

Q: Holland?

A: OK, Hollands. They lived at the bottom of Powers Run Hill there. Back in the, as you go up (the hill).

Q: Where the Creek is, back in there?

A: Yeah, Powers Run Road used to come down and curve there and go across that creek.

Q: Now, Mrs. Van Horn said that this Holland was the one that bought the reservoir. Was going to put a reservoir up there and they called that Holland's hill.

A: Yeah-uh-huh. It was Holland's hill.

Q: Ritter?

A: I know the Ritters.

Q: John Ecker?

A: John Ecker, uh-huh. He lived up in the back of Montrose Hill there.

Q: Faubs?

A: Yeah, Faubs. Right after the '36 flood, there was 4 of us, my brother and I and I think Ossie Marshall and one of the Robertses went down to look around, just for the fun of it, you know.

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Down the river. And we found an old tool chest sitting up against the rail road station down there. And we opened it up and there was all kind of boots and shovels and picks and everything in it (laughing). So, we took a shovel out each and we walked down to where the old Water Works used to be. There was a big whole in the ground then. And, it was filled with water. And, there was an old barn door laying there. So, we got on the barn door. Each one on a corner so it would stay stable, you know. We were using the shovels for paddling ourselves out. And somebody got off balance and all four of us went in the drink. With them heavy boots on, our heavy coats on... Phitttt! {Indicates went down.} One of the Faub boys, I think it was Ray Faub, come down and he heard our cries. He pulled us all out (laughs).

Q: He saved all four of you?

A: All four of us, yes. If he hadn't have come along I think we would be still there!

Q: How about Cyrus Blackham?

A: Blackham, yeah.

Q: Tom Clawson?

A: Clawsons, yeah. They had a gasoline station down there in Blawnox.

Q: Lydia and Myra Boyd? David Boyd?

A: Oh, yeah! Dave Boyd, he owned Montrose Hill. He had that old stone house that sit way back, you know, right as you were coming around the horse shoe curve? Instead of going, go straight, you had that big stone house sitting back in there. I think they tore that down when they widened Freeport Road. Then he built another house going up, it's on the right hand side, it's a real long.

Q: The one that's right in the bend itself?

A: No, it's not in the bend, it's before you get to the bend. I'd say it was right across from where Humes lived there.

And, every winter they went to Florida. We couldn't figure out, he didn't work, he didn't do nothing. We couldn't figure out where he's was getting the money, to go to Florida every year (laughs).



**A Glimpse at Life in the Area Surrounding Montrose Hill  
In the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s  
An Interview with Bill Sproul**

This is an edited transcription of a portion of an extensive interview with Bill Sproul conducted in November and December of 1998. Bill was born in Blawnox in April of 1924 and has lived there since then. The interview was conducted over the phone with Bill at his residence in Blawnox. Since most of the interview relates to growing up in Blawnox in the 1930s and 1940s, the editing is an attempt not only to make it more readable, but to limit it to subjects that could have been common to people living on Montrose Hill. Editor's notes are shown in {brackets}, probable missing words, due to difficulties hearing the tape recording, are in (parenthesis).

{Timeline:      Ten years old: 1934  
                    Graduated high school: 1943  
                    Discharged from U. S. Army: November, 1948}

Q: Where did you **play as a child**, say 10 or 12 years old?

A: Oh, we swam mostly in the river. And, we played ball up there at the field, although it wasn't too good of a field at the time. And then in the old days too we used to play a lot of releev-io, and "put your finger in the pie and run", and you go hide, more or less a game of release. And the, like I said, I swam in the river constantly, every day. I was a pretty good swimmer at one time. I could swim back and forth across that river without even touching either side. In fact, one time, now this is beyond 10 years old, I'd say probably 13 or 14 or something like that, about 10 of us started to swim from Blawnox and we swam up to the Hulton Bridge. Only about 4 of us made it. And then, at that time there used to be steamboats going up the river. Well, as soon as we could hear that, that steam going pheew, pheew, we'd get in our boats and go out and catch the paddle wheels, the big waves off the paddle wheels. Or, sometimes we'd hook ourselves onto a barge. We'd hook our boat onto a barge and let him take us. Just before the Acmetonia dam we'd release and then it would take us all day to drift down to Blawnox. Of course, we'd stop here and there. It was easy coming down because all you'd do was let the boat go. You could drift down.

And, we did have a guy from Blawnox that got too close to the paddle wheel and the paddle wheel smacked him and he was not a complete cripple but he walked with a stiff leg. I can't think of his family name. He got the boat too close to the paddle wheel, the paddle wheel just hit the boat and threw it in the air and that.

At the end of Center Avenue, we had what they called Popeye Beach. And on a Sunday you'd have anywhere from fifty to a hundred people down there. Swimming. And, then over in Sandy Crik, I'd say on a Sunday, you'd have as many as 500 people swimming there. But, it lost its popularity because, see they had dredged that side. So, you could be walking out and next thing you know, you had about a 30 foot drop there. So, consequently couple of people would drown every year. And they were always what we called "hillbillies". People come down from the hills, like Penn Hills and these various other places. Kids didn't respect the river, they probably thought that was in some swimming pool and drowned, you know. And, over the element of time, it lost its popularity. But, it was never what we called a "river rat", any of us that lived along the river, {that} would ever drown. It was always these here people that, you know, came down from the hills or didn't live along the river, or something like that. A couple times they had about 3 or 4 drownings over there in one year. Well, after that it lost its popularity. In fact, there was a place over there called the Anchorage. It was more or less a night club. At one time, that was a very, very popular place.

Like, what people talk now, "Ah, I wouldn't swim in that river. It's filthy, and that", I'll tell you what, everyone of us could swim breast stroke. You know why? Because, that's how

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you cleaned the turds and everything in front of you to swim (laughs). You swam breast stroke. In other words, the breast stroke, more or less, you was sweeping you way, a path through it, you know. Then you had your mines up there. A lot of acid. It wasn't unusual, once or twice a summer, why you go down the river and you see hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of dead fish. Maybe from the acid from the Harmarville mine. Which you don't have anything like that now. And like the people, "Oh, the river's filthy". Now, I'll tell you one thing. It is filthy to a certain extent. Now, if you go swimming, you end up with a grease job on you from all the gas residue on top of the water and the oil residue from the motor boats and that. But, was you ever down along the Wall? Below the Workhouse Pumping Station, there? At the sewer? Well, I'll tell you what, when the Workhouse used to dump and you should see what used to come out of there. You could always catch carp there. Because there was always, like, corn, everything else. I mean, this was when all your industry was dumping into the river. So, consequently they really had a lot of filth in the river. You don't have as much filth now.

Q: Was there **anything that you could do that was special**, unusual or even unique for it's time?

A: We used to roam up over Powers Run. I don't know if you knew or not, but there used to be an airport up there. Called Roger's Field. That's where the Fox Chapel (High) School, more or less, covers quite a bit of that area. But, there was an airport up there and we used to go up there like on Sundays and we'd watch them do sky divers {sky or wing walkers} and all kind of barnstorming at the time. And, then, we used to go up to the Stone Quarry, because, the Workhouse farm was up there and, like a lot of times, after mass and that, we'd go up there on a Sunday, and we could stay up there all day because we'd go out there and pick potatoes and corn that we could eat up there. And, then we'd get a couple cigarettes and we'd go down to the, on top of Center Avenue there was, that was the Workhouse barn, like. They had cows and chickens there. And we'd go down there with a couple cigarettes and we could get all the eggs we wanted. And, so basically we could stay out there. And then, we'd roam out through what is now Oak Hill Manor. But, there was nothing there and we could loaf up around there quite a bit. In fact, they had what they called the Victory Gardens up there at the time of the Depression, the government would give you seeds. Well, at that time they weren't called Victory Gardens, they were called that during the War. But, prior to that they'd give you seeds and then lot of the people had homes up in, shacks, more or less, up in the top of Oak Hill Manor. Let's see, Westfall lived up there, and the McKays lived up there, that's the McKay from Mon'rose Hill. George McKay, George McKay's brother's and his parents lived up there.

Q: This was before the Oak Hill Manor plan went in?

A: Oh, yeah. Well, see the plan didn't go in there basically good 'til, probably after the War when they started the building. See, at one time down where Hobay Lumber Company is, that was a National, that was an amusement park down there. Now, I was a little bit too young to remember that. I mean, I do remember it, but it was called National Park. And do you remember the old skating rink down there? {No}. OK. Where the Chinese restaurant is now, that was their dance pavilion. After the park more or less closed, it was the National Park skating rink. Now, I spent a lot of time down there roller skating, too.

Q: Were you going out to Roger's Field when you were 10 or 12?

A: Yeah, yeah.

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Q: How did you get there?

A: Walk!

Q: Through the Workhouse?

A: Oh, we could walk through the Workhouse or go up Power's Run. Go up Power's Run Road and walk out there. I mean, it was nothing for us to walk that far on a Sunday, in fact, quite a few times, we would walk what we called the circle. The 16<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge was down Sharpsburg. We would walk down to that. That was before they had the Highland Park Bridge in. We could walk down to the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge, cross there, come up on the other side and cross the Hulton Bridge. I think it was about a 16 mile trip. We'd do that a lot of times on a Sunday. I remember one time Dale Roberts wanted to come with us (laughing). He insisted on coming with us, we ended up carrying him on our backs, horsy back ride, from about Hulton Bridge on down. He couldn't walk no more. I mean, he was younger than us, but he insisted on coming along. Now, this is with Andy Dolhi, George Dolhi, Jack Sharf, Johnny Bataglia, uh... let's see, who else. I mean we'd do that maybe a couple times during the summer.

And then, well I think we was older than 12, but, they used to have streetcar passes, on Sundays. And, you paid a quarter for a pass and you could ride all day Sunday. So, we'd go down Pittsburgh and we'd get on a streetcar not knowing where the heck we were, we didn't care which streetcar it was. We'd get on a streetcar and maybe go out to Belview or Kennywood. We didn't know where the heck we was going because the streetcar had to come back anyhow. I remember the one time we went in the Grant Building, to go up to the KDKA studios. There wasn't too many radio stations at the time. And, we went in there, and the elevator operator, I don't know how many there was, probably about 8 or 10 of us, anyhow the elevator operator, he didn't want to take us up, and that, but we ended up getting on top of the, Grant Building there, you know. But, that was the tallest building in Pittsburgh at our time. And, that's where KDKA broadcast from.

Q: Now, when you talk about the stone quarry, there were a couple of places that I heard referred to as **the Stone Quarry** when I was growing up on Montrose Hill in the 1960s. Now, where were you talking about? Was it in the Workhouse property?

A: Yes. See, they quarried the stone for the Workhouse from this quarry.

Q: Now, was it nearest to Oakhill Manor, Blawnox or Montrose?

A: If you go straight up Center Avenue. And, up beyond where the school was. Then you go out another length of Center Avenue beyond that through Workhouse farm.

Q: And that would put you right about in the middle

A: Yeah. But, in reality, I guess you're walking east. Actually, you know where Crown Meadows is in Powers Run, don't you? Well, it was right near the orchards.

Q: Now, towards Montrose or the other way?

A: Uh, I think the orchards were more towards Mon'rose Hill. I'm trying to recall that.

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Q: So the stone quarry was down towards Oak Hill Manor?

A: No, I wouldn't say

Q: Towards Fox Chapel more?

A: Right, right. No, it wasn't towards Oak Hill Manor. Because, see you had the National Park, that amusement park, between Blawnox and Oak Hill Manor. So, basically it was more towards Mon'rose. But, like you said towards the orchard.

Q: Did you go to indoor theaters?

A: Well, there was a theater up in Blawnox. It was, right up beside Pianos and Stuff. On this side. It was Mr. Merty's apartment. He bought the theater later on and made apartments out of it. But, it was called the Maryland Theater. George Dominick and his sister, they worked there. Jimmy Ragerri worked there. He was an usher or something. George Dominick's sister was a ticket seller.

Q: How young were you when you remember going there?

A: I guess 12 and that. Well, you see the first theater, basically, in Blawnox was, the prison had one. And, my mother, and all the people of her age, on a Saturday, they could go, now this is when there was no theaters around, they were allowed to go into the prison. And, they was like up in the balcony. And the prisoners were down in the gallery part like. But, that's how they got to see their first movies. Up at the prison, up here.

Q: Where did one go to **grocery shop** at the time that you opened your store?

A: You don't remember the A&P in Blawnox? When I opened my store in 1952, there was nine stores in Blawnox at the time. I was the ninth store. But, you had a Sure, and you had Witas, Jimmy Rigarri's, and right beside him was Bill Peteri. He had the little Clover Farm store there. In fact there was a Clover Farm store that was there for quite a while, that was Tanudi's Clover Farm store. Then they had Kapella's right beside me. Then, up on Center Avenue where Thompson's park their truck now, there was a store there called Tony's. But, when I was younger, your little corner store was the place of business. I mean, every small town had many stores.

Q: Did you do anything in Blawnox to **earn extra money**?

A: Well, like I said, I ran a paper route. In fact Joe Sheridan, after school I'd pick papers and I'd take them along Walnut Street and, I'd meet him where the Bi-Lo Station is now. But there was nothing there, at that time. At the bottom of Mon'rose Hill. And then he'd pick me up and we'd go up to Power's Run, clear out to where the airport was then. Do you by chance to know Federkeil's, out there? Well, it was out there. The street that goes to the Fox Chapel School, it was out maybe, another mile beyond that. And, at that time, who owned the store up on that Power's Run? I know his name well enough. I can't come up with it right off the bat. We had a kid there, he would get papers from us and he'd take them out through Crown Meadows. Joe and

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I, we'd peel off and go down River Road and get all the apartments and all that along there. Then later on, I was their bad debt collector. In other words, if you owed papers for more than 2 weeks, it was up to me to go out and collect it. As I was collecting papers.

I was going to tell you this about the theater. In my papers I would take out these Maryland Theater flyers, you know, coming attractions, and for that, I got a free ticket. Which was worth a dime. So, that's how I got to the show at least once a week because I got my free ticket.

**Q: Did you have an after school or Summer job?**

A: Well, when I was in high school I was taking care of the bowling (alley). OK, I'll get to that. Now, Andy and George and his gang all caddied at the Field Club. I'll tell you, I never caddied at the Field Club but I knew more about the Field Club, I mean, they'd sit and that's all I'd hear every night. I knew everybody that golfed at the Field Club. What it was, see, we had a shack. Now, this was like when we were in 9<sup>th</sup> grade and in there. We built a shack, you know, where George Dolhi lived, along the railroad track on 4<sup>th</sup> Street. OK, exactly across the tracks there, we had dug a hole, I'd say, probably about 8 by 8 by 8 by 8. First we put metal over it and then we put dirt over it. And then we had like a big iron thing that we used to use as a cover to keep the kids out. But that was our shack. And we loafed up there every night. And all these other guys were caddying.

But, Donald Shawfield, who lived right across the street from me, him and I would huckster. We'd go up to New Kensington and Creighton and all that area and we would huckster. We got paid so much. Like, if we sold a bushel of peaches we'd get paid so much and then Donald and I used to go over to the islands and there used to be elderberries over there. I mean, knee deep. I mean, berries by the billions. And we'd go over there maybe about 5 in the morning and we'd take orders (laughs). And we'd hulk these elderberries and sell them for a nickel a quart. I mean, not just the elderberries in the bush, we'd hulk these things. In other words all you got was the elderberry. And then we'd sell them for a nickel a quart. That's how we made some living there. And then Donald and I, we was in like, picking scrap iron and that. Quite a bit. We'd go down to Roys(ton's) where they made these vaults. Because they had some iron railings and that where they'd encase these vaults. And we'd clean them up. So, we did a lot of junkin' too. I took care of the paper store at nights, too. And then, I was the house man in the bowling alleys for a while. Now, in my senior year in high school, I got off at one o'clock and I worked at the Blaw from 3 'til 11. Now in my summer vacation between my junior and senior year, we worked up the Blaw-Know Company for that 3 months. At that time, during the War, I mean, they wasn't worrying too much about age. So, we worked our summer vacation.

**Q: What do you most remember about Blawnox School?**

A: Blawnox School? They tried to force us to go up and down them steps. I forget how many steps there were, something like 88 or 108 steps, but all us kids on Center Avenue, we'd go straight up Center Avenue, you know. And, every once in a while some eager beaver teacher would decide to write us up for it. Coming down the steps was no problem because we used to jump three or 4 at a time, but going up that was a long trudge.

**Q: Do you remember any of your teachers, principals?**

A: I remember Mr. Barnhart, he was my home room teacher, and he was my Algebra teacher. And, later on he became principal after a while. Mr. McCord was the principal when I went to

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school there. And then, I had Mr. Terley for Biology. I had Miss Patterson, she was my English teacher. Then I had Sharpnak, he was my Mechanical Drawing and Wood Shop teacher. He was a little flaky. He used to wear a hair net in his hair and that kind of stuff! But, I got in a big fight up there. I was a native of Blawnox, but we had some guys up here though they was real tough. Anyhow this Trindy and Steve Utis were going around the shop wanting a nickel for protection. So, we had like, two students at a desk. Marion Young, he was my desk buddy there. So, he says, "You better have a nickel". I says, for what? He says, "Trundy and them will want a nickel for protection". I said, well, I'm not going to give them a nickel for two reasons. Item number one, I don't have one, item number 2, no body pulls that kind of stuff on me. He says, "Boy, you better settle down". I said, hey, I was born and raised in this town, I know my way around. So, just about that time Trindy come up and he was just about to put the shellac brush in my face, if I didn't give him a nickel. And, so I looked over my shoulder and Steve Utis is behind me and I hauled off and kicked like a mule and got him in the knee cap and I went and brushed Trindy all over the shop. So, this old Sharpnak guy, he was a s flaky as a snow flake in a wind storm, he's yelling, "Get him, get him, get him (in a high pitched voice)", (laughs). George Dolhi and Bob Whartonby and all them, they all grabbed me. And he said, "Take him up to the office, take him up to the office (in a high pitched voice, laughing). So, they took me up to the office and like I said, McCord was the principal at the time, see. So, they left me in the office and he wanted to know what had happened. Well, old Sharpnak started to tell him, "He started a fight (in a high pitched voice)". So, anyhow, so he says, "Well, you stay here", and he says, "we'll, deal with you". So, later on he asks me what was the deal in the fight, you know, and I told him that they had a nickel protection gig going on there. So, he asked me who it was. I told him it was Steve Utis and Trindy. And he says, "You took on Steve Utis and Trindy?" I says, yeah, no problem. I says, "I'll tell you what", he says, "you're supposed to get 10 swats, so when you get down to the room, you pretend you're crying and you got your 10 swats". He says, "But, I want to shake your hand", he says, "I've been waiting for someone to take one of them on anyhow". So, I got out of that pretty good.

I'm trying to think of some of the other teacher's names. I know Terley, I had for Biology. And, well, I got in trouble with him right away, too (laughs). He was asking us, each student what our answer was to such and such a thing. So, anyhow he asked me what mine was and I told him, and he said, "Louder". So, I repeated it louder. He says, "Louder". So, I screamed it out, I really hollered it out, and he come down, he says, "You're a wise young man, aren't you {craggy voice}?" So, he starts telling me about how he, we had two pretty big football players came from Blawnox. Ernie Banelli, he played for Pitt, and Joe Shadonik, he played for... Well, I think Ernie Banelli went to the Rose Bowl when Pitt did and Joe Shadonik, I think it was the Sugar Bowl for Duquesne. But, anyhow, he says, "I took care of Ronnie Banelli and I took care of Joe Shadonik and", he says, "I don't think I'll have any problems with you". So, he's giving me all these here things what he did to these guys and that, and I said to him, Mr. Turley, I said, one more step and I'll bend this Geography book right over your head. And, he backed off and we became real good friends. In fact, I made solid "A"s in Biology from there on in (laughing). I mean, I did a lot of work in it, but we got along pretty good after that. And, like I said, I was up there for 2 years, and then we went to Aspinwall.

Q: What do you most remember about **St. Sco's** {Scolastica's}?

A: Saint Sco's. Well, let's see. Anytime you talk about a Catholic school, you think of punishment, man! I mean (laughing), they talk about cruelty. I'll tell you what, if them nuns had pulled today what they pulled in school years ago, they'd have them all in court (laughing). They

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were trying to make an alter boy out of me, and my mother, I mean, she was pro-Catholic. I mean, and I wasn't about to go to Aspinwall to get up early to go to Mass and all this and that, plus I didn't feel like being an alter boy. And, so it ended up, I was a choir boy (laughing), they made me a choir boy. I don't know whether I could sing or not but, they made me a choir boy anyhow.

Q: How did you get there?

A: Well, at that time, I think it was ten cents on a train

Q: Well, did the train stop in Blawnox?

A: Yes, oh, yeah. Well, at that time it was a local. I mean they stopped at Blawnox and Aspinwall. There was a station there!

Q: Near Center Avenue?

A: Oh, yes. OK, coming down Center Avenue, you hang a left. And, that's still all railroad property there. Yeah, there was a station there. In fact, in the book, did you get to see the book on the 50 years of Blawnox? OK, there's a picture of the train station in there. And the station master was Mr. Schrum.

