

Marshall University

Marshall Digital Scholar

0064: Marshall University Oral History
Collection

Digitized Manuscript Collections

1974

Oral History Interview: Pauline McGraw Blatt

Pauline McGraw Blatt

Follow this and additional works at: https://mds.marshall.edu/oral_history

Recommended Citation

Marshall University Special Collections, OH64-139, Huntington, WV.

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Digitized Manuscript Collections at Marshall Digital Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in 0064: Marshall University Oral History Collection by an authorized administrator of Marshall Digital Scholar. For more information, please contact zhangj@marshall.edu.



MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA 25701

JAMES E. MORROW LIBRARY

ASSOCIATES

ORAL HISTORY

GIFT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

I, Pauline Blatt, the undersigned, of
Huntington, Cabell, County of Cabell, W. VA., State
of W. VA., grant, convey, and transfer to the James E.
Morrow Library Associates, a division of The Marshall University Foundation,
Inc., an educational and eleemosynary institution, all my right, title,
interest, and literary property rights in and to my testimony recorded on
Dec 8, 1974, to be used for scholarly purposes, including
study and rights to reproduction.

PB
initial

Open and usable after my review.

initial

Closed for a period of _____ years.

initial

Closed for my lifetime.

initial

Closed for my lifetime unless special permission
is gained from me or my assigns.

Date Dec. 8 1974

Pauline Blatt
(Signature - Interviewee)

1312-5th Ave
Address

Huntington W. Va.

Date Dec. 8 1974

Anna O. West
(Signature - Witness)



DLM: Mrs. Pauline McGraw Blatt, the address is 1312 fifth avenue. Her birthday is April the 14th, 1903. The date of this interview is December 8th of 1974, and my name is Donna Musa. (Inaudible) we'll start with then your husband, [PMB: Yes.] tell me something about him, what was his name?

PMB: His name was Gladstone Jacob Blatt. Which, uh, is quite a long name and, and he always went by the name of Gladdy which alot of people thought that funny, you know, [DLM: (Laughs).] but everyone called him Gladdy. And, uh, he was born in, uh, Wetzel County in the German settlement that I spoke to you about, [DLM: Um, mmm.] and, uh, his father came down, uh, the Ohio River in a boat, uh, in, uh, 1903, and uh, settled out in Wayne County on a farm, and uh, and uh, had nine children, and daddy was the oldest and they were, there were five boys and, uh, four girls, and they lived on this big farm out there and they built a beautiful home and, uh, they were very hard working progressive people, very, very good people. And, uh, most of the, uh, uh, children had continued in the dairy business which the father was engaged in for thirty years. And, uh, one of the boys worked for, uh, United Fuel and Gas until he died, and uh, my husband worked for C&O.

DLM: He worked for C&O, [PMB: Uh, huh.] was that, was that his first job?

PMB: No, his first job, I believe, was with the, uh, was with a bed springs factory down in the west end.

DLM: Do you remember the name?

PMB: And it's still there, [DLM: Do you, is it?] uh, huh, uh, huh, and uh, then he served an apprenticeship at the C&O shops. And, uh, and uh, was hired at, as, as a boiler maker and soon after that the depression came along, he didn't get to work too long and the, uh, depression came along and he was out of work then for a, uh, uh, several years, he worked hither thither and yon, uh, for, he worked for a company who was, uh, a reclaiming steel here and there. And he helped to remove

the, uh, railroad that had been abandoned in Virginia. And, uh, then he, uh, worked on the farm with his father and did whatever they was to do, you know, they was no work during the depression days. And, uh, then he, uh, finally, uh, uh, applied in Hornel, New York at the c--, at the shops there I think it might be a branch of the C&O but there was some connection and they needed boiler makers there. So he and two or three others, uh, boiler makers, uh, left Huntington, and uh, went to, uh, Hornel and he worked there for a while. And, uh, then, uh, after he'd been there a, a few months and we were getting ready to get married that time he thought he was situated well enough, you know, that we could why then he was called back into the C&O shops in Huntington, things had begun to pick up [DLM: When was this now?]. That would be about nineteen and thirty, uh, three. And, uh, so, uh, then he, uh, came back home to, to the Huntington shops, and uh, we were married in Parkersburg, I was living in Parkersburg at that time.