Q: And where was the station in Aspinwall?

A: At Brilliant Avenue. I mean, the train would go up and after it deposited the passengers in Aspinwall, then it would go across the railroad bridge into E's' liberty.

Q: Oh, so they left you off up top like?

A: Yes, uh-huh.

Q: And you had to walk, you had to come down the stairs?

A: Yeah, come down the steps, yeah.

Q: The station must have been under the trestle.

A: Yeah it was under the.... Do you remember like on Brilliant Avenue where people used to wait for the bus? It was basically on railroad property. In other words, you crossed the street, and you waited for the bus there, and then the Loop was created. Your Pittsburgh Railway would come in from Sharpsburg. The 94 was called Sharpsburg. I don't think they used the word Aspinwall. Anyhow, that would come in and go around that loop, and then coming through Blawnox from New Kensington and that was the West Penn. The West Penn line came through Blawnox and down the old road and it would come in and it would make a loop. And that's where the West Penn and Pittsburgh Railways would exchange your transfer Uh, there wasn't a transfer, it was 2 different companies back then, in other words, if you was going to Pittsburgh say from Cheswick or Springdale, you'd take the West Penn into Aspinwall there at the Loop. And then you would get the 94 Sharpsburg and then you'd go into Pittsburgh from there. And, in fact there was a Loop Restaurant and you had the Loop Lounge there, but that's where the streetcars would loop around. In other words, like the Pittsburgh street car would turn in Brilliant

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Avenue and make that quick left into the Loop and then the West Penn would come up and make their turn into Brilliant Avenue and when it came out the next street, where the bowling alleys were.

Q: So, you'd get off the train there and then you'd have to walk 4 blocks or so St. Scolastica's?

A: Right. See, if I bought the round trip ticket or something, invariably if I were standing there and waiting for the train to come, and a slow freight would come, I'd hop the slow freight and come into Blawnox, I mean at that time, the freights never did go that fast and I knew how to jump. All of us kids knew how to jump off a train. You jump off a train, you don't jump off straight, you jump off in a running fashion. But sometimes it was real nice weather, I'd walk home, you know, and stop off at Ross Crik down there and play around down there or something like that or see who was fishing and I'd walk home a lot of times. Anything to save a nickel.

Q: Do you remember you teachers at St. Sco's?

A: Well, let's see. I had Sister Agneta in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. She was the principal. She used to pounce on me like I was her pet stomping bird. And I had Sister Claire; I think she might have been my second or third grade nun. And, I had Sister Lucille, I think she might have been the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. She was pretty tough. That's about all I can remember right off hand.

Q: Were they good teachers?

A: Oh, yeah. You learned in the Catholic school. That's one thing. I don't care what they say, to me, the reason you learn better in the Catholic school was these nuns don't have nothing else to do at night but prepare lessons. Where as these public school teachers, they can go out carousing around, bar hopping and everything else and come the next morning they're no more prepared that what the students are. But, the nuns, boy. I mean, invariably they would check your test, I mean, very seldom did you ever pass out papers in a Catholic School to check. Those nuns would take them papers over to the Convent that night. And one thing I like about the Catholic school, too, more than the public school was, you got a number. In other words, you didn't get "A", "B", "C", or "D", you got let's say a 100 to 90, and then from 89 to 80 was say, a "B" or something like that. I mean, you could take all your grades and add them up and average them out and, I mean, on the report card would have the number and you could come out with the number. And, it wasn't where some people get a strong "A" and other people get a weak "A", but in the mean time, they got an "A", you know. It had a wide range, where as in the Catholic school you got an actual number. If you had a test of, let's say, 50 questions, each one was worth 2, I mean, somebody had 6 wrong did better than somebody that had 8 wrong. So, I mean, although it's close, it's still a different percent. And, I always liked that better than the regular "A", "B", "C" and "A+", "A-", "B+", "B-", you know, all that kind of stuff. I mean, you could actually figure out your own grade. For example in Catholic school, they didn't teach fractions. You worked with decimals.

Q: What can you tell me about your **high school** experience?

A: When I went to Aspinwall, well Teabough, he was principal down there, And as a Senior you needed 16 credits to pass. So the senior (year), I had 14 and three-quarters credits or something like that. So, I signed up for English and Gym (laughingly). I needed my other quarter credit in Gym and I needed one more credit. So that lasted about, maybe about 2 weeks or something



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(laughing). Teabaugh sees me one day and he says, “You’re Sproul, aren’t you?”. I says, yeah. He says, “You know, you didn’t fill out your schedule.” Oh, yeah, I filled it out. He said, “No, you didn’t.” He hauls me in to the office. He say’s, “You signed up for English and Gym”. I said, I know. All I need a credit and a quarter. Well, he jumped on me (laughs). So, in the mean time he makes me take Algebra II, and another course in History and Geography and some kind of science. And then I had... needed an elective. So, he says, “How about typing?” so, I go down typing class. Well, this was during war time. And teachers are starting to get a little scarce at the time. So, they had this one old teacher, she was **old**. We called her foggy Boyd because she wore, at that time to wear colored glasses, you know, was an oddity. And she had her leg all wrapped up. We used to say she was running at Santa Anita (laughs). But, invariably, like when you changed classes why, everyone that was downstairs had the next class upstairs and vice versa. And she’d be changing classes, she’d get caught in one of them stair wells like, you know (laughs). She looked like a revolving door. People pushing her around and everything. She had a cane and everything, too. So, I come walking in and she says, “What do you want, young man?” I says, well, I’m supposed to see if there’s any opening in typing. Ah, she grabs me on the shoulder. She says, “You’re a mighty strong young man”, she said, “now, what you’ll do, you’ll escort me up and down the stairs between classes”. And I thought- Oh, Yeah! I never was a Boy Scout and I’m not going to try to start being one now (laughs). So, I went back up to the office, at that time Teabaugh wasn’t there, his secretary, Miss Shoop, was there. And I says, typing’s filled up. I said, they don’t have no room. So, that ended my typing career (laughs).

I remember one time, there was George, Bob Leya and I, see all the kids from Blawnox, we carried our lunch. And, we’re in the hall and we’re throwing an orange back and forth. It’s one of them deals, every time you threw the orange back and forth, well, you more or less stepped back a step, you know. Next thing we’re at the whole length of, did you ever go to Aspinwall? {Yes.} OK, so we’re in the main hall there and the next thing you know we’re practically at the whole length of the hall. So, to get it down there you had to really whale that orange. So what happened, I think it was George, he threw that stupid orange and it went through a window, down towards the tennis courts, on that end. When you went into the school on the left hand side of the school there was tennis courts. Anyhow, the orange goes through the window. So, we’re going to be heros. So, we go in there and we tell Mr. Teabaugh about that we broke the window and this and that. So, he’s praising us for being honest and all this and that and honesty and all that. In the mean time, I think we were just about ready to leave and he says, “Well, what went through the window?” And we nonchalantly says, an orange. Holy Man! We stood there for 15 minutes listening to The Starving People in China and the rest of the world (laughs). We’re throwing oranges back and forth (laughs). We didn’t have to pay for the window, but I’ll tell you what—that ear beating!

Q: Well, how did you get to school in high school, was it the same as grade school?

A: Same way. Well, the trains were not running quite as full schedule at the time and I’d take the bus in or bring the bus back. Harmony Short Line.

Q: Do you remember any school activities? Dances, football games, basketball games, etc?

A: Well, football, you see the year we graduated, we were unbeaten.

Q: What year did you graduate?

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An Interview with Bill Sproul**

A: Forty-three. But, the year after that when Ribby, did you ever hear of Ribby Malek? {No.} OK, Ribby Malek and, I forget who (else), anyhow, they went unbeaten and unscored upon. Which, I think, is the only time it ever happened in the WPIAL. In that section, in fact, in almost any section. Art McCones was the coach. Their field is called McCone Field. It was named after him.

Aspinwall, when I went to school was the powerhouse of the Valley. Well, see what it was, what McCone would do, he'd want to know who was going out for football. Now, I never went out for any of these because I was always working. I had to more or less had to work so consequently. I didn't do any school activities. I might have went to a couple of football games. I never went to a dance. And I still don't dance. I used to roller skate a lot, but never dance. But, he found out who's going to play football and then he'd find out how many kids were from Blawnox and then, see at that time kids from Harmarville and even as far up as Cheswick and that, the better students went to Aspinwall. Instead of going to Springdale. In fact, Aspinwall's English was so good that if you went to college, you didn't have to take an English exam, or something like that, because they figured your senior English was equivalent to a first year of college English anyhow. But, I never had that problem because I never went to college, I went right to the Army.

Did you ever hear of Sonny Jukopik? Well, he was police chief Harmarville. He played football for Aspinwall. Anyhow, the majority of the team was made up from Blawnox, Harmarville and your coal mining section. And then, there was some kids on it from Aspinwall, but very seldom was there anybody on it from Fox Chapel or O'Hara. It was made up of the mill-hunky towns. And they had good football teams. They never did real good in basketball, but they sure was known for football. Like I said, if you ever could look up their record, they sure was a powerhouse.

Q: Where did you **hang out**, outside of school, when you were in high school?

A: Dinty Moore's Bar-B-Que, it was big. You remember Dinty Moore's down there? OK, well that was big place, I mean if you was going out a more high class (laughs). That's where you more or less went.

Q: What was that place like, I mean, what did it look like?

A: Well, it had like juke boxes in and they served sodas but there specialty was bar-b-ques which they cooked outside on the spit. I mean, you could see the meat being bar-b-qed. And then they would bring it in and would chip it, I mean it really had a bar-b-que flavor to it.

Q: Was it set up with like tables and booths?

A: Oh, yeah. Booths, yeah. Booths and then you had like your soda fountain where, you know, you sat individually. Like some of these dinners, you know.

See, then there was another bar-b-que right below that, down about where Pep's is now. They tore it down. But, there was another bar-b-que down there, but it never did go over too big.

Dinty Moore's was the, well then they had a miniature golf course out there, too. Where the old road comes up into Freeport Road, that was more or less a point. And that was your front nine and then from that point on was your back nine. But, it was a miniature golf course and that's when miniature golf courses were fairly popular. That was the closest one around. It was always well crowded.

**A Glimpse at Life in the Area Surrounding Montrose Hill  
In the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s  
An Interview with Bill Sproul**

Q: Now you remember the **flood of 1936** don't you?

A: Hell, yes I remember the flood, I was in it! (laughs).

Q: Where did your family go?

A: Well, a lot of the people went up to the churches, the Methodist Church, all your churches... the Presbyterian Church. And up the Fire Hall. It wasn't a Boro building at the time. I don't think they had the Boro building. And different clubs and that, like, you know. But, it was mostly the churches. The Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church. They more or less bedded the people down in there. And then a lot of people, you know, they had relatives that lived, let's say, up over the hill side, you know. At that time, most of your small town was intermarried, more or less, you know. If you talked about somebody, and here you found out it was their aunt or uncle or something like that

See, I lived in Farrine's house. And, the water ended up... the water line in our house was 3 inches from the ceiling on the first floor. In fact, that night, for something to do I was looking over my stamp collection at the time with a candle. And I guess by the time we decided to take off, I must have slammed the thing down, the stamp album. And here, it must have caught on some wax and we come in and our big, round table was laying on the side but the stamp album was still stuck to it. In other words, I didn't lose any stamps (laughs). And then, the water was across the road. When I was remodeling the house over there on First Street, we was cutting out a door way and I got a piece of mud, it looks like a small brick, but it's actually mud from the flood that, you know, had settled down in there. And then Second Street was the last street down to get flooded. You see, the water came up from the swamp, up along the railroad track and then it came down along the railroad track. So, basically, 4<sup>th</sup> Street was flooded before 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. And then the water coming up the other way, so actually 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, momentarily, let's say for half an hour, was an island. It was the last street to be flooded. The water was across the railroad tracks.

Q: Did you walk out or did you have to be boated out?

A: Well, see at that time I was what? Eleven or twelve years old. And, all us kids were the ones with boats. So, we were helping people to get out. Well, when I got out, it was up over my waist, I know that. But, like Donald Shawfield had a couple boats. Irelands had a couple boats. With the firemen and all that, we was helping. We were more or less helping people get out of the houses and that.

Now, down the end of the street we had a bootlegger. Named Jimmy Cole. The firemen's insisted he was going to get out and he sat on top of the roof with his shotgun, and wasn't about to get out. He says, "I get out here, all you thieves will steal my booze" (laughs). He stayed up there and they had to take over his meals to him (laughs).

And then, another funny thing I remember about the flood, there was an old barn house coming down, right by the train station, at the time. This barns going down and there's an old cow sitting on top of it going... moooooo! (Laughs). He had enough brains not to get off that thing, but he sure was making enough noise about his boat ride. He didn't like that.

Q: Do you remember you or the community doing things to aid the **war effort**?

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A: Well, they had these War Bond drives, you know, and at that time you could, like the schools and that, you could take 10 cents and get a 10 cent stamp. And you filled up like a Green Stamp book. And then when you got eighteen-seventy-five in it, well, you turned it in at the Post Office and you got a bond. It was called a War Bond at the time.

Then, the Blaw-Knox Company, they got a couple "E" flags. Anyhow, I know they did a lot of Navy work. Making king posts and that for the Navy, I know that. I worked up there twice. Three months both times.

**A Glimpse at Life Raising a Family on Montrose Hill  
in Period of Time Immediately Following the Second World War  
An Interview with Mrs. Eileen Hulina**

This is an edited transcription of an interview with Eileen Hulina from December of 1999. A verbatim transcript is available upon request of the copyright owner. The interview took place in her residence on Central Avenue on Montrose Hill. Editor's notes are shown in {brackets}, probable missing words (due to difficulties hearing the tape recording) are filled in in (parenthesis).

Q: When did you move to the Hill?

A: Let's see, we were married in '46. We moved in in 1946 into Mr. and Mrs. Vanhorn's house and I think one of the Vogels live in that house now. You know where I mean? On Clifford. I forget the number of the house.

Q: And, you rented that house?

A: Yes, we rented three rooms in that house, with Mr. and Mrs. Van Horn, the senior Van Horns.

Q: When did you move to **your house** here on Central Avenue?

A: We moved in 1952.

Q: And you own this one?

A: We own it.

Q: Did you build it?

A: Yes, I did all the buying and we had hired a professional retired builder. And we had a surveyor to do the foundation work. Mr. Gibbons laid the blocks. You remember Mr. Gibbons? He laid all the cement blocks in the basement. And a lot of the kids from the Hill here helped to hammer the wood on the first floor, you know, the basic wood. And they were a big help. And let's see what else happened. Oh, my husband's brothers, John and Joe Hulina, came up and they did a lot of the construction of the walls and so forth. We had a book of the house, how to build it. And we bought all the (material) from Sieberts; do you know where Sieberts are? We bought all the material there. And, John did all of the wiring in the house and we have that, what they don't sell anymore, what is it, BX. It's metal. Metal and you put the wires through. It's coils. So, what else?

Q: Who did you **buy the lots from**?

A: We bought them from Myra and Dave Boyd.

Q: Did you have to talk to her before she would sell them to you?

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A: Well, Eddy and I had gone down and asked her if we could buy these two lots here. And she said that would be fine and we paid her and got our deeds and all that for the lots. And then, what happened over here, on the first two lots, another couple bought them but then she didn't like these two lots on the corner. So, my mother and father bought those two lots on the corner, and then Eddy and I paid them for the two lots on this corner so that we would have four lots. On separate deeds, is what we did there.

Q: Who were the **first people that you remember** meeting when you moved in?

A: The Van Horns. Elizabeth Van Horn lived in there where Timmy Whacter lives. Elizabeth Van Horn and her girls.

Q: What do you most recall about them?

A: She worked at the school. In O'Hara Township.

Q: Did you have any relatives on the Hill then?

A: No. No relatives on the Hill.

Q: Who were your near neighbors?

A: Mrs. Fike, remember her? That was {next door}.

Q: Did you have kids then?

A: No, we had a son in 1947. He was born before we moved here. Because, Mrs. Van Horn and her daughter, if we wanted to go somewhere they would help us with Victor. They would watch him for us.

Q: Did he have enough **playmates**? Who were they?

A: Yes. He played with Michael Gibbons and Chuddy Welsh. Mickey Bauer. And, it was at that time in their lives where they never got into trouble, you know what I'm saying? When they graduated from high school, most of them were going to college and had a good education. None of them ever got into any problems, in other words, when it got dark, they were home (laughs). You know what I mean?

Q: Do you recall any problems with **bullies** in the neighborhood?

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A: No, I wouldn't call them bullies because they didn't destroy anything, you know. Maybe Halloween knocks on the doors or stuff like that. But, we never had any violence to speak of on the Hill.

Q: What **games and activities** do you remember your kids playing?

A: They would play football, they would play basketball. And, if they had anything in the evenings at Kerr School, it would be basketball. That would be with Mr. Boyle. And, Victor was, oh what do you call it? He worked on the football team but he did not play football, but he managed to take care of the equipment and stuff like that. With Mr. Costanzo. He was teaching up there then.

Q: Was there anything that they could do on the **Hill that was special**, unusual or even unique for it's time?

A: Well, I'll tell you all the people, in fact the people now are very nice. But when we lived up here and the people were always trying to help each other, do you know what I mean? We had no problems with the neighbors or nothing like that. Nor, the kids when we were first moving up here.

Q: Do you remember any ice cream or "**sweet treats**" **vendors** and how did you feel about them?

A: Yes, they would ring their bells and the kids would all run to the corners. Yeah. (They would) do that.

Q: Were there any places on or near the Hill that were off-limits to your son?

A: No. We never had any problems with, you know, wherever they would go, would be up to the ball field and stuff like that.

Q: Did they have a **curfew**? When was it?

A: Oh, he was always home before it got dark. All the boys were. And the girls, too. They didn't hang out here on the streets.

Q: When you first moved in on the Hill, where did you **shop for food**?

A: We shopped at the A&P in Aspinwall. Do you remember that? And, where else did we go? We went to Thrift Drug. I think we did most of the shopping in the A&P.

Q: How frequently did you go grocery shopping then?

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A: Once a week.

Q: How did you get there?

A: I drove Sylvia and her kids and we always did the shopping down there. Because, her husband was a truck driver for Foodland.

Q: If you just had to go and pick up bread and milk?

A: Oh, that was down in Mrs. Sullivan's. You know where the beer distributor is in Blawnox? Well, that was Mrs. Sullivan's. And that store used to belong to Mr. Petolsky. And then Mrs. Sullivan took over and she was there for quite a few years. In fact, I worked for her for a while in there. When Vic would be in school, you know, grade school.

Q: Did you have any food items **delivered to the house**?

A: In the fifties? No. No, I don't think I had anything delivered unless it could have been like from Sears, for a washer and drier, stuff like that. That was in the fifties.

Q: Did you have a **vegetable garden**?

A: My stepfather had one in my back yard.

Q: Did things grow well?

A: Uh-huh. Yep, he had everything in there. Tomatoes and you name it.

Q: Where did you go for a **doctor**?

A: Dr. Magee. He's the one that saved my son's life.

Q: How's that?

A: We had company and one of his cousins hit him on the head with a policeman's, you know that toy set that had a star and a billy, you know what I'm talking about? It's like a little club, but it's a toy. And he hit Victor in the head with that little toy club. And it had a police badge with it and all that stuff. And he cried and carried on and we came home and we were down at my brother-in-laws house. That was his son, the same age as Victor. And he went into a convulsion and Dr. Magee came to the house. That was when doctors would come to your house. And he stayed here for quite a long time and kept watching Vic to come out of it and finally he came out



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of that and he had no problems anymore. But, he was in terrible (trouble) till he went through this business. He couldn't talk. He couldn't see nothing. Dr. McGee was our best doctor.

Q: What was the closest **hospital**?

A: We had to go to St. Margaret's in Lawrenceville.

Q: Who was your **dentist**?

A: My dentist was Dr. Griffin. He was over in Verona. And, Victor's was Dr. Ranii in Aspinwall.

Q: What did you and your spouse do for **fun and relaxation**?

A: Well, like the Rapps down here in the back, (we) had no car and my husband worked 3 till 11 down the Blaw-Knox Company as a welder. And we had trees out here in the yard and we had a picnic table and all that. And, what I would do was when I knew he was coming the Rapps would come up and, of course, their children were right here with them, but they were not in our yard, but we would roast hot dogs and all that stuff. And then the troops would even stop. After my husband would come home. And Vic, he was already in bed, their children were already in bed. And the troops were very nice. I mean, they stopped and get a couple hot dogs and some Coke. And, the people were more friendly in the fifties. Now, everybody is so busy. And when Vic graduated from high school we had a big party out here in the yard, with all the neighbors and friends and all that.

Q: Did you or your family **swim**?

A: Yes. Then we were swimming in (the) Allegheny River (at the) bottom of Montrose Hill. The water was better then. Or we would go up to the Highland Park swimming pool, also. We would do that and keep the kids busy. We always did everything with the children. We didn't have babysitters. If we were going to be out a little late we took our kids with us. We'd go visit the Marshals, Mack Marshal, and stuff like that. But, we always knew where they {kids} were.

Q: Did you go to **indoor theaters**?

A: Not too much. We didn't do too much of that stuff.

Q: Go to **drive-in theaters**?

A: A few drive-ins. That was when they had them up in Harmarville. And, we'd take Vic with us.

**A Glimpse at Life Raising a Family on Montrose Hill  
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An Interview with Mrs. Eileen Hulina**

Q: I want you to imagine yourself **in your house**, 5 or so years after you moved in. It is a warm summer afternoon. There is a nice breeze blowing. What are you doing?

A: Well, my husband worked from 3 till 11. So, I always made his dinner first, because he had to go to work at three. And then I would wait for Vic to come home from school. And then, Eddy always walked home from the Blaw-Knox steel mill.

Q: If I were to ask you to walk out of your house, which door would you be most likely to use?

A: I would have gone out the front door and I had no fear of anything. I will not do that anymore (laughs). Especially if it's late.

Q: If I ask you to walk over to your front door and step out, what do you see on the street in front of your house?

A: Well, that's where Mrs. McRandell's house was, I would see that. That's the old couple. (The house that) Diane and Michael live in now.

Q: Were there any kids around?

A: In the daytime after school, yes. But, after dark, nobody.

Q: Was the neighborhood noisy?

A: No, it was a quiet neighborhood. In the fifties.

Q: Do you recall any particular smells such as flowers, smoke, fumes, cooking?

A: Oh, yes. Then you could smell flowers. Today, you go to a funeral home; you can't even smell flowers. I don't know what happened. If you bought roses, you could smell them. Now you buy roses, you can't smell them.

Q: Was there much traffic?

A: No, the traffic today is terrible! Everybody wants to be ahead of everybody. It's aggravating.

Q: If you now get an urge to take a walk, which direction will you head?

A: I would head towards the, it's the Holiday Inn now, it was then the County Workhouse property, I would walk that way. I don't know, it was just nice to get out there and with the deer and the orchard. They always had apple trees out there. It was such a quiet place, very quiet in the fifties.

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Q: Who are you most likely to meet?

A: Not too many people. There's more people walking now than ever.

Q: Where did you send your son to elementary school?

A: Up at, I'm trying to think, I think he graduated from Boyd, yeah.

Q: When you first moved in here on Central, was Mrs. Fike your next door neighbor?

A: Yes, they lived in the basement till they could afford to put the top on.

Q: Were Bauers there?

A: Yes, Bauers were there.

Q: What about Verdebers?

A: Oh, they might have come around the fifties, late fifties. And Rose Cook, they did it around the fifties like we did. And I think Eddy Joyce did the same thing.

Q: Was there **anybody on Lawrence Avenue** when you first moved into your house on Central in 1952?

A: No. Because it was quite a while before Dietrichs moved up here.

Q: What about Cahills house, was that in?

A: I don't so, I think that was much later because, when we moved in we didn't have a Central Avenue. I mean, it was Central Avenue, but it was no road, it was a path like. And then after we started building, then they came in and made it Central Avenue. But, on the paperwork it was stated to be Central Avenue.

Q: You mean there was no road running across the top of the Hill?

A: Not all the way up, no. When we were in the process of building, that's when they started working on the road.

Q: But, Clifford was in wasn't it? Part of it?

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A: Part of it. Clifford was in, yeah.

Q: Just to the top of the Hill?

A: Yes.

Q: And Riverview was in?

A: Yes, that was the one (street). Then we fought for Boyd to come up. (We went to) the Council meetings and fought to have another way off of this hill. See, you could only come up Riverview and then you had to go back down Riverview. And, it has a bad turn on it down there. So, we all got together and fought for (them to) open up Boyd (and have it) run into Central.

Q: You were telling me once that you remembered Asdales. The little house across the street.

A: Oh, Bessie Asdale, yes, yes. She was in the (back of) McRandells house. Senior. They lived at 308 Central Avenue. And, those must have been one of the first ones up here on the Hill. And the Van Horns. But, anyway, Bessie Asdale lived down, right behind McRandells house. And, when she died, I guess the state took over and destroyed the property and the house.

**A Glimpse at Life Raising a Family on Montrose Hill  
in Period of Time Immediately Following the Second World War  
An Interview with Margaret And George Dolhi**

This is an edited transcription of an interview with Mrs. Margaret and Mr. George Dolhi from July of 1998. Their oldest son, Dave, was also present and contributed. A verbatim transcript is available upon request of the copyright owner. The interview took place in their residence on Lawrence Avenue on Montrose Hill. Editor's notes are shown in {brackets}, probable missing words (due to difficulties hearing the tape recording) are filled in in (parenthesis).

Q: When did you move to the Hill?

George: I think it was 1950 or '51.

Q: And you rented down there {211 Oxford}?

George: No, we owned the house. That's our first house we bought.

Q: Whom did you buy that house from?

George: The Murdocks. Jim, the dad, I think his name was Jim, too {as was his son}. They were direct cousins of Bill Treager who lived next door to us and also Jean Bier who still lives (next to) us.

Q: Now, this house { on Lawrence Avenue}, you own?

George: Yes.

Q: Now who did you **buy the lots** for this house from?

George: See, everybody, I think, had to buy through the estate of David and Myra Boyd, who owned everything. And when they passed away, their attorney, his name was Buck Wallace, now I don't know his real first name, but his last name was Wallace, and he handled the whole estate. So you had to go through him to buy this lot.

Q: So you didn't buy directly from Myra Boyd?

George: No, she was dead.

Margaret: They were dead.

Q: So, you didn't see her or you didn't go through the interviewing process with her?

George: Not with her on buying the lot, but I did know both of them. Before then. Before they died.

Q: Oh, so you did know them?

George: Oh, yes.

Q: What kind of a person would you say Myra Boyd was? Did you find her to be friendly?

Margaret: I didn't know her.

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George: She didn't know her, she's from Aspinwall. But, when we were down in Blawnox yet, before I was even married, Dave and Myra owned the Blawnox theater. And Myra used to stand out in front, there was no ticket booth, she collected eleven cents. That was the cost to get in the show, from us kids. And, all I remember she was very tall and very strict. Especially about sneaking in. We try to sneak in and boy, if she caught you sneaking in, she wouldn't even let you pay to get in for a month after that. But, I don't remember anything about her personality or anything like that except that she did run the movie theater. Dave, her husband, wasn't in that so much. {Dave and Myra were siblings, neither ever married. The theater in Blawnox was the "Maryland"}

Q: How long were you married before you bought the house on Oxford?

George: Oh, just two years. That was our starter house. We rented over in E's' Liberty for 2 years and I couldn't stand paying the rent every month. Man, it bothered me something awful, that I was paying someone else when I could have my own home (laughs).

Q: Who were the first **people that you remember meeting** when you moved in?

Margaret: Down the bottom of the Hill, Mrs. Mulley.

Q: What do you most recall about them?

Margaret: She was very friendly. She would always yell at us. What I remember most about it was she said, "Why did you buy this house?. It was built of box crates. " And we said that was the only thing we could afford at the time. And, I remember, we paid it off in about 6 years and we made a profit on it so we did OK, but they told us not to buy it.

George: Well, no so much Mrs. Mulley as right across the street was Mack Marshall. He still lives in the same house, down there today, and I got to know him real well, and I don't know if it was every Friday night, maybe even Saturday, they had penny ante game down there and he'd invite us down, and we'd go down there, Dave was only a year old. We'd let him fall asleep with the other little kids on the floor and then about midnight just walk right next door. We'd haul them all home and throw them into bed. We'd play penny ante. So I remember Mack Marshall and his wife Berl.

Q: When you moved to Lawrence Avenue, who were the first people that you remember meeting?

Margaret: The Diethrichs. Peggy Diethrich, she's dead right now, but she came over while we were having the house built and introduced herself, and I just got to be friends with her then.

George: I seem to remember, when we first moved in , it was not so much the Diethrichs here, it was the Lists and the Cahills it seemed. Especially because of the kids. They were always over here. I remember it was cold whenever we first moved in, it was Thanksgiving.

Q: Did you have any **relatives on the Hill** then?

Margaret: Yeah, my mother. My mother had moved up on this hill about a year, and we were married, probably nine months later. So, my mother was up here.

George: No, not at all. All of my relatives were in Blawnox.

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in Period of Time Immediately Following the Second World War  
An Interview with Margaret And George Dolhi**

Q: Did you have kids then?

Margaret: Yes, we had David and then Don.

Q: Did they have enough **playmates**?

Margaret: Oh, heavens yes, there were 30 some kids on this street!

George: Our yard was constantly full of kids.

Margaret: Full of kids.

George: Yeah, including yourself and a lot of the other neighbor's.

Q: Do you recall any problems with **bullies** in the neighborhood?

Margaret: Bullies? Dave and Greg next door, they never got along. That was the only one that I remember.

George: I have to agree, he was about the only one that caused trouble.

Q: Were there any other **problems**?

George: You mean with, the kids growing up? No, just anything. Problems, no.

Margaret: There weren't any problems.

George: No, we seemed to get along good.

Q: What **games and activities** do you remember your kids playing?

Margaret: Over in this lot over here, where your relative (lives), they played ball, I think, every day. They were playing ball over there and if they weren't there they were in the back yard. Mostly ball.

George: Yeah, I have to agree with ball, but a lot of times, there was a patch, three acres of woods right behind your place, Dan, and also one block over. The boys spent an awful lot of time over there. But there was boys and girls mixed growing up, but I don't recall, just the boys.

Q: Was there anything that they could do **on the Hill that was special**, unusual or even unique for it's time?

Margaret: That they could do? Well, when we first moved up here there was really nothing doing on up here at all. So, I walked around the Hill to see if I could get them organized to get Christmas parties and picnics. But, there was nothing up here when we first moved up here. We didn't even have the ball field up here. We had one over there somewhere, but we never let our kids go over there whenever they were very young. So we, I started the Christmas party and then we started to have Hill picnics and...

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George: Well, that was, like she said, the Christmas party and the Hill picnics, and I think that was well received by all the people here. It always had good attendance and that's about the two things that people waited for to happen.

Q: Do you remember any ice cream or “**sweet treats**” vendors and how did you feel about them?

Margaret: I didn't like it because he always comes at suppertime, dinging that bell, and the kids wanted something and I'd say no. That's what I remember about that (laughing).

George: I don't even recall a vendor coming up to tell you the truth (laughing).

Q: Were there any places on or near the Hill that were **off-limits** to your child(ren)?

Margaret: As far as I was concerned the under ground shacks over there at, what's that ground over there, you know, where Hoffer wanted to build? David used to go over there and when I found out about it I almost had kittens, I didn't know he was doing it. The cliffs out at the end, because it was steep. And over the hill, I didn't want them to go down there. Most of the time they roamed. And I don't know where they went half the time.

George: I just seem to remember that we kept telling them that if you ever wander off the Hill, don't go to the river. I was afraid of the river down there. It was rather close when you come to think of it here (laughs).

Q: Did they have a **curfew**?

Margaret: Just when it got dark, they had to be in.

George: Yeah, I don't think it was very strict.

Margaret: No, we didn't, because they mostly played on the street.

George: We knew just about where they were all the time.

Q: In general, how did you feel about the Hill as a place to raise kids?

Margaret: I thought it was great. I don't think George didn't care too much to come up here, but, I liked it. I felt safe up here.

George: Well, it was a very safe place but I didn't like the walking up and down that I had to do. That was, in my opinion, that I had to go down to work down Pittsburgh, and riding the bus and everything, and that was my main objection. You had to have a car. And we had one, but it wasn't used for work. At that time we couldn't afford it. Every day driving in and paying the parking. So, I just didn't like all that walking.



**A Glimpse at Life Raising a Family on Montrose Hill  
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An Interview with Margaret And George Dolhi**

Q: When you first moved in on the Hill, where did you **shop for food**?

Margaret: The A&P, in Aspinwall. And the butcher shop was in Aspinwall.

Q: How frequently did you go grocery shopping then?

Margaret: Probably once a week.

Q: How did you get there?

Margaret: We had a car after, we got a car whenever David was a baby

Q: Who went with you to shop for food?

Margaret: I went and I took my mother so she could shop. She didn't have a car so I took my mother every week.

Q: How did you pay for your food?

Margaret: I have no idea. I couldn't even guess, Danny.

Q: Did you have any food items **delivered to the house**?

Margaret: Just milk. Menzie.

Q: Did you have a **vegetable garden**?

George: Well, I remember a vegetable garden down at the other house, our starter house, that we lived in six years.

Margaret: We always had tomatoes. Onions. Lettuce.

George: And up here I'm sure we always had it. I still have one today and in my later years I seem to like to do garden work more. I was just too busy in younger life.

Q: Did things grow well?

Margaret: Yeah, we always had a good crop of tomatoes.

George: We didn't put any exotic plant, food in. We just stuck with tomatoes, onions, lettuce.

Margaret: Zucchini maybe.

Q: Where did you go for a **doctor**?

Margaret: Over E's' Liberty, Dr. Steffler.

Q: What was the closest **hospital**?

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An Interview with Margaret And George Dolhi**

Margaret: St. Francis, I'll say, over in Lawrenceville.

Q: Who was your **dentist**?

Margaret: Dr. Dimmett from Aspinwall.

Q: What did you and your spouse do for **fun and relaxation**?

Margaret: Mostly on weekends, we'd go in the car and he said, "Let's get lost", (laughs), and he'd drive and he didn't care where, "Let's get lost". But, we went out to Bedford, up around there. We liked to go up there. And the kids played in the criks, and we went to Shawnee. We went there almost all the time.

George: They had a state park up there and it was the first one before Moraine was here or even before Keystone was out there. Much closer, we started to go up Shawnee State Park and we really liked it. It was a chance, the only thing we could afford to stay over night, there was an old hotel in Bedford.

Dave: It was about ten dollars.

Margaret: It was seven.

George: I think it was little cheaper than...

Margaret: It was seven.

George: We stayed overnight and remember, Dave, they had an old colored elevator operator. He really took care of the boys and we weren't afraid to let them go up and down in the rooms. I like the mountains and we were right in the center of the mountains in Bedford. And it took two hours by car to get there. Luckily we never broke down, in some of those old cars I had, it's a miracle (laughs).

Q: Did you or your family **swim**?

Margaret: Oh, yeah, that's why we went out there, to swim. It was two days, Saturday and then Sunday, and then we'd come home.

George: Let me tell you about a little how, (it was) very crowded back there. This was sort of a place for people who couldn't afford to go to big resorts or anything, it was a state park. It was crowded. There was a lot of people like us who could only afford to go there, on the weekends. And it was so crowded, did we leave Friday night or Saturday morning? I think Saturday morning to save the one night's hotel fee. So, when we would stay overnight, I would get up very early in the morning, go out 5, 6 o'clock in the morning. I'd go down the state park, from where our hotel was up there. I'd take empty boxes along with us and a big tablecloth. Nobody was in the picnic grounds. I got the best table and put the empty cardboard boxes, 2 or 3 of them, cover them with a picnic blanket or a tablecloth, went back to the hotel and went to sleep until the afternoon. When our family would go down there there were hundreds of people all over, there was our table.

Margaret: Nobody touched our table.

George: Nobody touched them. When we walk in we had our table (laughs).

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Margaret: That's where we ate our meals, down there.

George: We always ate our meals down there. I had an old camping stove. A gasoline camping stove. We spent a lot of time up at Bedford. Swimming, mostly.

Margaret: Yeah, swimming.

**Q: Hunt or fish?**

George: Yeah, I hunted long before I was married when I was about sixteen, my brother-in-law was a great hunter. His name is Sam Egree, and he started to take me hunting rabbits and so forth. And I enjoyed (it) and then he took me deer hunting and I got one deer, I shot one deer, and that was it. I never wanted to go hunting again, it just didn't appeal to me, killing a big animal.

**Q:** So, when you lived on the Hill, you didn't hunt?

Margaret: Yeah, once

George: Yeah, that's when I got the deer. I was already living up here. And I hung it over, well it was her and her mother's house at that time and we were just newly married. And I hung it down in the cellar and skinning it and everything down there and boy, her mother didn't want any parts of it. So I gave almost all the meat away just to get it out of the house (laughs). They didn't want any parts of that deer (laughs).

But, as far as fishing goes, I really didn't start fishing until I was retired. And, I just didn't have the time. I was just too busy making a living back then. After I retired I got to like fishing well, I still do, but I'm eased off, I hardly go at all now.

**Q:** Did you go to **indoor theaters**?

Margaret: Oh, indoor theaters, yeah, down Aspinwall. All the time.

George: Yes, we took our boys down to the indoor theater in Aspinwall.

Margaret: We used to see all the musicals coming out. I liked the theaters then.

**Q:** Did you go o to **drive-in theaters**?

Margaret: We went occasionally. We didn't go too often. I think it was over where Washington Boulevard, where we went to the drive-in. We didn't do too often. It was shortly after that, I think, that they started to close down.

George: At the end of Washington Boulevard almost near...

Margaret: The crossroads there.

George: Yeah, Fifth Avenue or Frankstown, there was a place called Silver Lake. And they had an outdoor theater back there. Right now, I think, a lot of businesses are in there.

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Q: That was under the railroad trestle?

Margaret: Yeah.

George: The big concrete trestle, yes.

Q: I want you to imagine yourself **in your house**, 5 or so years after you moved in. It is a warm Summer afternoon. There is a nice breeze blowing. What are you doing?

Margaret: Friday afternoon? Friday afternoon, I would be shopping, if you picked Friday. I don't know. Probably just waiting, cleaning up the house, waiting for the kids to come home from school.

Q: If I were to ask you to walk out of your house, which door would you be most likely to use?

Margaret: The living room.

George: Yes the front room. We didn't use the side door until we got a porch here, then we started using the side door.

Q: If I ask you to walk over to your front door and step out, what do you see on the street in front of your house?

Margaret: Five years after we (first) lived here? Probably Pappy Rice digging a ditch out front, I swear he was there every day (laughs). Pappy Rice. I can remember him, and he was constantly (there), and we'd have a conversation and he'd come up for a glass of ice water, I remember him.

Q: What was his name?

Margaret: Rice, Pappy Rice.

George: He's probably some distant relative of yours. You know where Wacters live now, that was his house, except Wacters now expanded it now. It was just a little tiny house he lived in there by himself.

Margaret: And the first time I had a Christmas party up here and was looking for a Santa Claus. And I thought, well, he would make a darned good Santa Claus. So, I asked him and he said, "No, but thanks for asking. Then I asked Mr. White from Neilson Avenue and he said yes, and all the ladies complained and they said, "Well, you know, he is a drunk". And I said I didn't know, he's a nice guy, so he made a good Santa Claus. But, he was my first Santa Claus.

Dan Nowak: (Regarding "Pappy Rice") I think his name was Eddie. I think he may have been my grandfather's brother.

George: I don't know, we just called him Pappy {Rice}

Margaret: He was just a nice man and I liked him.

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George: Not only digging ditches like she said, but he had the scythe, you know what a scythe is? A long handled sickle that took both hands to swing and grass grew so big in these ditches filled with septic tank juice, that they grew and he had to go around week after week cutting that.

Margaret: He constantly, he went from the bottom of the Hill, all the streets to the top of the Hill, then he started over. Some of the ditches were really deep. You had to watch that (laughs).

George: (That) was 45 some years ago, Dan, and do you know that scythe, that I got it? And I gave it to Dave. He still has it up in Butler.

Dave: Yep, still got it.

George: The same Pappy scythe (laughs).

Q: What would you expect to see if you stepped out of the front of your house?

George: The Diethrichs house and the Cahills house and (I had) my eye on a piece of property over there that was 3 acres of wood. I always liked it and I had ideas that someday I'd like to build a house in the middle of it.

Margaret: That land over there.

George: Right now it's totally developed.

Q: Was the **neighborhood noisy**?

Margaret: No, it was very quiet up here. It was so quiet that I had a hard time getting adjusted to the quiet because I lived in Aspinwall, right across from the rail road track. So, this place was quiet up here.

George: It was rather quiet, I had lived right across the street from railroad tracks in Blawnox, but just the noise of the kids constantly playing. See every time, see I worked all day, naturally and every time I came home the kids were out in full force. Playing on the street, or in our yard or empty lots around.

Q: Do you recall any particular **smells** such as flowers, smoke, fumes, cooking?

Margaret: (Laughs) Yeah, the burning of the trash and the sewage. I can remember that very well. But, that's all.

George: The septic tanks. We all had septic tanks. There was no sewage up here. And, it didn't smell too good on certain days. It seems like the atmosphere had a lot to do with when it was really bad. And if Pappy Rice didn't come around and clean them up, clean out the ditches, to take the flow away.

Margaret: I can remember the smoke probably was worse though, because everybody burnt almost every day. In the back yards.

George: I kind of enjoyed that. I liked the smell. I was the one that did a lot of the burning.

Margaret: I know you did.

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George: I had a trash barrel all the time. 55-gallon drum with holes in the side. And usually, after a couple years the steel burned out, had to get another one.

Q: Was it the clay up here that caused everybody's septic tanks to overflow?

George: Possibly, because what they have now is leach beds that there's no water or anything coming out of the septic tanks. Back then they didn't have them. All you had was a tank and then an outlet to the tank. When it came out, oh boy, it wasn't smelling so good and it wasn't like today's septic tank. (When) it comes out of the septic tank, the water goes into a leach bed and never comes out of the ground. It stays, leeches into the ground and you don't smell anything. Back then, oh boy.