DLM: What were you doing?

PMB: I was chief operator for the telephone company there. And, uh, so then, uh, we were married in Parkersburg had a beautiful wedding. And, uh, then, uh, we moved to Huntington. And, uh, the, uh, telephone company asked me to exchange jobs with the chief operator here, uh, here in Huntington. And, uh, let her go to Parkersburg, and uh, and, uh, I should take her place here rather than have to train another chief operator [DLM: Um, mmm.]. So I came down and, uh, to, uh, the Huntington office and worked, uh, bout fifteen months or fourteen maybe and my first baby was due (laughs) [DLM: Who was that?]. That was in thirty, thirty, uh, seven.

DLM: Okay, and who was your first baby?

PMB: Philip.

DLM: Philip?

PMB: Uh, huh, [DLM: Okay.] and, uh, but in the meantime my hu--, my husband continued to work in the C&O shops

and we had bought a home in the east end and, uh, and lived up, lived in it sixteen years. And then we, uh, uh, decided on account of the children going to school at St. Joe and I'd been hauling them, you know, for eleven years backwards and forth, uh, that, uh, we would come down closer to St. Joe. So we had a chance to rent a house right across from the rectory on Sixth Avenue and we, uh, rented the house and rented our house out up on, uh, Fifth Avenue Twenty-Ninth Street. And, uh, we, uh, lived there for quite a while enjoyed it, and then this house became available. And so, uh, in the meantime the Kroger store had gone in up on, uh, Twenty-Ninth Street, and uh, they had wanted to buy our house and we didn't want to sell it. We had, uh, we were situated very well and the rent from that, it was a duplex and the rent from that more than paid our rent down here, so we were content to leave things as they were. But, uh, they insisted and so, uh, I gave them a price, you know, that I thought was ample, and uh, the man said, "Well I never had any, uh, complaints from this company before so I think we can come up with twenty thousand for you." And so, uh, he came down with a portable typewriter and wrote up the deed and we signed it and he gave us a check for twenty thousand. That's when we bought this house.

DLM: Uh, (laughs) what is that school across the street?

PMB: This, this is, uh, Oley.

DLM: Oley?

PMB: Um, mmm, [DLM: I didn't know down . . .] this is Oley and St. Joe is on the other side.

DLM: I see. I was, I'm getting my streets confused.

PMB: Uh, huh. And, uh, St. Joe and then the church and then the high school see. So, uh, we bought this house because we'd be close to the college and the schools and downtown and all, my husband just loved it here. He use to say he liked this place better than anyplace he had ever lived in his life (laughs).

DLM: It's a lovely home.

PMB: And you know before he went to the hospital I'll never forget he had been going back and forth to the hospital, and uh, his last trip he made he went up and down the hall a couple of times and I noticed him looking in one room and then the other and, and he said to me, "You know I hate to leave this time." And he never came back.

DLM: Oh that's sad (laughs) [PMB: Yeah.] uh.

PMB: And, uh, but uh, he died in, uh, '67.

DLM: '67, now how many children did you have altogether.

PMB: Six.

DLM: (Inaudible) you and Thad, (laughter) we joked around the office when he was there, he trust me, you know. Okay what was their names, and when were they born?

PMB: Oh, uh, the boys?

DLM: Um, mmm.

PMB: Well, the uh, well I can't remember all those dates really, now let's see, uh, we were married in thirty six, I believe I said thirty three a while ago, didn't I, [DLM: I don't know.] no let me, yes thirty six we were married. In August of thirty six we were married and then in December of thirty seven Philip was born and then the next November Thad was born, [DLM: Um, mmm.] and then Paula, uh, there was just two years difference in Paula, and uh, then Steven and the four older ones were close together [DLM: Um, mmm.] and then Steven was about three or four years older than Jane and then Jane is just two years older than Jerome, now Jerome was born in forty seven and that would mean that Jane was born two years earlier which would be forty five.