Q: Was there much traffic?

Margaret: Oh, no. Hardly any traffic on this street.

George: No, I don't recall any at all. Like I say, I had a car, but, I didn't use it for work and very few people did. If they could catch a bus and walk to work. A lot of them worked down Blaw-Knox company and walked down to the company.

Q: If you now get an urge to take a walk, which direction will you head?

Margaret: At that time I would go to the top of the Hill and go to my mother's. But (laughs).

Q: Who are you most likely to meet?

Margaret: Usually at the top of the Hill, Hulina yells out at me. That's about all.

Q: If you were to take a walk, which way would you go?

George: Well, probably to the top of the Hill, and then the opposite way out to where our ball field is now, and out to the cliffs. I like to look over down at the river. It's quite a sight.

Q: Would you be likely to meet anybody?

George: No, at that time it wasn't developed up there. Very few houses around, except on the main road. Possibly, John Cook. I'd pass his house and he'd always yell, "Hi", or something.

Q: Where did you send your kids to **elementary school**?

Margaret: Where did I sent them to school? He {Dave} went to Boyd School. He went to Boyd and Don went to the basement of St. Edward's. They didn't have a school there, they started a school in the basement. Why? There was no Catholic school for David at the time, Boyd was the only place, and then they started one for Don, so Don went.

Q: Were you happy with the quality of education that they received?

Margaret: Yeah.

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George: I think they did very well.

Q: Were you involved with the PTA of other school groups much?

Margaret: I don't know if they had a PTA, but I went to all the meetings, you know, if I was called up there. But, I can't remember exactly a PTA meeting.

George: I don't ever remember going to a meeting or any involvement in the school actually, no.

Q: Were there any of their teachers that you remember?

Margaret: No special teacher.

George: Well, just the Grindles David used to talk about them quite a bit swimming, his swimming coach. That's about all I remember.

Q: Where did you sent your kids to **high school**?

Margaret: Fox Chapel.

Q: Were you happy with the quality of education that they received?

Margaret: I was with David. But then whenever Don started, they started New Math and, I don't know, a different type, way of teaching. And, I didn't approve of it. It was phonics and a New Math and they classified Don's class as disadvantaged. Because they were taught that way. He still can't spell, and he's lousy at math. So I didn't like it at all.

George: One way or another it didn't bother me because, I kind of left it up to my wife to do that (laughingly) end of it and I'm glad I did, she forced them to learn, I think. A lot of times they objected and I just walked out of the house and she took over and really forced them (laughs).

Q: If you lived on the Hill in the 1950's, did you worry about **the bomb**? Did you have a fallout shelter?

Margaret: The Bomb, no.

George: No, not at all. Never. {Shelter}

Q: Did you worry about Communists? Do you remember watching Sen. Joe McCarthy on TV?

Margaret: No, because I always said, leave them alone, they're going to kill themselves.

Q: Do you remember watching Sen. Joe McCarthy on TV?

Margaret: I knew of him but I didn't watch him that much because I didn't like what he was doing.

George: I remember a few episodes watching him on (TV). I thought at that time that he was doing an excellent job. Really, until later on when I found out that he was, on a big witch hunt, that kind of changed my whole outlook on it.

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Q: Did you worry about Communists?

George: No, not at that time. Over here I didn't think we had too much to worry about.

Q: Did you think that the kids on the on the Hill were significantly involved with **drugs** in the 1950s?

Margaret: If they were I didn't know about them. I never knew of any drugs up here. David never mentioned drugs to me until he was in high school when he said something, "Oh Mum, if I really wanted them, the rich kids have it". That's the first I ever remember drugs.

George: I don't even remember that episode, but, no drugs at all.

Margaret: I didn't know of any.

Q: If you had to do it all over again, would you have moved to the Hill?

Margaret: Yeah.

George: Uh, looking back, I'd say yes.

Margaret: That's a surprise.

George: Well, for the kid's sake.



**A Glimpse at Life Raising a Family on Montrose Hill  
in Period of Time Immediately Following the Second World War  
An Interview with Mrs. Dolores Nowak**

This is an edited transcription of an interview with Dolores Nowak from approximately 2005. Editor's notes are shown in {brackets}, probable missing words, due to difficulties hearing the tape recording, are filled in in (parenthesis). The interview took place in her residence on Montrose Hill. Mrs. Nowak and her husband, Daniel Sr. and 4 children {they eventually had 9 children} moved into the house on Lawrence Avenue in September of 1957, having spent three years building it. The lots were purchased somewhere between 5 and 10 years earlier. Although Mrs. Nowak could not recall the actual purchase date of the lots, it did occur early enough that Myra Boyd was still alive.

Q: Was this the first home that you owned?

A: Yes.

Q: Now, did you have to go see **Myra Boyd**?

A: Yes. And her brother. They were both there when we went down to talk to her.

Q: You went to her house?

A: Yeah, that big white one on the corner down there.

Q: Oh, you didn't go to the big stone one, that's gone now?

A: No, we went on that, big white one right on the {horseshoe} bend.

Q: Did she ask you questions?

A: She was very selective of the people she put in up here, and if she thought there was something wrong, you didn't get it.

Q: What was "wrong" to her?

A: I guess if you weren't really family oriented, you know.

Q: Was she at all concerned about, not your ethnic background or anything like that?

A: No. She never asked anything about that. She just talked to you and (would) figure out whether you were, (laughs) I would say, honest, you know.

Q: So, she was looking at character?

A: Yes, definitely. No, she wasn't looking at ethnics.

Q: I wouldn't think not, considering the mix of people that live up here.

A: No, I don't think it was anything like that.

Q: How long did you talk to her?

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A: A couple times. She didn't say "yes" right away. You know, I guess she would think it over and then...

Q: She would make you come back?

A: Yeah.

Q: How long was it, 20 minutes or so each time?

A: Yeah, it wasn't very long.

Q: Maybe she wanted to give you time to make sure you were still married (laughs).

A: Well, no there was no question about that then. You know, people were married.

Q: Maybe she was checking up on you in between.

A: I don't think so.

Q: You think it was just using her judgment?

A: Yeah, I think so.

Q: What was she like, physically?

A: Old and frail.

Q: Was she a small person?

A: She was a little on the heavy side. And all she would say was "Well, don't you know?", you know, when she talked. "It's a nice day, don't you know?". She was nice.

Q: Was she pleasant to talk to.

A: Uh-huh.

Q: When you first got married, did you start thinking about a house of your own?

A: That's all I thought about from then until now, I'm still worried about the house.

Q: How did you hear about these lots?

A: I don't remember how we heard about it. Oh!, Harris, I think they bought one up here. As a matter of fact she still lives up here. Remember, she lived next to Grandma down on First Street {Blawnox}, Joe Harris.

Q: Oh, the older Joe Harris. The one that was on my paper route over on Livingston?

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A: Yeah, that's Joe Harris's dad. They lived right next door to Grandma {140 First Street}. And they bought up here.

Q: So then you decided to look into it? Now, how did you do that?

A: Well, Grandma first wanted to buy a lot up here. And Grandpap didn't want to do it, you know. So then we came up and looked. And of course, there was nothing here then, you know. Well some of these were starting to live in their foundations, on the top street. But, down here, as far as I remember, Julie was the only one down there, Cahill.

Q: Who were the **first people that you remember** meeting when you moved in?

A: Madge Bauer. She came over and, you know, welcomed me.

Q: Did you have any **relatives** on the Hill then?

A: Yes. Bob Rice. Paul and Mim {Rice}.

Q: Who were your near **neighbors**?

A: Reeds, next door, older people.

Q: Did you have kids then?

A: Yes.

Q: Did they have enough **playmates**? Who were they?

A: Definitely. I remember the Dolhis that you were friends with. The Fentons.

Q: Were there any **bullies**?

A: No, I don't remember any.

Q: Were there any other **problems**?

A: Yes, when they fight.

Q: What **games and activities** do you remember them playing?

A: Hide and seek, and most of the time they played baseball.

Q: Was there anything that they could do on the **Hill that was special**, unusual or even unique for it's time?

A: Yes, they had a lot of woods to roam in, build shacks and things like that.

Q: Do you remember any ice cream or "**sweet treats**" **vendors** and how did you feel about them?

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A: I remember the Goody Bar man, but I don't know if it was then. I don't remember when he started to come.

Q: Were there any places on or near the Hill that were off-limits to your children?

A: Well, they weren't supposed to go in other people's yards.

Q: Did they have a **curfew**? When was it?

A: Yes. Well, as soon as it started to get dark. Or 9 o'clock. In the Summer.

Q: In general, how did you feel about the Hill as a place to raise kids?

A: It was a great place to raise kids.

Q: When you first moved in on the Hill, where did you **shop for food**?

A: Was it Krogers? And Witas' was always there. I shopped there a lot.

Q: How frequently did you go grocery shopping?

A: Once a week.

Q: How did you get there?

A: Drove.

Q: Who went with you to shop for food?

A: Everybody that was here.

Q: How did you pay for your food?

A: Cash.

Q: Did you have any food items **delivered to the house**?

A: Yes. Milk, bread, eggs, chickens. I had an egg lady, and the milkman was Meadow Gold and then later, who did we go with, was it Turner?

Q: How did that work out?

A: That was great. We looked forward to the baker coming with those pecan rolls on the weekend. They liked the chocolate milk and orange juice {orange drink} from the milkman.

Q: How did you pay for it?

A: Cash.

**A Glimpse at Life Raising a Family on Montrose Hill  
in Period of Time Immediately Following the Second World War  
An Interview with Mrs. Dolores Nowak**

Q: Did you have a **vegetable garden**?

A: Yeah, Dad always had a little garden.

Q: Did things grow well?

A: Did they grow well? No.

Q: Where did you go for a **doctor**?

A: Down to Dr. Cramer and Kinsel {in Aspinwall}. Cramer at first. He was above the, I can't think of the name of it, the "loop" bar, I can't remember the name of it. Sigretti's, I think, was the name of it then. He had an office there. Then he moved over near the bowling alley. With other doctors. {The "loop" was the streetcat loop around the block at the end of its route.}

Q: What was the closest **hospital**?

A: Saint Margaret's and Pittsburgh.

Q: Who was your **dentist**?

A: Dr., Nauhouse was one of them. Dr. Ambrose was my dentist. All my life. And then some of my older kids went to him. And then it was Dr. Nauhouse. They were located down Aspinwall above the businesses.

Q: What did you and your spouse do for **fun and relaxation**?

A: For fun and recreation? We didn't. Dad played golf. I stayed home for 13 years, never went anywhere.

Q: Did you or your family **swim**?

A: Yes. At the {Pittsburgh} Field Club, where Dad worked, on Mondays.

Q: Did you or your family **hunt or fish**?

A: No.

Q: Did you travel in the **car for recreation**?

A: No, 'cause we needed 2 cars to go somewhere when yunz were older. We went to Storybook Forest and things like that. The Zoo. But that wasn't recreation with a bunch of kids, I'll tell you that!

Q: I want you to imagine yourself **in your house**, 5 or so years after you moved in. It is a warm Summer afternoon. There is a nice breeze blowing. What are you doing?

A: Sitting on the porch. On the stoop. It wasn't really a porch. We never had a porch.

**A Glimpse at Life Raising a Family on Montrose Hill  
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An Interview with Mrs. Dolores Nowak**

Q: If I were to ask you to walk out of your house, which door would you be most likely to use?

A: Kitchen.

Q: If I ask you to walk over to your front door and step out, what do you see on the street in front of your house?

A: Empty lot.

Q: Are there any kids around?

A: Yes. As a matter of fact, they played over there. The whole street. Diethrichs.

Q: Is the neighborhood noisy? What kind of sounds do you hear?

A: No. Just normal, ball sounds.

Q: Do you recall any particular smells such as flowers, smoke, fumes, cooking?

A: In the Spring, I always liked this Lilac bush over in Verdeber's yard.

Q: Is there much traffic?

A: No, not really.

Q: If you now get an urge to take a walk, which direction will you head? Why?

A: I would just go to the end of the top street and come back. There wasn't any cut throughs to the Hol, well, I don't even know if the Holiday Inn was there, then. It was there when Bill was in high school. That was the Workhouse property then.

Q: Who are you most likely to meet? Are you eager to see them? Do you speak? About what?

A: Probably Aunt Mim and Mrs. Cregan and Mrs. Wacter. Yeah, I enjoyed seeing them. Yes. Probably about our kids.

Q: Where did you send your kids to **elementary school**?

A: St. Edward's.

Q: Why?

A: 'Cause it was the Catholic school around here.

Q: Were you happy with the quality of education that they received?

A: I thought they did good. If they paid attention. Not like Bill.

**A Glimpse at Life Raising a Family on Montrose Hill  
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An Interview with Mrs. Dolores Nowak**

Q: Were you involved with the PTA of other school groups much?

A: No.

Q: Were there any of their teachers that you remember? If so, what do you remember about them?

A: You mean down here? At St. Edward's. I don't remember too much about... Sister Victoria.

Q: Where did you sent your kids to high school?

A: Fox Chapel.

Q: Were you happy with the quality of education that they received?

A: Yes, some of them did very good. If they paid attention. Some did not want to pay attention.

Q: When you lived on the Hill in the 1950s did you worry about the bomb? Did you have a fallout shelter?

A: No, truthfully, no. Not here, no.

Q: Did you worry about **Communists**?

A: Hunt-uh. {negative}

Q: Do you remember watching Sen. Joe McCarthy on TV?

A: Yes, I do. I thought he was an idiot.

Q: Did you think that the kids on the on the Hill were significantly involved with drugs in the 1950s?

A: No, I never thought they were involved at all. If they were involved with it I was oblivious to it. No, I never thought any of them were involved.

Q: If you had to do it all over again, would you have moved to the Hill?

A: Yes, definitely.

## Myra Boyd

Nobody had a greater impact on the character of Montrose Hill in the four decades following World War II than did Myra Boyd. The reason is simple. She decided to whom she would sell a lot and who she would refuse. It is apparent from the oral history interviews that her criteria involved issues of character. She had a vision of the type of community that she wanted to evolve on the Hill and the type of people that she wanted in that community. I believe that her earlier life gives us a clue as to what those values were and where they originated.

The following paragraphs, taken from the book "The Good Provider, H. J. Heinz and His 57 Varieties" by Robert C. Alberts, 1973, offers insight: "On January 30, 1894, in his fiftieth year, feeling 'very tired and worn, nervous stomach and head ache... In need of a long rest,' Heinz undertook a five-and-a-half month journey through Egypt, Palestine and Western Europe. Sallie {his wife}, troubled with reoccurring attacks of rheumatism, was not up to such an adventure' he took with him Irene, Clarence and Myra Boyd, Irene's friend and the daughter of Sallie's sister, Lydia. Mrs. Boyd had left her husband Harry with her three children in 1884, 'selecting' (in Heinz's words) 'to remain apart on account of his drinking.' She had moved in with the Heinzes and was in charge of running the household. Myra had worked creditably as the company cashier for several years. She was one of the leading members of the Duquesne Ceramic Club and had exhibited what a reviewer called 'several pieces of superior workmanship, a beautiful bonboniere with head and several toilet articles of extreme beauty. Heinz carried L1000 and \$1500 in American Express checks, and he gave \$400 to Clarence and \$300 each to Irene and Myra Boyd."

It continues later with: "At the end of a five-day stay in Venice, Myra Boyd took Clarence to Munich to get him started in school, while Heinz spent several days in Venice with his daughter."

And finally, to show how close Myra was with her uncle's family: "Irene, twenty-six, the oldest, announced her 'matrimonial engagement' to John La Porte Given, a Cornell man, telegraph editor of the New York Evening Sun. The wedding was held eighteen months later at Greenlawn, after the addition of a music room and a billiard room and enclosure of the porches made space for some 150 guests. Miss Myra Boyd served as the Maid of Honor."

H. J. Heinz was a man of strong principles. He believed in treating his workers fairly and vowed, after witnessing the Homestead strike, that a situation such as that would never happen at his company. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Heinz works were considered to be the preferred employer for women in the Pittsburgh area. Heinz even went as far as giving each of his female employees a day off of work each month during which they were taken on a buggy ride through the neighborhoods and parks of Allegheny City.

This was not, however, a one sided arrangement. While he treated his employees much better than the average employer of the day, he also insisted that they provide him with a fair days work and that they follow the rules of the plant, particularly when it came to hygiene. His company motto, "to do a common think uncommonly well", says a lot to his philosophy.

It is apparent that Myra was close to her uncle and trusted by him. I believe that she was greatly influenced by his values and that when it came to selecting buyers for the lots on the Hill she applied much of his values to the process. In many ways, Montrose Hill could just as well have been called "Heinz Hill" in the period following World War II, due to his indirect influence.



**A Glimpse at Life Growing Up on Montrose Hill  
in Period of Time Following the Second World War  
Interviews with Dave Dolhi, Pete Vogel, Kathy (Cregan) Day and Lori (Van Horn) Schmidt**

These interviews were all conducted by Dan Nowak, time particulars as follows:

Subject	Date of Interview	Born or Moved to Hill	Ten Years Old	Grad. High Sch.
Dave Dolhi	July, 1998	1950 {Moved}	1959	1967
Pete Vogel	August, 1998	December, 1953 {Born}	1963-64	1971
Lori Van Horn	1997	1957 {Born}	1967	1975
Kathy Cregan	September, 1998	1961 {Moved}	1968	1975

Words in (parenthesis) were spoken by the interviewee, but not easy to hear on the tape and are the best judgment of the correct words as interpreted by the transcriber. Words in {brackets} are from the editor or interviewer.

Q: Were you born on the Hill? What was your first year on the Hill?

Dave: No, I wasn't, I was born in E's'Liberty. And I think (when) I came here, I was about one year old. And we moved down at 211 Oxford Avenue on the bottom in 1950. We moved up here {to Lawrence Avenue} about 1956. It was in the Fall, around Thanksgiving of '56. I was about 6 years old.

Pete: {No}, Shadyside Hospital. {But was living on the Hill, 107 Watson Avenue.}

Lori: Yes.

Kathy: I was 4, so that would have been 1961, God! It used to bother me so badly when we left the Hill on holidays to go visit my grandparents and stuff, because it was like, nobody did that, nobody had to do that. Except us (laughing).

Q: Did your parents own or rent that house?

All: Owned it.

Q: Who were the **people that you most remember** when you started to play outside?

Dave: Well, I remember you {Dan Nowak}, because we loafed together. There was Jeff Farmarie. Over here was the Neffs. The Cahills. Fenton-Lists. And the Diethrichs. There was Becky Bauer. The Biers next door. And, of course, we had all the relatives, the Vogels (laughs), running around all over the place. But, that was our group that ran together. I remember Harry McFarland. That was the group.

Pete: Sherry and Cheryl Moyse.

Lori: Her name was Irene Wojtowicz. I cannot spell the last name (laughs). {*And that was an adult?*} Uh-huh, that was my next door neighbor.

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Kathy: Ok, there's two. The adult was June Robinson. Because, that's how we got up on the Hill. My mother, worked with Tom. And, Tom and June lived up there and Tom told my Mom about a house for sale up near them, because my Mum and Dad were city people. And June having had Tommy, Kevin and Ronnie, and Ronnie and I were the same age, we were like- I would just go over and cook with June and sit and brush her hair- for hours. So, she was the adult. She was the first one that I ever went to when I left the house.

Then the first friend was Monica Thompson. I mean, I can remember getting a pair of Keds when I was like 5. And they were supposed to make you run faster and jump higher, and I had to run over and show her that that worked.

Q: What do you most recall about them?

Dave: Well, we hung around together. Part of us rode motorcycles. A lot of us played softball games.

Pete: They were the only ones up there to play with.

Lori: She was just so nice and she used to teach me things, how to make baskets and stuff out of, like, reeds, like we'd soak them in her stationary tubs, and that, and I'd sit on the back porch and she's the one I'd do the cloud thing with, where you'd imagine what was in the clouds and she was just my neighbor that I always went over and sat on her porch, you know. And we just talked and I just really liked her.

Q: Did you have any **relatives on the Hill** then?

Dave: Yeah, my grandmother lived over here on Neilson. And then Mum's brother Joe lives up on Watson. And then when Artie Vogel moved from Grandma's house he lived over here, on Watson. Those were the relatives that we had on the Hill. I think it was the clan. Because all of Dad's relatives lived down in Blawnox.

Pete: Yes. Grandparents and the Dolhis.

Lori: Uh-huh. Elizabeth Van Horn. She's my aunt. My father's brother's wife.

Kathy: No, still don't.

Q: Where did you **play as a child**, say 10 years old?

Dave: Ten years old? We had a lot of softball games over there in the Sunoco tanks field. They used to have all kinds of picnics. That one, I don't think that was built yet {Referring to the Kensington Park field}. Oh, yeah, we used to play in this lot that's now a house next to the alley. And then Bauer's had a basketball hoop. We used to do a lot of basketball in the alley up there. We played a lot in that vacant lot which in no longer a vacant lot.

Pete: The woods.

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Lori: At the Malek's house.