DLM: I've met Jerome [PMB: Yeah.] and Thad and I think

those are the only two that I know.

PMB: Um, mmm.

DLM: But knowing Thad is a, a well worthwhile experience,
(laughs) it really is.

PMB: (Laughs) oh he really is something isn't he?

DLM: Yes (laughs) I'm not quite sure at times what, (laughs)
we tease him unmercifully. Well how did you get through
the, the depression with so many children?

PMB: Well now let me think.

DLM: Were you working then?

PMB: Let's see, uh, the depression was pretty well over in,
uh, thirty six wasn't it?

DLM: Well I think.

PMB: I think it occurred about twenty-nine, you know,
[DLM: Um, mmm.] they talk about the crash of twenty-
nine, uh, uh, I would, it was pretty well over now,
uh, my husband was see working at the C&O when we
married, he was called back because things were picking
up then [DLM: Um, mmm.] and he was called back but
there was a slump after that.

DLM: People were still afraid I guess.

PMB: Yes [DLM: Huh.] there was a slump came after that and
he was layed off, uh, the, uh, when I had my last day at
the office in October, and uh, Jerome, uh, uh, Philip was
born in December I was expecting him in two months, uh,
Gladdy was layed off at the shop. I went home, it was
my last day at the office and he got notice that day
that he was [DLM: Oh.] layed off.

DLM: It figures, it always happens [PMB: Yeah.] that way.

PMB: And then (coughs) he was off for a while and he, he got
a job, uh, temporarily it didn't last long. Uh, we had

a friend who was running this WPA job [DLM: Uh, huh.] and, uh, we talked to him and he, uh, put Gladdy to work at something I don't know what, but Gladdy always hated that he ever went to work for the WPA. He thought that was the most, uh, terrible thing he ever did. He, he was so proud and all and he thought working for the WPA, now I think he shouldn't have felt like that but he did. He felt like it was a black mark on his record that he ever worked for the WPA.

DLM: What is the WPA?

PMB: I think they called it the Works Progress Administration or something like that and it was a, uh, just something to give employment to the unemployed.

DLM: Oh, well it sounds like a good idea now.

PMB: And WPA built alot of the streets and alot of the roads around and different things that was their job.

DLM: I hear something buzzing, is, do you have something on that's buzzing?

PMB: Hum, mmm.

DLM: No, like a timer or anything? Okay, well, uh, I was wondering because I hear so much about the depression how people ever made it through, it just kind of fascinated me.

PMB: Well the depression didn't affect me at all, uh, during the depression I was chief operator for the telephone company the whole time.

DLM: Um, mmm.

PMB: And the telephone company always paid well, and uh, I went all through the depression working and was getting increases like the telephone company always gave, and uh, I lived at home with my mother, and uh, and the three of my, two of my nieces and one of my nephews and different, uh, grandchildren were there, different times, and uh, uh, we lived in Parkersburg

most of the time, part of the time I was in Charleston, and uh, so the depression didn't really affect me at all because we went ahead living just as well and, and uh, my salary was adequate. And uh, so, uh, (coughs) he wasn't off too long before the C&O called him back, and uh, then the, the C&O was always laying people off [DLM: (Laughs).] always laying people off. It has been the most unstable industry in the United States. People never knew when they were going to be layed off or for how long it was always sure to happen [DLM: Um, mmm.] and, but he, he stayed on with um, and uh, and the, uh, then after we moved from twenty ninth street down here to, uh, thirteenth street across from the rectory and we rented property, why uh, the notice went up in the shop that, uh, all of the boiler makers would be layed off indefinately due to the, uh, diesel engine. They didn't have boilers and coal they didn't need um anymore, they used, uh, diesel oil and, uh, and, uh, boiler makers just didn't have any job because their, they work around steam engines, you see, and the diesel engine is a different kind of engine. So he was layed off well there it was again. And uh, so what he did, uh, he, uh, joined the, uh, the boiler makers union, uh, in uh, Cincinnati and I think the Cincinnati local operates all through here and he worked at the atomic plant up here at Kyger Creek [DLM: Um, mmm.] or somewhere during the time and they needed boiler makers there and he worked up there during that time. And then that job was finished and then he worked out of Cincinnati again and they sent him to Hamilton, Ohio, the uh, papermill there, uh, wa--, was shut down for a period of time, uh, each year or every so often to under go complete repairs and they have a deadline to meet, and uh, and the men, uh, could, uh, work as, uh, many hours as they wanted to, and uh, he made as much as nine hundred dollars in one month which, which gave him quite a life, he was discouraged when he left the C&O with, with no job at his age and a family yet to raise and he was, he was discouraged. But when he got this job working out on the public works they called it, and, and uh, in Hamilton where he made as much as nine hundred a month then he had more self-confidence and was more cheerful after that and then he went on to different jobs from different times. Sometimes they'd be a