Kathy: The old ball field. Like, going up to the, now the only ball field, that was so far away. So, we played at the old ball field. I think our world began at that section of woods and probably ended at Neilson. I mean, anything farther than that was far (laughing).

Q: Were there any places on or near the Hill that were off-limits?

Dave: Oh, yeah! We weren't allowed to go to the Workhouse. Which, we managed to go quite a bit (laughing). We weren't allowed to go down the road here, down the end of the cliff, we weren't allowed to go all the way down to route 28 and the main road. We weren't allowed back on the cliffs back here by Fred Allen's place. We weren't allowed back there because it was too dangerous. And, let's see, I'm just trying to think of where else. Those were pretty much the off limits places.

Pete: Not really.

Lori: That were off limits? I would say, no. Just that I wasn't allowed off the Hill. {Now, would the workhouse have been considered off of the Hill?} Yes

Kathy: That's a good ques(tion), I think, what did we call it, the Stone Quarry? I think we had to get permission to go there. Like, we just couldn't go out and play down there. And we couldn't go up to the Orchard, like whatever that was back up in there. But, other than that there really wasn't anything off limits as long as we came home and said, we were going to go up to the other ball field, or whatever.

Q: Did you listen to the warnings?

Dave: Heck, no (laughs). Heck, no, we were all over the place.

Lori: No. I was over there getting apples and pumpkins when I shouldn't have been.

Kathy: Uh-huh, I was such a little wimp. I had Gigi {McKay} and Stitch {Kathy Nowak} do everything. I would think of it, but I was too wimpy to do it. No, I did listen.

Q: Who were your playmates?

Dave: Well, there would be you , Dan Nowak, and it was Farmerie and it was the two Neff boys. Those were the guys that I really loafed with. Up on the Hill. Then you had a second set which is the Diethrichs and the Cahills and the Fentons. But, those were basically the guys, because we walked down the Hill together.

Pete: When I was little it was Sherry and Shirley Moyses and then Vasbinders moved up there. So I had my brothers and Vasbinders.

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Lori: I had like different groups, but I hung out with Judy and Ellen and Doll Malek. And Patty Malek. And Barb Malek. And then I'd also hang out with Nancy Dinger and Dee Rapp. And then, I'd hang out with Gigi McKay, and Charlene White.

Kathy: Oh, God, Monica {Thompson}, Gigi {McKay}, Susie {Rice}, Mary {Nowak} and Kathy {Nowak}, your sister. Like, Lori {Van Horn} wasn't so much part of the picture until we were in high school because we stayed with the little Catholic girls and she was one of the Protestant ones. She still laughs to this day about that.

Q: What did you play?

Dave: Let's see, there was a lot of softball. I remember playing softball and baseball over the field. Kick ball. We had a big thing of building shacks whether they were tree houses or underground shacks, I remember that. That was basically all that I remember. Then as we got a little older we got into playing pool, I remember Farmarie and I had a pool table, we used to play a lot of pool together.

Pete: Used to play a lot in the woods, army and war and building shacks then they built a ball field beside us and it started to be baseball and golf and football.

Lori: What do I remember playing? Softball with Martha Vulgris I think was her last name, down at the corner? And, we used to always have buckeye contests, in the Fall, with all the buckeye trees. I had one in my yard and then Jazbenzek's had one, like three of them down at the end of Nelson {Neilson}. We just had this thing where we would see who could collect the most buckeyes and win prizes. We always had Muscular Dystrophy carnivals every summer, at the Malek's house. I had a pool. So, like, I remember, like, swimming and McKays coming over and swimming in the pool and that. And, riding bikes. I think riding bikes was a big thing up there.

Kathy: Oh, my God. What did we play? I can remember playing with baby dolls in front of the house. We played house. We played, I guess we would have been about this age, about 10, 11 or 12, when we would play in Thompson's pool all the time. We played a lot of, I guess, for lack of a better word, make believe, that we would be dating, like, the Cowsills, and the Jackson 5, and Bobby Sherman. We did so much of that. Make believe, I mean, we really did. We led a sheltered life. But, even my own kids today, where you needed activities, you know, our parents sent us out to just play and we did. And then we'd play games like release. And active games to play outside. Red rover, red rover.

Q: Were there any **bullies** in the neighborhood?

Dave: Yeah, now up here, I'm just trying to think, I guess Greg Diethrich would be the bully that I remember. Down on the hill, down on the bottom, it was Jimmy Haus. Jimmy Haus was the local bully down there. There was a band of tougher kids up here but we really didn't loaf with them The Sheleys and the Faubs and the Renakis, but they were an older group, they were older than we were and we really didn't loaf with them and they didn't really bother us.

Pete: A lot of them.

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Lori: Mike McKay, (laughs). And, Raymond Jazbenzak (laughing). I would say that's about, that would be really, like that would be the 2 that, because when you're that age, like, I tended to stay on this side of Montrose Hill. I really didn't spend too much time Clifford and over, at that stage of my life. I recall um, 'cause the ball field was there, and the woods were, you know, like, everything was over where I needed to be.

Kathy: Mike McKay, I would say. He's the name, the first one that pops to mind. And, I guess about only one.

**Q:** Were there any other **problems**?

Dave: No, I think most of the problems that I had up here was Greg, next door. But, other than that there really wasn't, you know, from my memory, I really can't remember any real problems up here. I mean you had, sometimes the neighbors fought and ...(?)...that you weren't allowed to play in their yard for a while or whatever.

Pete: Problems, no, not really.

Lori: Yeah. (Sighs). {Name deleted.} lived {deleted}. And, I really, truly don't know what {name deleted} had, but there (was) something wrong with him. But, he used to scare the heck out of me. He'd threaten my Mom. Like, I was always afraid, and they lived {deleted}. I can't think of any other like, any other like bad, you know, bad problems.

Kathy: Other than, the only problems we ever had would be, the McKay's and the Dingers. If we would be down there laying out in the sun and a ball would go across the Dinger's yard and they had such a problem, those two neighbors. And then, as we got to be teenagers, the only other thing would be, Mr. Balog, whenever he moved in, between the Thompsons and their pool. He had a hard time with that and that's why they have their fence up. And then, my brother Jimmy, who is just the one year older than me, so we were part of the same crowd all through growing up loved music and he loved **loud** music. He would play his stereo and/or his electric guitar and Mr. Balog would have an absolute fit. And, I mean, Dan, when you think of it, that window was such a tiny, little window upstairs, in their upstairs where the kids slept I don't know how he even heard anything. It's a good thing he doesn't live behind me now with my 14 and ½ year old son, he'd be going nuts. But, that's really about the only thing that I can remember.

**Q:** Was there anything that you could do on the **Hill that was special**, unusual or even unique for it's time?

Dave: The Hill was always safe. I think that was the biggest thing as a kid. We could go out all hours of the night and everybody knew everybody, there weren't too many strange people and, it was a safe place. We didn't have to worry about any problems or anybody coming from other sections because the only way up and down was Montrose Hill road there. And nobody bothered us.

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Lori: Well, like, I would say when I was 10 it might still be going on, but I'm not positive it wasn't when I was younger, but I have great memories of the Hill picnics when they were across from my house in the woods there. But, I just don't know if I would have been a little younger or not before they stopped, where they would have like the corn roast and the big picnic and everybody would bring something that would be in the woods right there on Livingston.

Kathy: Well I would say, the biggest thing about making that hill unique or that made the Hill unique, at that time, was the sheer fact that the families were all so close. And, that you could open your door and let the kids go out and play and you knew, if your child was doing something wrong, that another parent would see and would correct it, or something. It was like we had all these mothers and fathers. It wasn't so isolated, like other plans. Like, say Falconhurst around here or even Oak Hill Manor didn't have the same sense of community, I guess, that the Hill did. And maybe it's because so many people were so related, you know, that there were so many relatives to everybody up there but, I truly think that's what made it unique.

Q: Do you remember any ice cream or “**sweet treats**” vendors?

Dave: Yeah, there was the Goody Bar man. I can remember he used to come in just about supper time, right before supper time, and he used to ring his bells and come up and down the street. He was a real sleaze bag, I remember him.

Pete: The Good Humor man, Goody Bar man. Goody bars was what I always called them.

Lori: Yep.

Kathy: I remember the Goody Bar man. I don't remember him by name. I remember our milk man. The Country Belle milk man. Him I remember, but not really anybody by name.

Q: Did you have a **curfew**? When was it?

Dave: At ten years old, yeah, we had a curfew. It was dark in the Summertime and it was, I'm just trying to think, at school nights, I can't remember, was it 8 o'clock we had to be in bed? Something like that. (I'm a little) fuzzy on the memory.

Pete: Dark.

Lori: Yes, I had to be in before the streetlights came on. The only time that I remember being beat was waiting for the Goody Bar man and missing my curfew (laughs). I didn't get like beat beat, but I did, my Mum was waiting for me at the sidewalk with a wooden spoon (laughing).

Kathy: The quarter to nine whistle. When the fire thing would blow in Blawnox. That was the latest.

Q: Did you go to **indoor theaters**? Where? How did you get there? Do you remember any specific movies or attractions?

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Dave: Yeah. I can remember goin' to Cheswick I can remember goin', wasn't there one in Blawnox that we used to go to? Well, I remember we used to go down and there was one down in Aspinwall. We used to watch 300 cartoons for a quarter, or whatever it is and sit there all Saturday morning.

Pete: I remember a couple of times going to the Oaks. I don't remember any others.  
"The Blob". Steve McQueen in "The Blob".

Lori: I did, but the only one. Mrs. McKay would take me. My Mom never took me, but I would always go with Gigi and her mom. Cheswick. And the Oaks.  
There is one that I like, maybe you can help me think of the name of it, where the man is drunk and he keeps falling off that horse. It's a real classic, I can't think of the name of it.

Kathy: Yeah, Cheswick.

Oh, about that age, maybe I was 12, "Love Story" with Robbie Thompson. God, he held my hand, that was my first date. Oh, my God, I haven't thought of that in years! And "Man of La Mancha", but I think we went there when I was in junior high, so I would have (been), well, 12 or 13. Seeing "Man of La Mancha", because I would have been 12, because I have a son in 7<sup>th</sup> grade that's 12, so my brother Jimmy was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and he went, too, and he always said from that movie that if he ever had a little girl he was going to name her Dalphinea, (laughs).  
From "Man of La Mancha".

Well, when we would go to the movies a parent would drive and then another one would pick up.

**Q:** Did your family go to **drive-in theaters**? Where? Do you remember any specific movies?

Dave: Sure, we used to go to the drive-in, which (was then) the racetrack up here, which is now the McDonald's. Was that the Harmarville Drive-In? I can't remember. Because we used to go up there during high school, too. In that field up there.

Pete: Yes. Up at Harmarville. The Dean Martin ones where he was a secret agent, I forget what it was called.

Lori: No. I didn't do much with my family at all. I did it with other people. Other people would take me places, because my dad died when I was 12 and he had cancer for 5 years, so my Mum was, you know, attending to him. So, like, anything that I usually did was with somebody else in the neighborhood. {Well, you were a lot younger than your siblings, weren't you?} I was 6 years younger than my youngest one, my closest, you know. {And quite a bit younger than the oldest one?} Right, I'm 40 now and he's 64, so...

Kathy: When I was younger. The Gateway. Is that the one in New Ken? And I think there was one on Route 8, but that was like a big adventure, if we went that far.

**Q:** Did you remember any food items **delivered to the house**, such as eggs, dairy products, produce?

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Dave: We used to have milk delivered on the old side porch here. There was an old wooden porch and I remember we used to have milk and it would freeze because it would come up about an inch if we didn't catch it. I don't remember eggs, I just remember the milk and it was in glass bottles.

Pete: The egg lady used to come by. I don't remember what my mother bought off her. (I want to say) fruit, vegetables and eggs. Obviously, she was the egg lady. The milk man. There was one of those vendors that did like Entenmanns or somebody that had cakes and cookies and that kind of stuff. Just a vague recollection of that.

Kathy: Yeah, the milk man, yeah.

Q: Did you as a child look forward to any of these deliveries in particular? Why?

Dave: The only delivery that I really looked forward to was when I stayed at Grandma's house and it wasn't really a delivery, but Artie used to get down to McNally's Bakery down in As'innwall and pick up fresh baked cupcakes. And he used to bring them up. And I can remember when I stayed over Grandma's house on a Friday night they would be waiting. Artie would go down and they would be waiting, that would be my breakfast.

Pete: No.

Kathy: Oh, yes, I loved seeing the milk man. Because he was such a friendly little fellow thing. And I could remember him being in my Mum's kitchen, and I don't know his name, she would remember his name, but he would come in and always talk, and she'd give him a glass of iced tea or glass of water, and he'd spend about 5 minutes. He was just a perfect little grandpa. And when I would drive out to the airport and up until a few years ago and you'd see that Country Belle sign on that store, office or something, it was right along the Parkway, I always thought, "God, I loved that little Country Belle milkman".

Q: Did your family have a **vegetable garden**?

Dave: I can't remember one here. Down on the older house, yeah. We had peaches, we had strawberries. I remember we had chickens down there. We had a garden in the back. Yeah. But not up here, I can't remember a garden up here. Until we were older.

Pete, Lori, Kathy: No.

Q: Where did your parents take you if you needed to see a **doctor**?

Dave: (Laughs) Doctor Steffler. He was in E's' Liberty I think he was about 80 years old when I was going there, and the thing I used to dread was needles. And we would go over there and he would be boiling needles in a corner and I'd always have to get a shot. I hated that.

Pete: Doc Magee. All of us. (He) delivered all of us. John Paul is named after him, my youngest brother. He delivered my mother.



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Lori: Dr. Ranai in Aspinwall.

Kathy: Doctor Donovan. And I guess he was at St. Francis. But, he was the doctor. I don't know if eventually he got an office down along Freeport Road. He may have.

Q: Who was your **dentist**? Where was his/her office?

Dave: Dr. Dimmett. And he was down in Aspinwall. We used to have to go up on the second floor with old wooden steps and he would give us a nickel certificate that we used to go downstairs to Bard's. That's right, it was Bard's to get a nickel ice cream cone after. Of course, we couldn't eat it 'cause our teeth were all drilled.

Pete: Dr. Hilger and Dr. Dimmeck. Demmick first and then Hilger. He still is

Lori: Dr. Palcare. Aspinwall.

Kathy: Doctor Hilger. To this day I hate dentists. I should say, have a mortal fear of them. You know, Dan, I have had 3 children and I have yet to have an epidermal nothing, with 3 kids. I can take pain. Let me know I have to go to a dentist and I wish they would knock me out. I get Novocain to get my teeth cleaned!

Q: Did you or your family **swim**?

Dave: Yeah. We used to swim out at North Park and then Mum and Dad used to take us to Keystone to Shawnee State Park. Which is up in Bedford PA. We swam in the river a little bit. Those were places I remember.

Pete: Yes. We had a little pool in the back yard.

Lori: Yes, at my house (laughs). And, I used to go over to the Willows with McKays a lot.

Kathy: Uh-huh. Well, we would go to Fox Chapel high school. Because we did not belong to Community. So, we would go to the high school and swim up there. And North Park. And then whenever my Mum and Dad joined Lake Arthur Country Club for those couple of years we would swim up there.

Q: **Hunt or fish**?

Dave: We weren't hunters. And the only fishing that I remember doing was you and me and my brother and Neff. We'd go down to the river but actually we were throwing bricks at each other rather than fishing.

Pete: Some of the brothers a little later.

Lori: Yes. My brother Tom, both. Is a hunter and a fisherman.

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Kathy: No.

**Q:** Travel in the **car for recreation?**

Dave: Every Sunday. We used to get in the car and drive, and drive all over the place. Gasoline was real cheap. I can remember going to, I think probably my favorite spot was going up to Bedford, and we used to stay at the old Bedford Hotel for, I think, ten bucks a night and it was really neat. And go down to the Dairy Dale and have eggs, and I remember not eating pancakes because I got so sick I couldn't eat pancakes and that was Shawnee State Park and we really liked that going up there.

Pete: An occasional vacation. Not very many vacations. Our big deal was going to Brookville with Grandpa.

Lori: Yes.

Kathy: Yeah, we would go to Erie. That was it.

**Q:** What **chores** do you remember doing?

Dave: We didn't have any chores! I had to sweep out the garage because it got so bad and occasionally do dishes but other than that we really didn't have any chores that we did. Mom did everything. What can I say?

Pete: All of them (laughs). Cutting the grass, washing the wishes, sweeping the floor, vacuuming and babysitting. I was the oldest.

Lori: Truly, nothing. I don't think I had to do anything until I was about 14 years old.

Kathy: Tons. At that age, I remember, I had to dry the dishes every night. And, that's really about it. I guess make my bed. Clean my room and dry the dishes.

**Q:** Did you receive an **allowance?** What did you do with it?

Dave: I don't remember. I honestly don't remember if I got an allowance.

Pete: For a very little while we got a quarter a week.  
Goody Bar man (laughs).

Lori: No.

Kathy: Not a thing that was set in stone. Like, if I wanted something, then I would do something. To earn it. But it wasn't like every week I would get 50 cents or something. I think for maybe a year I did, but not as any regular thing.

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Q: Did you do anything on the Hill to **earn extra money**?

Dave: Yeah. I can remember we shoveled side walks a little bit and then for a while, and I'm not sure who else helped, it might even have been Tommy Cahill, I don't know, we used to trim hedges. We trimmed hedges for money. But really, we didn't earn a lot. And we really didn't do a whole bunch.

Pete: Yes, cut grass.

Lori: Yes. Betsy Coward lives down beside Dingers, Ricky Coward's mom? I used to wash her car and help her weed her yard and everything in the summer time and she'd always pay us a couple dollars and take us to the Taste Freeze, for helping her. But, it really was like more fun than actual work, like, you know, I really enjoyed being with her.

Kathy: Babysat. Well, I probably started babysitting when I was 12. I know I did. But the time I was, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade I was babysitting.

Q: What did you do with the money?

Dave: Oh, Jeez, I can't remember. I have no idea (laughing).

Pete: Anything.

Kathy: I think spend it at roller skating. Up at the Ches-A-Rena.

Q: Did you have an after school or **Summer job**? Where? Doing what?

Dave: Yeah, when I was a little older we caddied at Fox Chapel golf club. I caddied from, I can't remember, if it was 13 or 14 until I was 18 years old.

Pete: In high school I started working at the Boron down in Fox Chapel. Pumped gas.

Lori: I truly don't think I ever had a summer job until I graduated from high school. Like, I didn't have to work. No, I didn't work in the summer.

Kathy: No.

Q: Did you enjoy it?

Dave: Oh, yeah, it was pretty good, and it was halfway decent money. We got 3 dollars a round for golf and in fact, I just ran into the old caddy master here, Pete Kanezovich. I just met him about 2 weeks ago, playing golf.

Pete: Yep.

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Q: What did you use the money for?

Dave: Just kicking around money, playing golf. A little bit of spending money.

Pete: Living, eating, car, gas, clothes.

Q: Where did you go to **elementary school**?

Dave: I went to Boyd, which is now the old folk's home up there. It was Boyd Elementary. (Laughter from Mr. & Mrs. Dolhi) Is that what it is, the old folks home?

Mr. & Mrs. Dolhi: Community Center, Senior Center.

Dave: Senior, old folks home, whatever it is (laughing).

Pete: St. Edward's.

Lori: I went to Blawnox and Boyd. {Oh, good, someone who didn't go to St. Ed's!}, No, I was the only Presbyterian in the whole group (laughs). I went to Boyd 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> and then I went to Blawnox for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>.

Kathy: St. Ed's. Up until 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Q: What is the first scene that pops into your head when I ask you about your grade school?

Dave: The first scene? I'm trying to think of my first grade teacher. Mrs. Evans. She was a skinny old lady with grey hair and she scared the heck out of me.

Pete: Sister Edward pulling me up the steps with my hair. I don't remember why, I just remember how it hurt.

Lori: Well, one that happened at Boyd elementary, is a little girl that I was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade with, fell at recess and died. At recess. There's a library there, Lori Ann West library? Right on the school and she was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade with me and she just hit her head on the steps going in, you know, just hit it the wrong way. She died on the playground.

And the other thing, like, for Blawnox, is Mr. Merty, like I just remember him as a teacher in 6<sup>th</sup> grade because my Dad died that year and he just, like, took me under his wing, I was like, you know, the teacher's pet and he'd let me, I'm real arts and craftsy and I still am and like I'd do all the bulletin boards for him and everything at school, and uh, (it's such a) good memory. But I really, truly have good memories of 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>, I mean it, I really do. I like everything that went on in my life, you know.

Kathy: Fear of the nuns (laughs).

Q: How did you get there?

Dave: By bus. We caught the bus at the bottom of the Hill.

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Pete: Walked.

Kathy: In the early part, like 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, or so, I think we would get driven, but then, I think we would walk the rest of the years.

Q: Do you remember any of your **teachers, principals**?

Dave: I remember them all. I remember Hertz and Burkhart and Evans, Mrs. Core, Mr. Hall was the principal at that time. I can remember missing my school bus when I was in first grade or second grade because Dad went to California and I was afraid I'd come home and Mom wouldn't be there. So I remember missing the school bus all the time. We'd go down the Chicken Path and I'd wait and miss the bus and come back home.