period when he wouldn't be working but he always made enough that we, uh, were alright, and uh, then, uh, finally, but now he never severed his connections with the C&O, he still held, held his seniority and they called him back at different times to come back to work but he didn't go. He, he didn't have to go until they had exhausted the list of men who were available to do that work, uh, when he was the last man and didn't come back then he could be severed [DLM: Uh, huh.] his, uh, service could be, uh, severed. But he, uh, he wouldn't go back as long as there was someone else to be called in, and uh, he worked his last job was, uh, down here at Roughlin for the, uh, oh the, uh, company, uh, it's in Kentucky, Dupont, [DLM: Oh yeah.] um, mmm. And then he worked for Dupont for three years steady, and uh, then they called him back to the C&O and he was the last man and they notified him if he did not come back that he would have his service severed. So, uh, uh, he went back, yeah he left down there and went back, in fact the day he went back up to the C&O was his sixty fifth birthday and the Dupont people automatically, uh, retires ya when you're sixty five, so he just went from there up to C&O. And then he worked at the C&O then for two years, and uh, and then, uh, when he died he was still on the payroll and, and he wouldn't, he wouldn't resign or retire at all, and uh, because he wanted me to, uh, the longer he stayed on the payroll up there when he died, and then I get a small pension.

DLM: From the C&O?

PMB: Um, from the C&O plus social security.

DML: Well I was surprised to hear that politics didn't enter into his life.

PMB: That what?

DML: That politics, you know, politics didn't enter his life. How did Thad get into politics?

PMB: Well, uh, Gladdy was always interested in politics insofar as knowing the candidates and voting for the right man,

[DLM: Uh, huh.] but he himself never cared for, uh, a public office. I, uh, he never gave that a thought. Well Thad got into it in a, in a unusual way he, he had, uh, a very unpleasant experience with a law enforcement officier which made him think that the right type of people was not employed to enforce the law, you know, and to have authority over decent people, [DLM: Um, mmm.] and uh, so, uh, he thought about it and decided that he was going to run, this fella happened to be a, uh, constable and it was a very unpleasant experience. He was really a very undesirable type of person and Thad couldn't get over it. And, uh, so he went home and told Carolyn he was going to run for constable and nobody believed him (laughs). And he was working then of course at the International Nickel and they tried to talk him out of it [DLM: Um, mmm.] everybody liked him up there and they wanted him to stay. They found, they found out he was really serious why they backed him, worked for him, and uh, course he won easily and, uh, then after he had four years at that why, uh, he decided to run for magistrate. And of course he won easily there and I think truthfully that Thad improved the image of jp's and magistrate for the whole area I really think he did, and uh, he was an unusually intelligent high type of boy, you know, a young man and he had, uh, lots of nice friends and, uh, alot of the people down around the courthouse and the lawyers just meet different times in meetings and places where we had occasion to talk that Mrs. Blatt you should be proud of Thad (laughs) I said well I am (laughter). But he really, uh, he really is a nice good person, very good, he has alot of integrity and that's something that's, uh, sort of in short supply, you know, [DLM: Yeah.] and around these political practices and all [DLM: (Laughs) very.]. So all in all that's, uh, the way it was.