Pete: Well, I can't tell you anything good about them. Sister Benedict, Sister Edward, Mrs. Bosnick, Boswick, whatever her name was. Sister Anita in first grade was real nice, but, hell that was first grade, I don't remember much other than she was nice. 4<sup>th</sup> grade was Sister Vincent, she was 173 years old. 5<sup>th</sup> grade was Sister Geraldine, she was nice. 6<sup>th</sup> grade was Sister Edward. Oh, man!

Lori: Yeah, I had Mrs. Evans for 1<sup>st</sup> grade, I had Miss Wagner for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, I don't remember 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. I think Hornbeck, but I'm not positive. 4<sup>th</sup> grade was Mrs. Piper, I don't remember 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 6<sup>th</sup> grade was Mr. Merty. Um, Mrs. Evans was a witch (laughs). She was our 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher and she was mean, as I remember. Um, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade was a very young girl that I really, really liked and she got married the year that we were in her class and we had a big shower, the parents had a shower at someone's house and all the kids got to go and bring her presents and that. Um, other than that, as teachers themselves, I really don't, you know, I don't remember.

Kathy: Uh-huh There are two main memories. There was this one teacher, sister, I don't even know her name, in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, that literally, like, would scare us half to death and she told us this grave story that stayed with me for years and years and years. But, the biggest thing is, our 6<sup>th</sup> grade class, Mary and I were just talking about this the other day, we were so bad that, our nun was Sister Barbara, and she quit the nun hood and quit teaching after she had us. {Laughter.} She did. It was the first year she got to wear that whole habit. You know how they had to build up? To the official habit? And she got to wear that official habit and quit (laughs). Oh, I could tell you stories, I could talk for an hour about that year. And then Miss Hulina, I do remember her. I was her teacher's pet. In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. And everybody knew it. And, in fact, I just taught 3<sup>rd</sup> grade last year and I kept wanting to tell my kids, my students when I would teach them spelling that I won an award for spelling in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, but I couldn't bring it in because it was a statue of the Blessed Mother and I had like 5 or 6 Jewish kids, I didn't want to open up that can of worms.

Q: Were they good teachers?

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Dave: When you're 10 years old and up to about 12 or 13, I don't think you really evaluated them that way. I think you evaluated whether they were mean to you or not (laughs). But, as far as good teachers, reflecting back, I don't think I had an opinion. Again, it was the nice teachers versus the mean teachers.

Pete: For their abilities, yes. They taught what they were supposed to.

Lori: Yes, I had to say yes or no, like, yes I think so. It's hard to say that 1<sup>st</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade because it's hard for you to remember. Like, you don't think like that as older, you know, you can make a better decision when you are in high school or something but, I would say yes they were.

Kathy: In hindsight being a teacher, maybe Miss Hulina, but no, they may have been good instilling the religious fear, guilt kind of thing into us, but as far as academic, no. I don't think so.

**Q:** Are there any **special friends** that you still think about or even see?

Dave: No. Not one.

Pete: Ed Mescal. I mean, we weren't friends in elementary school, but, we remained friends for a long time.

Lori: Truly, no. The kids that I went to school with, were Bill Devine and Bobby Kunkle and Dee Rapp and Nancy Dinger and I really don't see any of those. Eric Vasbinder. I don't see any of them.

Kathy: I see Mary Ann Dolhi in church. And we'll always be friends and it's only from that, because we've never really done anything since then, we still have that connection. And, Mart Lynn Serto, I see her in the summer at the pool. And we were friends in grade school.

**Q:** I want you to imagine yourself **in your house**, at 10 years old or 5 years after you moved in. It is a warm Summer afternoon. There is a nice breeze blowing. What are you doing?

Dave: In the house? I'm fighting with my brother. We fought all the time. Mum used to throw us outside.

Pete: Reading the newspaper, or reading.

Lori: Watching the Pirate baseball games. Eating cheese and crackers and drinking lemonade that my Mum made with oranges in it. That is such, like a GOOD memory for me. As for the afternoon, I truly can't see myself sitting around on a nice day in my house. 'Cause I was, I mean, I would have been out, you know, I wouldn't have been home reading or, you know, I would have probably been out doing something.

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Kathy: In the house? Probably reading a book from the bookmobile. And I, if it was a warm summer day, I wouldn't be reading in the house I would be sitting outside under our cherry tree that was in the back yard. I was an avid, avid reader.  
{I don't remember a book mobile that came, up on the Hill, did it?} No, no, it would come down to the Plaza on Saturdays. And I took the limit every Saturday.

Q: If I were to ask you to walk out of your house, which door would you be most likely to use?

Dave: The front door.

Pete: The porch. We weren't allowed to use the front door. Still not allowed to use the front door (laughs). 45 years old and I can't use the front door. The front door is for Grandma and she's dead now so nobody uses the front door (laughs).

Kathy: The kitchen. Never used the front. In fact, I don't think the front door opened for years. That's why you knew, when someone knocked on that door, it was a stranger.

Q: If I ask you to walk over to your front door and step out, what do you see?

Dave: What would I see? Diethrich's house was here. Cahill's house was there. Bier's was there, because we were one of the newer houses on the street. They {Diethrich's} lived in, I can't remember which one lived in their basement. Both of them lived in their basement, OK. It was a dirt road. I remember distinctly the dirt road because in the Summer time people would come down and it would be terrible and then they would oil it and then we would have oil all over our tennis shoes. It was definitely a dirt road.

Pete: The road and the ball field.

Lori: Ah, woods.

Kathy: OK, what I would see then at that age was, it would be the tall pine tree that was in the middle of the yard, the tall pine trees at the end of the street. I should just say trees, because then you'd look over to the left and that's where those woods would be.

Q: Were there any kids around?

Dave: Oh, yeah, we had 32 kids on this street. Because we had the Bauers and Nowaks and Diethrichs on both sides and the Cahills and the Biers and the Fentons, like I said, the Fentons-List. You had the Harrises, with Joey and, I can't remember her name now. And down on the corner was Jack Sharp and there was another set of kids but they might of been later. Remember Davey? He used to eat the turtles? Yeah, I can't remember who they were. Yeah, it was Ressler.

Pete: (There were) always kids. All of my little brothers and sisters. Usually the Koslowskis, the Moyses, the Vasbinders.

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Lori, Kathy: No.

Q: Is the neighborhood noisy?

Dave: I can't say it was noisy. It was active. I mean there were always kids running all over the place. (Laughs) You hear the neighbors fighting. You hear kids running around. Dogs. Lot of birds. An occasional car. I don't remember being bothered by the cars too much.

Pete: Yeah, when I was 12, yes. The ball field was up there and if we weren't there, somebody was always there. Kids. Riding their bikes, playing, little kids crying. There was always babies, every age you could think of was there. Girls and boys.

Lori: No. What might I hear? Truly, like, the only thing that would come to my mind would be birds. Like, I always thought it was like really quiet, I was on a dead end street and there was only homes on one side of it. I'd say it was pretty quiet.

Kathy: When the kids were out and it was generally our house where everybody congregated, so yes, when there were kids out, but if just to walk out, no, because, you know, Saboliks didn't have many and Robinson's were older, so. The birds, mainly the birds. And, I guess, kids. Yeah, kids and birds.

Q: Do you recall any particular smells such as flowers, smoke, fumes, cooking?

Dave: I can remember the regalias as a little kid. As far as smells, I can't recall.

Pete, Lori: No.

Kathy: God, I'm just like transporting back there. I would say just an outdoor, treesy type smell, because there were so many trees. And, like the smell of the pine tress. But, I'll tell you what I always imagined I smelled, and I would purposely looked for it, I always tried to make sure there wasn't a smell of gasoline, because I was so deathly afraid of those white tanks. Over at Sunoco.

Q: Is there much traffic?

Dave: No, again, like I said there wasn't a whole lot of cars up here that I remember. Like I said they didn't really bother us.

Pete: No. We lived at the top of the hill, the end of the street.

Lori: Nope.

Kathy: Just because of where the location was, no. I should say no because the new road wasn't there yet, so it was just the side of the house was because we were right on that corner. But, if I would go out in the front of my house, no. Now, it's a different story. My Dad calls it the Parkway.



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Q: If you now get an urge to take a walk, which direction will you head? Why?

Dave: We'd walk out and you'd hang a right. Because we'd usually meet up in the corner with the guys or go up to your place or cut through the back alley right here to go over to Farmaries and then we'd end up in the ball field, either in the lot over here or over in the other, Sunoco tanks.

Pete: Top of the cliff. That's where we always went.

Lori: I would have walked out my back door and into the alley to one of my friend's houses. I wouldn't have just walked by myself, to walk somewhere, no way.

Kathy: I would probably go left to go see who was over the ball field. That's exactly what I would do.

Q: Who were you most likely to meet? What did you talk about?

Lori: Gigi McKay.

At that age, I'm sure we were talking about other girls. It's a terrible age, you know, about what this one did or what that one did, but I couldn't pick one thing or anything.

Kathy: Every kid on the Hill. All the kids.

What we were gonna do, if we were gonna play baseball, if we were gonna play release, or softball and if the boys were out, if I got to play baseball with them because I thought softball was too sissified. I was too good. Having the competition with my brother Jimmy.

Q: Where did you go to **high school**?

All: Fox Chapel High School.

Q: What is the first scene that pops into your head when I ask you about your high school?

Dave: First scene I can remember very vividly going up there and all the school busses lined up in a row, all the yellow school busses, and getting out and seeing all the kids trying to get through the doors at the same time.

Pete: Connie McCutchin (laughs). Amelia Novak

Lori: The first scene.... going to the basketball games.

Kathy: I was just talking to my son about this because he's going there. As an adult looking back was the intimidation. I was so intimidated by the size of that school. The vastness of it. And just with the whole soci-economic thing. We were thrown into, I was very intimidated.

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Q: How did you get there?

Dave: School bus. Bottom of the Hill.

Pete, Kathy: Bus.

Q: Do you remember any of your **teachers, principals**?

Dave: I remember a lot of my teachers. Caldwell was the Chemistry teacher and Edinger was my homeroom teacher, he gave all the seniors a silver dollar. I can't really remember who the principal was. Boyle was the Gym teacher, and the swimming coach. I can't remember, but he had a wife that worked there and a daughter that was working there, too. Grindle! That was it, Art Grindle. If I would dwell on it awhile I could remember a lot of my teachers.

Pete: I remember them all.

Lori: Mrs. Walker. She was an English teacher in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

Kathy: Not many. I mean, I remember the occasional teacher, but not many.

Q: Were they good teachers?

Dave: Again, I don't give an impression of whether they were good or not. Again it was whether I get along with them and could survive, rather than were they were good or not. I think the whole idea was just to pass and get out.

Pete: Yeah.

Lori: Yes.

Kathy: Again, in hindsight, for me... uh, ... I would say, no.

Q: Are there any special friends that you still think about or even see?

Dave: Most of my high school people, I went to 2 reunions, not really. Living up in Butler I don't get to see too many of them. And, as far as just recently here, we had a little reunion that we're all supposed to get together when we're all 50 years old, which will be next year. But, I really don't think about them too much.

Pete: Not really any special friends, I still see people that I knew.

Lori: Just the ones that I was friends with in high school, I'm still friends with, most of them, today. I don't see, the core group of like 10 of us are still friends, but I don't see anybody that's not out of that core group, you know. I think we just lucked out, though. We had so many friends and we still stuck, you know, not too many people have all these friends that they grew up

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with and went to school with and you didn't have to venture out and make friends that were not from your area because there were so many of us that that age that we all stuck together.

Kathy: Yeah, I would have to say now, Lori {Van Horn}, that's where we got to be friends. Just, mainly her. Well, Mary {Nowak}, but Mary was from grade school, too.

Q: Do you remember any **school activities**? Dances, football games, basketball games, etc?

Dave: Well, I was in intramurals. I was in intramural softball and basketball. I tried out for the swimming team, didn't make it. I was in track 3 out of the 4 years up there. And tried out for the golf team, didn't make it.

Pete: Never went to any of them.

Lori: Yes, I remember going to the basketball games and the football games. Did not go to dances.

Kathy: A few. But I remember, like, the first dance we ever went to and this senior tried to kiss me and, man, I was like, so shocked. Because, we were so sheltered up there, Dan. I would have been better off in a smaller school.

Q: What year did you graduate?

Dave: Sixty-seven.

Pete: Seventy-one.

Lori: This is terrible, let me think about this (laughs), seventy-five.

Kathy: Seventy-five.

Q: Where did you **hang out**, outside of school, when you were in high school?

Dave: We hung out on the Hill. We played ball and everything and more or less hung out or there would be you and me and Farmarie and we'd get into whatever vehicle (there) was and we'd go out to North Hills to Winkys at that time. We'd go bowling. That was pretty much it. {Editor's Note: We went to McDonald's and, occasionally, Arby's. We never ate at Winky's.}

Pete: Hang out, I don't know, the shopping center, the Boron Station, or somebody's house.

Lori: On Montrose Hill.

Kathy: The Hill. The ball field. Now the new ball field, because the old one was gone. We just couldn't wait to get home and get up on our field.

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Q: If you were to picture yourself back in your senior year of high school, at 8 o'clock on a Friday or Saturday night in the early Fall, where would you be?

Dave: Friday or Saturday night in the Fall? I didn't go to too many football games, I remember one or two night games. I did date a little bit so I (might have been) out on a date. Most of the time it was loafing around with you guys.

Pete: Where everybody was, where it was, usually at parties. Lot of parties. (With the) gang that we loafed with.

Lori: With my boyfriend. At my sister's house. Playing cards.

Kathy: Up the ball field. Mary, Lori, Gigi, Susie, Stitch, Monica, and Shela.

Q: Doing what?

Dave: Just going out, like I say, going bowling, going Putt-Putt, going out to McDonald's, just kind of.. McDonalds at that time, I remember that clearly. You'd get a hamburger, french fries and a coke and get change for a buck. That's how I remember that. Because that's all we had was a buck. {At the time that we were doing this, the hamburgers were 15 cents and the cheeseburgers were 17 cents. Add in the fries for 20 of 25 cents and coke for the same and you actually got change back from the dollar.}

Kathy: Sitting up there, on the bench, waiting for Bill and Jack and Mark Schmidt and all the boys to come up.

Well, they would know I would be up there. We probably wouldn't tell them what we would do.

Q: Did you do things in Blawnox?

Dave: No, we really didn't do much in Blawnox except we played all our baseball games down in Blawnox. We had no league fields up here to play. I'll take that back. I had relatives in Blawnox so we were down there to visit the relatives. But, other than that I didn't loaf in Blawnox.

Pete, Kathy: No.

Lori: I didn't hang out in Blawnox at all. I may walk down with a girlfriend or someone to Sullivan's and get something at the store and walk back up, but I never hung out in Blawnox at all.

Q: Where was your favorite place to **shop for clothes**?

Dave: I never did shop for clothes. So, I didn't have a favorite place (laughing).

Pete: Kaufmann's.

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Lori: East Hill's Shopping Center.

Kathy: God, when I was that age, gee, where would we even get stuff? I wasn't really a clothes person, I guess I just have to say Kaufmann's. My Mum would take me to the Kaufmann's in North Hills and Monroeville.

Q: Did you go to town (Pittsburgh) often?

Dave: No

Pete: Just when I needed clothes.

Lori: Never.

Kathy: Not often. No, but I mean, as I was growing up, like, we would go down, there would be certain things that we would make sure that my Mum and Dad took up to. Like, "The Sound of Music", one time we went down there for a movie. We would go, my Mum and I would go down and meet my one aunt at one of the, one of the restaurant in Kaufmann's, but no, it wasn't anything that we could consider often.

Q: How did you get there?

Pete: I vaguely remember a bus, but, I know I used to drive there after I got a car.

Q: If you lived on the Hill in the 1950s, did you worry about the atomic bomb?

Dave: You know, we just talked about that the other day. I can remember up at school at Boyd, having the air raid sirens go off for practice and us diving into hallways and sitting there for 3, 4 hours in the hallways in anticipation of nuclear strikes. But whether it bothered me or not? Nah, we figured it would never hit here.

Pete: No, I was too young. I do remember when the scares were and I remember one day I specifically remember talking to my Dad about bomb shelters. I was 6 or 7 or 8, but I just remember. No, I didn't worry about it.

Kathy: Oh, I remember having to practice for those. At St. Ed's we would have to get down under the desk. That sign that they always had, like Air Raid Shelter, or something.

Q: Did your family have a **fallout shelter**?

Dave, Pete: No.

Q: Did you worry about **Communists**?

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Dave: No. Didn't worry about them. We studied them in school, I can remember that. But, when you're 10, 11, 12 years old, you don't worry about the Communists.

Pete: In the 50s? I wouldn't know. I was 6. Late 60s, yeah. My age group was. Early 60s, I don't remember. Again, I would have only been 7 or 8 or 9 then.

Q: Did you think that the kids on the on the Hill were significantly involved with **drugs** in the 1950s:

Dave: No! No, we had no drugs. The thing that we were involved in, if it was anything, was, you know, sneak a smoke or sneak a beer. But, no, there was no such thing as drugs back in the 50s. We didn't have any of that.

Q: Did you think that the kids on the on the Hill were significantly involved with drugs in the 1960s?

Dave: In the 60s on the Hill, no. It didn't really get into the drug scene until after, I would have to say, Kennedy got killed. And then things started to unravel a little bit. And then the drugs started.

Lori: I don't I truly don't know because I was very naive to the age of 12 and I would have been, you know, I wasn't turning a teenager until the seventies. I truly, truly would have not had any clue.

Q: Did you think that the kids on the on the Hill were significantly involved with drugs in the 1970s?

Lori: Significantly? No. I would say drinking as a drug, but not drug drugs.

Kathy: Significantly, I don't know. As a whole I would have to say no. I mean, there were pockets, but not significantly, no.

Q: Are you glad that your parents chose the Hill to raise their family?

Dave: Yeah!. Yeah, I often think about that. I think about the safety of the Hill and the ease that we could get around and not worry about things. We didn't have to worry about gangs coming in and we had, you know, no robberies, no murders that I can remember. I remember there was one break-in back at the Neff house here, and that was a shock that anyone would even think of breaking in anyplace. But, I, we used to leave the door open. That's how safe it was. Never locked the doors.

Pete, Kathy: Yes.

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Lori: Yes, unless they would have lived in the south where it was warm. (Laughs.) I have good memories, yes.

Q: Would you or are you raising your family on the Hill?

Dave: No. I'm too removed from the Hill. It is no longer really my place. To come back, I don't think I would. Nothing against the Hill, I've just moved on, that's all.

Pete: Yes, obviously.

Lori: No and no.

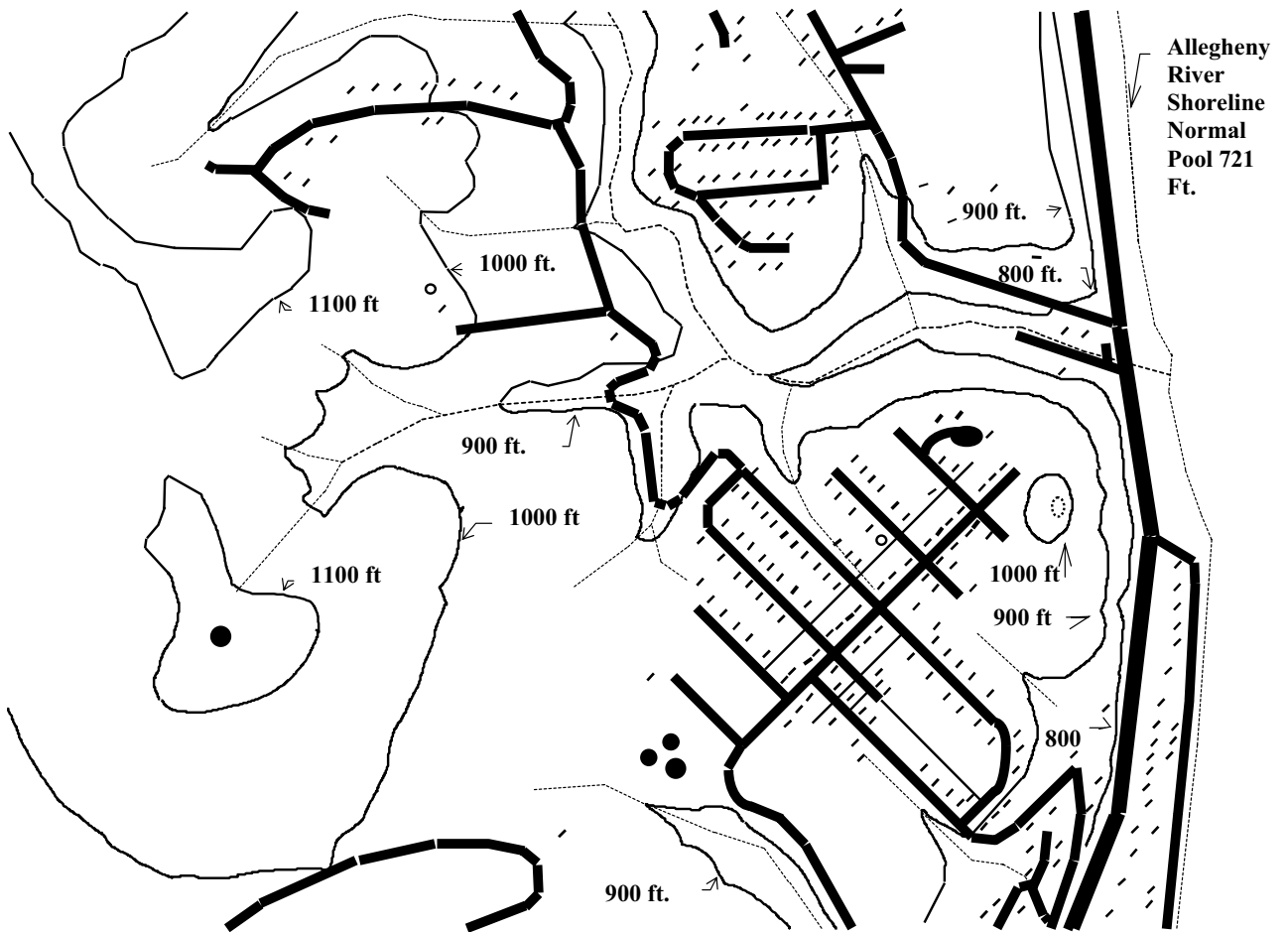
Kathy: No. No, I don't think I would in today's day and age.

## Sketch of the 1965 Topographical Map of the Montrose Hill Area

The sketch presented below shows the area around Montrose Hill prior to the construction of the Allegheny Valley Expressway.

The original path of Powers Run, its five tributaries in the area, the road that ran north through the woods from the end of Clifford, Watson without houses at the north-west end, the old ball field site south-west of Livingston without houses and the undeveloped area where Riverwatch is now located are all shown.

Most evident from this map is how much more open wooded lands were in direct proximity to the house and kids of Montrose Hill in 1965 than is the case today {2012}.





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These interviews were all conducted from March through September of 1998, other particulars as follows:

Subject	Born or Moved to Hill	Ten Years Old	Grad. High Sch.
Dan	Sept 1957 (moved to Hill)	1958	June 1966
Ken	Sept 1957 (moved to Hill)	1961	June 1970
Mary	Sept 1957 (moved to Hill)	1966	June 1974
Kathy	Sept 1957 (birth date)	1967	June 1976
Bill	March 1959 (birth date)	1969	June 1978
Mark	Nov 1960 (birth date)	1970	June 1978
Dee	July 1963 (birth date)	1973	Jan 1981
Laura	Sept 1965 (birth date)	1975	Jan 1984
Janet	Jan 1967 (birth date)	1977	June 1985

Editor's notes are shown in {brackets}, probable missing words, due to difficulties hearing the tape recording, are filled in in (parenthesis).

Q: Were you born on the Hill?

Dan: Ken , Mary and I were born before we moved to the Hill, Kathy as we were moving in and Bill, Mark, Dee, Laura and Janet while we lived on the Hill. We moved to Lawrence Avenue in September of 1957.

Q: Did your parents own or rent their house?

Dan: Owned it. Dad had spent 3 or 4 years building the house.

Q: Who were the **people that you most remember** when you moved in or started to play outside?

Dan: Mrs. Bauer came over when we first moved in. She noticed my mother hanging wash on the line. When she found out we had 4 kids and didn't have a drier she was shocked.

Ken: I think the Diethrich's because they were the closest. Pat Joyce, he always seemed to be right there because we were next door neighbors. I think they made the first impression on me because they were so close and they were the ones that I remember seeing initially. And it sort of spanned out to the Cahills and Biers and so forth and then over to Clifford Avenue. I seem to have had a lot of friends over there, Klines, Kunkles and Udanuses and so forth. Neilson Avenue was too far away when I was that young, it was like the other side of the world, so they don't stick in my mind until we were in 2nd grade or so, until we ventured that far.

Mary: Diethrichs, Lists, HARRISES, Rapps.

Bill: Probably Bill Haburcek. I didn't meet anybody else for the first few years. Probably just Bill Haburcek .

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Mark: Bill Haburcek, John Diethrich, Joe Harris, and several hundred kids named Vogel.

Dee: Verdebers, Diethrichs, Combs.

Laura: Diane Shaffer, Bridget Verderber, the two Diethrichs. Larry Panyon, Brian Swatzlander, that's about it for up there.

Janet: I remember Bridget Verderber and her mother.

Q: What do you most recall about them?

Mary: They all had a bunch of kids (laughs). Except for HARRISES.

Bill: He {Bill Haburcek} had everything. He did. His parents gave him everything. He had all the neatest toys and he was an only child, he got everything.

Mark: Any one of the Vogels could hit you with a rock from 500 yards. Hab {Bill Haburcek} always thought he was Ray Schaffer's deputy since he gave him a real live police badge. He would always get mad when we made fun of his police powers.

Q: Did you have any **relatives** on the Hill then?

Dan: Paul and Mim Rice. Bob Rice.

Q: Who were your near neighbors?

Dan: Reeds on the right. That was all. The lot across the street was empty, the alley was on the left. Behind us was nothing but woods for several years.

Q: Were there any **bullies** in the neighborhood?

Dan: Not that I recall from the Hill.

Ken: Oh, yeah (laughs). Reed White, who I thought would probably end up in jail but turned out to be one of the nicest kids. Reed was a bully in the sense that he always wanted to fight or wrestle, and he was big. But, he never hurt anybody, he just liked to clown around and I don't know, maybe prove that he was bigger. Other bullies... Doug Van Horn was for a little bit, but he wasn't too bad. I think Reed White was the one that most sticks in my mind. He seemed to be the one that was always trying to push someone around or do something or get something started and as soon as you got to know the kid he was your best friend and never hurt anybody.

Mary: No.

Kathy: Yeah, but I can't think of any. There had to have been. Aren't there always?

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Bill: Yeah. Mike McKay was a big bully.

Mark: David Thompson. He used to visit the Parris family during the summers. He was about five years older than me, but I still recall challenging him to a few fights. I don't think I won any, but I showed him who was boss.

Dee: None that I knew of. Maybe the older kids were bullies, but none of my gang was bullies.

Laura: Brian Swartzlander.

Janet: Other than my sister, Laura? (Laughs) No.

**Q:** Were there any other **problems**?

Dan: No, I don't recall any.

Ken: Dogs, I hated the dogs on Montrose Hill, especially when I had my first paper route. I think I was 11. Mom was upset because I asked Joe from Joe's paper store down here in Blawnox if I could have the route down at the bottom of the Hill and it was a whole 11 houses, like where Kathy used to live down there when she was married to Henry and I had that whole street, Sasinoskis and so forth, and I'd walk down there, and I think I was 11 when I did it and everybody down there had a damned dog that would chase you and I was half scared to deliver papers half of the time. I'd be sneaking around because Gillians were the worst, seems like they had a animal shelter there at the time. And all their dogs were mean, that was the one thing that bothered me. (What) I was scared of at that age was the dogs coming after me and chasing me and stuff. It seemed like I would spend half my time up in the trees waiting for the owners to come out and get them.

Mary: Some of the boys being rotten. Jimmy Diethrich being a rotten kid (laughs). On this street, when we were real little.

Kathy: No.

Bill: No, I fought with everybody.

Mark: At ten years old most problems focused on not getting enough money to buy something from the ice cream truck.

Dee: No. Just Bill and his gang, you know, they were always rowdy and stuff like that.

Laura: Hunt-uh. Not in my age group.

Janet: Just the dog. That dog that was in a cage, Mac. And Bridget's dog, King, that bit Laura. I was always afraid that the dogs would get loose.

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Q: Was there anything that you could do on the **Hill that was special**, unusual or even unique for it's time?

Dan: Yes, everybody was related to everybody else, so you could go anywhere without fear. There were woods in all directions. The single twisting entry road made it isolated. There was no through traffic.

Ken: I can't think of anything off hand. We played baseball, played in the woods. I think the Workhouse was always sort of unique in a sense to me because, you know, coming from an area that sits right above the, you know, the river towns, and so forth where we basically had a wilderness and a farm out there that close to home and I thought that was always unique because some kids never even see a farm in their life. We really enjoyed the time up there that we spent and Marilyn Schmidt, who became a friend later in life. Her father Dad was the Superintendent up there and (we) would sneak on the horses once in a while and so forth, they would let us do that, but I think that was rather the most unique thing.

Mary: Unique? No, not that I know of. Nothing was unique. Everything was simple back then, not like today. I can't stand all this, have to go somewhere, have to do this. I can't enjoy life.

Bill: Probably going up the Workhouse.

Dee: Well, not actually on the Hill, but walking over to the orchards. That was pretty neat. Picking those berries and stuff like that.

Janet: Yeah, I think that you could just about walk into anyone's house and know them. And other neighborhoods weren't like that.

Q: Do you remember any ice cream or "**sweet treats**" vendors?

Dan: Yes, there were several, including one that got himself run off for cheating the kids.

Ken: Yeah, Goody Bar man. Which later I think was bought up by Good Humor, but the Goody Bar man would come around and I remember always asking Mom for money for that, or were using our paper route money for that and so forth and if we missed him we always knew we could go to Rapps house because the Goody Bar truck would be at Rapps because since they didn't have a car they were allowed to get something every night since they missed vacations and going places and so forth, that was the agreement their parents made with their kids, so if we missed the Goody Bar man, we knew we could run over (to) Rapps and catch them because they would be parked there right there in the alley at their house.

Mary: The Goody Bar man. He came around a lot. (Laughing) believe it or not we had to go up and take the coins from you {Dan}, or was it Ken, that saved the coins in the coin thing? (Laughs.) You'd ask where they disappeared to? The Goody Bar man got them (laughing). From Bill and me and Kathy. Did you know that? Well, I guess you do now. (Laughs.) Bill says, no problem, got them right here (laughingly).

Kathy: Yeah, the Goody Bar man.

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Bill: Oh, yeah. The Good Humor guy used to come. I know there was an old guy that came around with a Willy's Jeep. They called him the Candy Apple Man.

Mark: Yes. Goody-Bar man, later Good Humor. And there was the candy apple man in his pitiful puke-green truck

Dee: Oh, yeah. Yeah, the ice cream man was always coming around.

Laura: Uh-huh. The Good Humor guy coming.

Janet: The Goody-Bar man.

Q: Did you have a **curfew**?

Dan: I don't recall one.

Ken: I never remember a curfew. We may have had one, or Mom may have come out and called us in at times, but I remember being out after dark when I was probably 9 or 10 in the summertime. Even on school nights, I can remember being out playing release or tag down in Cahill's and List/Fentons yard and Diethrichs and so forth and she would just call us whenever it was time to come in, when she wanted us in. But, I don't remember ever having to be home at a certain time.

Mary: No, we really didn't. Just be in at dark time.

Kathy: Yeah. 10 o'clock. 12 o'clock until I was 18, (laughs).

Bill: When I was real young, yeah, and I got my ass kicked one time for coming home at 10:30. But, after that I broke the ice with them and there was never any curfew after that.

Mark: Yes. Before dark.

Dee: I'm sure I did. I guess we had to be in the yard when it got dark.

Laura: Quarter to nine whistle.

Janet: Nine o'clock.

Q: Did you go to **indoor theaters**? Where? How did you get there? Do you remember any specific movies or attractions?

Dan: The Embassy in Aspinwall when we were young. Later the Oaks or the original Cheswick single which became the Cheswick twin. A parent would drop us off. I recall "The Tangler" and "17 cartoons" at the Embassy. I recall seeing Dr. Zhivago with a blind date from Oakmont at Cheswick.

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Ken: Yeah, indoor theaters (that we) went to, you {Dan} took us. I guess I had to go with you and Greg, we'd meet Greg Burns {a cousin of the Nowaks from Aspinwall} down at the old Aspinwall theater. The Blawnox theater, I think, was closed before I was even old enough to go to it. I remember going to Cheswick. And I remember going to E's Liberty {East Liberty in Pittsburghese}, which sounds strange now a days, but I remember Dad dropping me, you and Greg off to see Ben Hur in E's Liberty by ourselves whenever we were little kids. And then coming back and getting us later, after the show. Now you'd would have to arm some one and issue them a bullet proof vest if you were going to drop them off in E's Liberty.

Mary: Not when I was real little. Not 'til I was a teenager.

Kathy: Yeah. We went up to Cheswick. Mum or one of the other mothers would take us.

Bill: Yep. Oakmont, Downtown, Cheswick. Somebody's parents would ride us. That was in our teens.

Mark: Very rarely to go see a movie in Cheswick. "Yours, Mine, and Ours" with Henry Fonda and Lucile Ball.

Dee: I remember Mum taking us downtown, I think to see "Jaws" when that came out. We went to see "Grease". That's about it. We didn't go all the time.

Laura: I don't recall going. I don't remember going to any.

Janet: Yeah, Cheswick. Mum drove us or one of the neighbors would drive us, the neighbor's Mums. I remember going to see "Grease", with Mum and Dee and some of Dee's friends. I think that's the only one I can remember by name. Oh, and the scary ones, "Halloween" and "Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>".

**Q:** Did your family go to **drive-in theaters**? Where? Do you remember any specific movies?

Dan: I recall two. One was the Harmar on the land that the Bob Evans and the Route 28 Interchange now occupy. I seem to recall some Dean Martin / Jerry Lewis movies there. They must have been reruns since Martin and Lewis broke up before we got to the Hill. The other drive-in was Silver Lake off of Washington Blvd. You drove under one of the stone arch railroad bridges and into a little valley.

Ken: Yeah, I think I can remember going to Harmarville and I remember going to another place after Harmarville closed, but I can't remember what it was. I think it was the one up in New Kensington. But, I can remember going to Harmarville as a very young kid with Dad and Mom and the rest of us and watching movies there.

Yeah, there was one, Bob Hope and Bing Crosby, one of their travel movies. "Call Me Bwana", I think was the name of it where they were playing golfing over in Africa, they were on Safari and Bing Crosby comes in and cuts in on Bob Hope, (he was) playing golf. And I think Arnold Palmer was in it, made a cameo appearance in that, too. The other one I remember, I've never seen it since, I've looked for it, was "Zulu". There was some English or Dutch or whatever military men who were surrounded by about a million Zulu warriors and so forth, and that's the only other, that's the only two I remember actually seeing at the drive-in.

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Mary: Yeah, I remember going to a drive-in up by Harmarville. No, I can't remember the movies. I just remember going up there and they had swings that we played on before the movie.

Kathy: We did once in a while didn't we? A few Monday nights, I know, but it's real vague in my mind. Didn't we, a few times, the whole family go to drive-ins? I remember Harmar.

Bill: I don't remember us going to any drive-ins.

Mark: Once we all went with Mum and Dad to see "Snow White" and two other movies. I fell asleep early.

Dee: Yeah, we did. Gateway, is that what it's called? Up in New Ken? That's about the only one. Now it's closed down, too. No. {Don't remember any specific movies.}

Laura: I do remember a drive-in. And I do believe it was on, up off of Oakmont. No. {Don't remember any specific movies.}

Janet: Yeah, I don't think I went with the family, I think I mostly went with the neighbors. They would go a couple times in the summer, Verderbers. Yeah, we saw "Orca, the Killer Whale", (laughs), I remember because my tooth started bleeding in the car.

**Q: . Did you remember any food items delivered to the house?**

Dan: I recall milk, bread and eggs being delivered to the house. I think the egg lady was a relative of Mrs. Sullivan, maybe her sister. The milkman that I remember was either Meadow Gold or Menzie.

{Mrs. Sullivan, born Mercedes Martha Giel to Robert Thomas Giel and Mary Marcella Laretta Claus, owned the small grocery store in the 500 block of Freeport Road in Blawnox during the 1960s. Mercedes had eight brothers and five sisters. The sisters were Ruth, Helen, Mary Jane, Patricia Lynn and Katheryn Loretta. Katheryn was married to Regis Murphy. One of these women was the "egg lady".}

Ken: The egg lady! She's the one I remember the most. She was a good friend with Rapps. I remember her being over there all the time. She'd bring eggs, and dairy products, and so forth, garden vegetables. I think she was from out, somewhere on Middle Road or somewhere out in Hampton, or what ever. But, I remember the milk boxes. I remember when the milk used to be delivered in glass bottles and I remember it freezing once or twice and breaking the bottles. But, those were the only two things that I remember coming to the home.

Mary: Yeah, I remember the egg lady. And the milk man. That's about it.

Kathy: Eggs and milk and juice and vegetables.

Bill: No, Dad would deliver pizzas once in a while. He'd be in a mood to bring home a pizza and he'd stop and get a couple pizzas and bring them home, but, I don't remember it being delivered.

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Mark: Milk from Menzie Dairy, eggs from the egg lady.

Dee: I remember the lady that brought the milk {eggs?}. Is she the same one that we got the chickens from? I think.

Laura: Um, milk.

Janet: Just the milk. Milk and the juice from the Turner guy.

Q: Did you as a child look forward to any of these deliveries in particular?

Dan: I don't recall being very excited. I didn't care much for eggs, and took bread and milk for granted.

Ken: Not that I can remember. I guess I was more interested in the Goody Bar man.

Mary: Milk man, we loved to get chocolate milk, when Mum bought it. Every once in a while she'd get us chocolate milk (laughing).

Kathy: Oh, yeah. We liked the "egg lady".

Mark: No.

Dee: I'm sure I did. It's hard to remember. But, we did get chocolate milk. I always looked forward to that.

Laura: Uh-hum. It was just exciting. You got all excited, jumped up and down and said, "The milk is here!". Yeah. Chocolate milk (laughs).

Janet: No. Nothing special? Hunt-uh

Q: Did your family have a **vegetable garden**?

Dan Kathy, Dee, Laura, Janet:: Yes.

Ken: I don't remember any garden until I was basically grown up. Then I remember Dad always had his tomato plants. But other than that I never remembered a vegetable garden.

Mary: We didn't really grow that much, did we. I don't remember. Tomatoes, maybe. That's about it.

Bill: Yeah, you know that. Dad always had a garden. He always grew the Polish vegetables.

Q: Did things grow well?

Dan: I thought so.



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Kathy, Janet: Yeah.

Bill: He'd {Bill's father} bitch about it all the time but I suppose it did. He always got tomatoes and his favorite, kohlrabis.

Dee: What I remember, yeah, it did alright.

Laura: Yes, from what I recall.

Q: What in particular?

Dan: Mostly tomatoes, they were the main item of interest. Radishes grew well. Leaf lettuce grew fair. Cabbage sometimes. Carrots poorly.

Kathy, Mark, Dee, Laura, Janet: Tomatoes.

Q: Did you help with the garden?

Dan: I think I did most of the work, particularly from 7th grade on.

Kathy Dee, Laura, Janet: No.

Bill: Sometimes. Yeah, I helped him out. I watered it for him, and helped him pull weeds.

Mark: I sometimes picked weeds for Dad.

Q: Where did your parents take you if you needed to see a **doctor**?

Dan: Kinsel, Cramer and Teagle in Aspinwall. Also known as Larry, Curley and Moe.

Ken: The Three Stooges- Kinsel, Cramer and Teagle. (Laughs) I don't know really who came up with that phrase, but they were always known as the Three Stooges, I don't know how well they were in medicine, but you'd go into Cramer, and I knew his son because I went to school with his son, Cramer would be sitting there with a cigarette hanging out one side of his mouth while he's lecturing you on something, how bad it is for you. They were the three I remember. Kinsel was the school doctor, too.

Mary: Doctor Kinsel, Cramer and Teagle. The Three Stooges (laughing). Hey, I didn't name them that (laughing).

Kathy: Aspinwall. I can't think of their names. (It's) right on the tip of my tongue. Cramer! Doctor Cramer, Kinsel and Teagle! I knew it would come to me!

Bill: Down in As'inwall. I don't remember the name of the office.

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Mark: The three Stooges in Aspinwall.

Dee: Pshew! I guess in Aspinwall. I don't know. Yeah, it was in Aspinwall, yeah, definitely.

Laura: Here? I don't ever remember going to a doctor when I was little.

Janet: Aspinwall, down at the medical building. I don't remember how old I was.

Q: What was the **closest hospital**?

Dan: Pittsburgh Hospital on Washington Blvd.

Kathy: St. Margaret's, wasn't it?

Q: Who was your **dentist**? Where was his/her office?

Dan: Dr. Hilger. On Freeport Road across from Oakhill Manor. I still go to him.

Ken: I went to a few of them. Dr. Ambrose, I remember him. He was probably the first one I went to. And then we went to Hilger. And then I went to another guy down in Aspinwall when I was in my teens, and he was pretty old. I can't remember his name right now. But, I think Ambrose was the one that sticks the most in my mind because I remember Mom saying that he was a dentist back when Uncle Howard was a kid and left a needle in his mouth and it's still in there 'till this day. {Howard Rice was born in March of 1929. If he was a "kid" at say 12 years old, Dr. Ambrose would have been practicing on him in 1941 or so.}

Kathy: Hilger. We were just talking about that the other day.

Mary: Dr. Hilger. He still practices. I don't go to him, though, I think he's a little too old (laughing).

Bill: I used to go to Hilger at the dentist and then Nauhaus.

Mark: Nauhause. He was a lawyer's dream, but his price was right. Mom said sometimes he just never even sent a bill. Probably felt bad about the torture he was inflicting.

Dee: He's down there by Pep's. What's his name? He's still there. I'm not sure.

Laura: I believe it was Hilger.

Janet: Dr. Hilger.

Q: Did you or your family **swim**? Where?

Dan: I recall swimming at Hillcrest Country Club and the Pittsburgh Field Club when Dad worked at those. We also swam at North Park as part of a summer program and when the Little

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League had it's picnic there. There was also a Summer swim program at Fox Chapel High. That one was best since we were older and there was lots of girls there.

Ken: Yeah, I vaguely remember going to the Willows in Oakmont before it closed. I don't know how many times we were there, but I only vaguely remember going to there. And then we went to Highland Park to swim. And then we went to North Park. I think North Park was the one we went to the most. (There was) always ice cold water. But, those were the three places that I remember swimming.

Mary: We went swimming every Monday at the Field Club. (Because) Dad worked there and that was his day off and the Club was closed, so we went up there.

Bill: Yeah, we swam up at the Field Club. I remember going to North Park with Dad a couple of times.

Kathy, Mark, Dee, Laura, Janet: Yes. At the Field Club on Mondays

**Q: Hunt or fish?**

Dan: Hunting, no. Fishing, occasionally at my grandparents on First Street in Blawnox, particularly when my Uncle Joe was there. He was a good fisherman.

Ken: No one hunted as far as I know. Bill fished, I fished. I don't know if any one else did or not. I remember taking Danny {his nephew} fishing, up Cooper's lake. Janet and Danny and, me and Kathleen took them up one time. I can't think of anyone else that really, I don't think Mark did or you {Dan} did. I don't think anybody hunted, other than Bill. I hunted for about 5 years, then I quit. But, no, I don't think we were a big weapons family.

Mary: Hunt or fish? No, not when we were younger.

Kathy, Dee, Laura: No.

Bill: Fish. Down at Grandma's, down the river. With a lot of adult supervision. Grandma had this fear of the river that if you tipped your toe in there some whirlpool was gonna come up and suck you down and never be seen again. They scared us to death about the river.

Janet: We would fish every once in a while, we would go with Ken camping up to Cooper's Lake. Lori Shearer would take us down to Squaw Valley and we'd fish down there. I don't think, no, nobody hunted.

**Q: Did your family travel in the car for recreation?**

Dan: Not the whole family, there wasn't enough room in any one car.

Ken: I can't remember doing that, I can only remember going to someone's house, like Aunt Leona's, or Aunt Liz's or somewhere like that where we were all packed into the car. Recreation,

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no, I think most of our recreation took place on the Hill with our friends as make up games, I mean pick up games for baseball or football or whatever we were playing at the time.

Mary: No, there was too many of us (laughs).

Kathy: Yeah, every Monday. My Dad took his little rides. (Laughingly) Our family rides.

Bill: I remember going to Uncle Jack's in Columbus with, I think, you {Dan}, Grandma, Grandpap, Dad. We left here about 5 o'clock in the morning and stopped to eat somewhere and Grandma wouldn't order nothing because they wanted a dollar ninety-five for a lunch. She thought it was way too much money.

Dee: We went to Storybook Forrest the one time.

Laura: Yes. I remember goint to feed the fish in the Pymatuning area and I remember a trip to, I believe it was Geagua Lake or Sea World, one of them, that everyone went to.

Janet: Yes. We would go on Sunday drives. Just drive, I don't know where we were going, I don't think there was any point to it, other than to take a Sunday drive.

Q: What chores do you remember doing?

Dan: Running the sweeper, doing dishes.

Ken: Taking out the garbage (and complaining about it). Cutting the grass.

Mary: Clean one room every Saturday.

Kathy: Cleaning house.

Bill: Cutting hedges, grass raking.

Mark: Cutting grass. Trimming the hedges and getting poison ivy.

Dee: Cleaning the bathroom. That was my job. I had to clean the bathroom.

Laura: I remember we had to clean every weekend, the whole house, baseboards and all. But I don't think we had particular chores, I think we all worked together house, the girls.

Janet: Cleaning the dining room.

Q: Did you receive an **allowance**? What did you do with it?

Dan: One or twice my Dad decided that we, and I think it was only Ken and I at the time, should have some spending money. He gave us both a quarter or 50 cents, but it didn't continue. The next pay brought too many bills and the "tradition" stopped. I recall being puzzled as to why he

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thought we needed the money. There was no place to spend it on the Hill. You didn't need money to play baseball or army. I probably put it in my bank.

Ken: No, I don't ever remember ever receiving an allowance, because I know I started making money when I was about 11, a paper route and then another paper route. Then caddying and then working. I don't think there was such a thing as an allowance. I don't even remember any of my friends saying that they had an allowance. It was either get a job and make money, or your not going to have it.

Mary: No. We had chores to do but no allowance.

Kathy, Dee, Laura: No.

Bill: Sporadically. They'd tell you if you did this or did that you would get an allowance. That would last about a week.

Mark: At times we went through that allowance thing, but it usually did not last very long.

Janet: Yes. I didn't receive it until I was probably in junior high or high school so I would use it for, like in junior high I used to go to the movies or go skating. In high school I used it, you know, for the same thing or to buy clothes.

**Q:** Did you do anything on the Hill to **earn extra money**? What did you do with it?

Dan: I delivered the Pittsburgh Press in the afternoon and the Herald for a while. That earned me about 2 or 3 dollars. I also cut grass for Rosewells, Shetleys and Mrs. Van Horn. Standard pay was 2 or 3 dollars per lawn. I put most of that money away for college.

Ken: Bought junk mostly, like any kid. Wasted it on baseball cards, gum, candy, all that sort of thing. That's about all I can remember.

Mary: No.

Kathy: Babysit. Bought cigarettes (laughing). Basically, just blew it.

Bill: Yeah. I shoveled snow for people in the winter. I cut some grass up here, I cut some people's grass. Spent it on junk food.

Mark: Paper routes, snow shoveling, cutting grass. Spent it real fast, usually.

Dee: Babysat. Probably bought clothes.

Laura: Newspapers. I don't know, must have spent it (laughs).

Janet: The only thing I did on the Hill was, I helped Lori with her book keeping service.

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Q: Did you have an after school or **Summer job**? Where? Doing what? Did you enjoy it? What did you use the money for?

Dan: I briefly tried caddying at Oakmont and the Field Club. Hated it. The caddymasters were total barbarians. I never made any money doing it, either.

I worked on the course at the Pittsburgh Field Club from the Summer between my Junior and Senior years of high school until my Sophomore year of college. I raked traps, cut greens and cut rough mostly. I enjoyed it as long as the members wives were not around.

I worked at PPG's Research Center during my last 2 Summers in collage. It was OK. Boring, but there were a few good looking young girls there.

All of the money from the Field Club and PPG went to pay my school tuition, school expenses and transportation, specifically my 1956 Buick Special.

Ken: After school? My first job was down at Uncle Ralph's, down at what is now commonly refereed to as the Waterworks. Then it was the Pirate's Cove after that, I worked at both places, but it was only for a Summer washing dishes. Then from there, I went to the Field Club, I think 10th 11th and 12th grade. I worked up there, either in the kitchen at first, then over at the pool and then with Uncle Paul out on the golf course. And that was usually every Summer and year round, after school I'd work too.

I enjoyed it more than school, because I wasn't too much into school at the time. So, I enjoyed making the money and having money in my pocket.

I remember Dad complimenting me on how well I was saving money whenever I was in 11th grade. And come 12th grade, as soon as I graduated, I bought a car with the money.

Mary: When I was sixteen I worked at the zoo. The other times, I baby sat. Like, you know, during the school year for people up here, Wadsworth. I was able to buy clothes with my money.

Kathy: Yeah, at the Pittsburgh Field Club. Worked at the swimming Pool. Yes. {Enjoyed it.}

At the Zoo. Worked in one of the concession stands. Did I enjoy it? No.

I have no idea, I don't remember. {What I did with the money.}

Bill: Summer job, I worked up the Field Club caddying, I hated it, Dad made me go, he would make me leave with him early in the morning and I'd hide up there 'til I didn't get out and then go home. Then later on when I got a little bit older, I made some money doing it.

I started working at the Holiday Inn when I was 14 and I stayed there.

Dad got me caddying probably when I was about 12.

I spent it on school clothes and junk. I never saved money.

Mark: Yes, lots of jobs. Pittsburgh Zoo, caddying at Fox Chapel and later at the Field Club. Holiday Inn during jr. high and some high school. Later, I worked for Ken doing landscaping. Used the money mostly for clothes, school stuff, social things.

Dee: Yeah. Well, that's when I was 16, though, at the Simplicity Patterns stacking patterns.

No. {Didn't like it.} I bought clothes.

Laura: When I was 14, I believe, I worked at Pep's. That was my first job. (I) worked the counter. Uh-huh, yeah. {enjoyed it} I believe I saved a lot of it. I wasn't much on spending money.

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Janet: In high school I did. I had a job at two different times. One at Jan Drake's, which was the restaurant in Fox Chapel that Lori's mum owned. And I also worked at King's for a while. I wasn't too fond that I had to work, but... Mostly clothes and, I think, books for school.

Q: I want you to imagine yourself **in your house**, 10 or so years old, or 5 years after you moved in. It is a warm Summer afternoon. There is a nice breeze blowing. What are you doing?

Dan: Reading some literature on Air Force jets that just came in the mail.

Ken: I don't know, I was never in the house. I can't remember much about being in the house. I remember Mom always saying, "Where are you going, it's 20 below outside", and I'd still be going outside to play with somebody. In the house it seemed like an oasis to get something to eat and something to drink and someplace to sleep. I can't remember having a lot of hobbies inside the house or doing anything. I do remember playing with the chemistry set about that time and I guess I mixed some acids and bases together and had a little explosion upstairs (laughs), which scared Mom but, nothing developed out of it. It extinguished itself, basically. Um, baseball card collections. Watching TV. If I was in the house I was usually in front of the TV. Watching something.

Mary: We didn't stay in the house. We were outside, mostly. (Mum would say), "Time to go out and play, be back for lunch", (laughs).

Kathy: Probably watching TV, my John Wayne movies.

Bill: I ain't in the house. Not on a Summer afternoon when it's warm.

Mark: Taking a nap.

Dee: If it's in Summer? I was about 13, 14, I guess me and my girl friends would sit here and watch "Days of Our Lives" and all the other soaps (laughs).

Laura: Probably watching TV.

Janet: Sitting in the living room either playing a game or watching television.

Q: If I were to ask you to walk out of your house, which door would you be most likely to use?

Dan: Almost certainly the alley side kitchen door.

Ken: Oh, the alley door. I don't even think the front door opened for years. Well, I know there was no porch on it for years, but even after that I don't know how much we actually used it, I still side door all the time.

Mary, Kathy, Bill, Mark, Dee, Laura, Janet: The side (kitchen) door.

Q: If I ask you to walk over to your front door and step out, what do you see?

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Dan: A lawn with no trees or shrubs. In fact, very little grass. A road that was tarred dirt when we first moved in and then tar and chips for a number of years after that. An empty lot across the street with 8 boys in it playing ball with a hard rubber ball. ( A real baseball was forbidden after several incidents where they bounced off Diethrich's and our windows.)

Ken: A big, empty lot we used for golfing and a baseball field and so forth. I still have a hard time picturing Ron and Susie's house there. I remember just looking straight across to Rapps all the time, and that lot, which was like our own personal playground for the kids on the street.

Mary: I'd see a, it was a concrete porch then, yeah. No trees in the front. Just plain, nothing in the front yard. Empty lot across the street.

Bill: A cement block and a dirt pile. No slab on top. Maybe not 10, but somewhere around there. I remember playing on that with just the dirt filled in. And no cement slab on top of it.

Kathy, Dee, Laura: It used to be an empty lot.

Q: Are there any kids around? If so, who in particular do you see?

Dan: Always. Diethrichs, Dolhis, Lists, Fentons, Cahills, Harrises, Biers, Nowaks.

Ken: Always. The place was, you could not walk for more than maybe 30 seconds without running into a kid when you lived on the Hill. Or, if there wasn't anybody you would just go knock on the door and sooner or later you had someone to play with.

Mary: Yeah, there were kids that usually played in the lot, played ball in the lot.

Kathy: Oh, God. Diethrichs, Dolhis, who was always over there? Everyone was always over there, Cahills, Rices, Van Horns, you name it, they were all over there playing cars and playing everything over in the empty lot. And in the Winter, over there sled riding and stuff.

Dee: Yeah, there was always kids. Walking through the allies and through the yards and everything. Jimmy Diethrich. Bobby Diethrich. Bridgit, Verdeber.

Laura: Yeah, there was always kids running around.

Q: Is the neighborhood noisy? What kind of sounds do you hear?

Dan: Mostly kids. Yelling and laughing. Maybe a lawn mower or two. Possibly the loud roar of an engine coming from the Neff's. Most likely a Harley 74.

Ken: I don't remember it as being noisy. I remember it as being , you know, background noise, always hearing something in the background. There was always someone somewhere. (You) could hear something echoing down from the field or, you know, from the top street or from one of the neighbor's yard. It wasn't, you know, obnoxious noisy.



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Mary: No, it wasn't noisy. You knew people lived here and there were kids, lots of kids.

Kathy: Yeah, I guess so (laughs). Screaming and yelling and carrying on. Kids noise.

Bill: Yeah, mostly us (laughs).

Mark: Its quiet until you get near the ball field.

Dee: No. I mean, you could hear kids and that, but it wasn't noisy. Just kids playing.

Laura: Uh-huh. Kids and sometimes you could hear the highway over the hill.

Janet: No.

Q: Do you recall any particular smells such as flowers, smoke, fumes, cooking?

Dan: Just Mom's cooking. Spaghetti sauce.

Ken, Mary, Kathy, Dee: No.

Bill: It always smelled like smoke in the house. Dad was a chain smoker.

Mark: Broccoli cooking in the kitchen.

Laura: Probably smoke and food.

Janet: Yeah, I remember the Lilacs always. And rotten pears from Verderber's pear tree.

Q: Was there much traffic?

Dan: Very little. For some reason I can still see Mr. Dolhi in his Oldsmobile coming up the street.

Ken: Just on the top street it seemed, you now, you just had to watch when you were up there but everybody was careful and everybody looked out for the kids. I mean if you were on the top street they looked, they were expecting someone to run out from between a car or whatever and dart across the road. Traffic didn't seem to bother us at all.

Mary: No, hardly any back then. We were able to play ball on the roads without any problem.

Kathy, Dee, Laura, Janet: No.

Q: If you now get an urge to take a walk, which direction will you head? Why?

Dan: In the early years, down the street. Later, up at the corner of Central and Clifford where the mail box was. In both cases, to look for friends that were out.

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Ken: Well, I don't know, ten years old, probably down the street because I knew I was either going to run into Diethrichs, Lists, Fentons, whoever and if nothing developed from there, then it would be over to the ball field. The old ball field, the one over by the Sunoco plant.

Mary: Probably up the ball field. Up the street and up to the ball field. That's where all the kids loafed.

Kathy: Up the street and across the "top" street, that's where you went.

Bill: Always up the street. To see what was going on on the top street. Everybody congregated up there.

Mark: To the field. That is where all the action is.

Dee: Up across the top street. Or up to the Field. Because there's a chance of seeing people. It's a nice walk.

Laura: Probably to the field. Just because there's a lot of people around.

Janet: I would head up towards the ball park to see if there are other people up there.

Q: Who are you most likely to meet? Are you eager to see them? What do you talk about?

Dan: Down the street was Tom Cahill or Dave Dolhi.

Later, up on the "top" street was Dave, Larry or Timber Neff, Jeff Farmerie, Ken McKee, Bob Bainbridge. Farmarie and McKee were the only two that didn't get along. They would come to blows in a matter of minutes. Dave and I mixed with everyone.

I was eager to see anyone who was out. We talked about girls mostly, then any number of topics including sports {at that time almost exclusively the Pirates}, sex, TV { I recall a lot of rehashing of last night's Steve Allen Show or some old movie, or a comic routine such as the Smother's Brothers}, sex, school {usually involving some female student or teacher there}, what we wanted to do next {usually involving how we could meet or just see some girls}, telling jokes, discussing music, and then there was just the discussions just about sex.

Mary: My friends. Kathy {Cregan} and Lori {Van Horn}.

What we were gonna do. Wanna play ball, kick soccer, release, whatever.

Kathy: Oh, Susie {Rice}, Kathy Day {Cregan}, all of them.

Yeah. Because they were my friends.

Sex. Sex drugs and alcohol (laughs).

Bill: At 10 years old? I don't know. Probably a cousin. Chuckie {Rice}.

Dee: I don't know, there's a whole bunch of people. All my friends. Jimmy and Johnny, Rice. Timmy Wacter, and then all the girls, Debby Shaffer, Debby Wacter, Nancy. There was a whole bunch of us.

What else? The girls talked about boys and, I don't know what the boys talked about, who can figure them out yet? (Laughs)

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Laura: Diane Shaffer.

I don't know. Boys and school and (laughs), that's about it.

Janet: Debby and Donna Wadsworth, Bridget, you know, all the kids that hang out there.  
School, boys.

Q: If you lived on the Hill in the 1950s, did you worry about the **atomic bomb**? Did your family have a fallout shelter?

Dan: No and no.

Q: Did you worry about **Communists**?

Dan: No. I just had confidence that the United States would prevail.

Q: Did you think that the kids on the on the Hill were significantly involved with **drugs** in the 1950s?

Dan: No, not at all in the 50s.

Q: Did you think that the kids on the on the Hill were significantly involved with drugs in the 1960s?

Dan: We were warned the we were to be careful when we went to high school because there were drugs there. I never saw any indication of drugs at the high school or on the Hill in the 60s. I find it hard to believe it was on the Hill and I would have had absolutely no knowledge of it. There was no talk of drugs. Alcohol, yes. Drugs, no.

Ken: In the sixties, no, not at all.

Mary: No.

Q: Did you think that the kids on the on the Hill were significantly involved with drugs in the 1970s?

Ken: In the seventies, not significantly, I mean, I don't think there was anybody up there in my age group or beyond that didn't try to see what marijuana was about, but I didn't think anything ever progressed past that. No one that I know of or can remember in my age group in the seventies, that's when we were in junior high and high school, I can never remember anybody even talking about trying something else or doing something else. Sneaking beers maybe, um, lighting up a joint or something, but that was about it, there was, never heard of anything like cocaine or heroin or anything like, no one even had the intention of even thinking about it, I think.

Mary: Some did it, but there were very few up here that did it. At least the group I hung around.

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Kathy: It was bigger in the 70s when I was growing up. We were more into it than yunz guys were. Ken('s group) was, but not as much and not, like, variety. I think our group was the worst. And I think it's faded off since even then.

Bill: Definitely.

Mark: I don't remember. Everything seem so hazy.

Dee: I know Kathy's gang and them smoked dope. (Laughs.). And I know my gang did, too, a lot of them.

Q: Did you think that the kids on the on the Hill were significantly involved with drugs in the 1980s?

Laura: Eighties, it was when I was finding out some of them were doing, you know, marajuana and starting to drink and smoke.

Janet: No, not at all.

Q: Are you glad that your parents chose the Hill to raise their family?

Dan: Absolutely.

Ken: Yeah, I think it was the best place in the world to grow up, in fact, it sort of reminds me of where I live now in a sense, because of what the Hill was like when we were very young before they put in the houses where Haburcheks live and the ones over by the ball field because you (were) just surrounded by woods and you had something to do all the time. If it wasn't on a baseball field it was on a bicycle or in the woods, there was non stop from morning 'till night.

Mary: Definitely.

Kathy, Mark, Laura, Janet: Yes.

Bill: Yeah, it was a great place to grow up.

Dee: Definitely. That's why I'm back (laughs). It's a great place. The kids can go anywhere and you don't have to worry about them.

Q: Would you or are you raising your family on the Hill?

Dan: We tried to buy a house on the Hill twice. It didn't work out.

Ken: Would I? No I'm not at the time, would I? It wouldn't be my first choice now. I mean, I've already grown up there, the landscape's so different from when I grew up there. You now,

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not having the workhouse farm anymore, not having as much woods. It probably wouldn't be one of my first 3 or 4 choices although it definitely would not be counted out.

Mary: That's why I picked it here to live with my kids. But it's still not like when we were kids. I get paranoid when my kids are out past dark (laughs). I'm getting a little more relaxed, because, Sarah never hung around on the Hill with her friends, they always wanted to go somewhere or, you know, to someone's house. And I didn't like that, I said you have to be in whenever it gets dark. Where with Shelly, I'm noticing with her group of kids, they stay on this Hill now, they play release and that every night up here. It's like the way it was when we were kids. They're starting to, you know, look over there now, there's a bunch of kids playing ball like on Clifford.

Kathy: Yeah.

Bill: Would I? Yes and no. Give me a farm out in Butler or somewhere and I'll be happy.

Mark: Only in spirit.

Laura: Yeah. If I could afford it (laughs).

Janet: I used to think I would, but, I don't think so now.