DLM: Well I know when Sam and I first came to Huntington, uh, of course we didn't know anybody's name and we didn't know anybody and he started work, working for National Credit. Well they would take their things before a jp and Sam heard Blatt's name mentioned several times and they would say well he's fair, you know, [PMB: Um, mmm.] what he's doing is fair so right when Thad started to join New York Life, uh, there was a man out back that was

living above us and he said that he didn't like Thad. And Sam and I were appalled, we said why, you know, and he said because he busted some of my friends and we said [PMB: He what?], busted [PMB: Um, mmm.] and I said well then they must have deserved it (laughs). He said, "They did but that's beside the point," it was drugs, [PMB: Uh, huh.] you know, [PMB: Uh, huh.] and he [PMB: Uh, huh.], but if they broke the law that's all [PMB: Uh, huh, yes.] there was to it.

PMB: Uh, now he wasn't one of these kind of people that, uh, was looking for somebody to bust, [DLM: No.] you know, as they call it. But he had to do what he thought was right when the occasion arose, and uh, I know he got quite a bit of, uh, of uh, unfavorable comments from the colleagues because of some of the action he felt was only right and fair [DLM: That's right.] for him to take but he did it knowing that he was losing votes by doing it, he knew that.

DLM: Uh, huh.

PMB: But he did what he thought was right, and uh, his secretary told me that, uh, she'd work for jps all her life, her hu--, her husband, her first husband I know, I don't know if he was dead or living but anyway her first husband was a jp and she worked for him and learn the business and had been working for jps every since and she was, uh, not a young woman anymore and, uh, uh, she said that Thad was the only jp she'd ever worked for that would really stand up to the lawyers. She said most of um would buckle under the pressure of the lawyer but said Thad wouldn't, uh, you see the person on the other side employs somebody to defend him, you know, [DLM: Um, mmm.] and the lawyer comes in accusing this one of so and so and Thad knew the case and so Thad stood up for what was right and crucial in the case and whether it suited the lawyer or not and, uh, so the, uh, he, he uh, got alot of fair treatment for people that way, you know.

DLM: Yes, it's, it's a shame that we don't have more jps like that.

PMB: Oh it is, it is, [DLM: It is.] uh, huh, now Bruce Boone up here is a nice fella.

DLM: Yeah, now I've met him . . .

PMB: Uh, huh, he's a very nice fella. He doesn't have, uh, too much personality but he's a very, very, uh, good man I think.

DLM: I haven't, you know, where has Thad gotten all of his sayings that he always says like "fair to middling," and uh, [PMB: About what?] the sayings that he says. He always comes out with witty little sayings, I thought, I thought maybe his political background came from the home and I thought maybe he's been raised on the country because he talks, he talks like [PMB: (Laughs).] a country boy sometimes, he really does.

PMB: I know it, I told him sometimes he's a true Blatt (laughter).

DLM: Yeah he, he now he owns quite a bit of property [PMB: Yes.] doesn't he, [PMB: Uh, huh.] he owns a farm.

PMB: Three.

DLM: Three (laughs)?

PMB: Well now you know that sounds like he owns this and he owns that really his equity in those things isn't so great, [DLM: No.] uh, when he ran for sheriff, you know, he mortgaged quite a bit of his property to get money to run on and he's having to pay that back now, and uh, and now he has two, two uh, farms and he and Sam go together on everything, [DLM: Now . . .] you know.

DLM: Sam's last name is, uh.

PMB: Sam Porter.

DLM: Porter, right.

PMB: Um, mmm. They're partners on this farm out in Wayne County, [DLM: Yeah.] they got those farms cheap,

they don't amount to much, they're just somewhere to go, it was a farm where they could have some stuff and raise something, you know, and they enjoyed it and then he, I wouldn't of had it if he wanted to deed it to me, I wouldn't want it [DLM: (Laughs).] and, uh, then they, uh, one of the farms up in Pocahontas is the, uh, hunting lodge that, uh, a bunch of men owned for a long time and they were friends of Thad's and Thad always loved to hunt, he took that after his father I know, and uh, so, uh, different ones that they'd dropped out of it, you know, and uh, Thad wanted to buy out the different ones when they would leave, and uh, I remember that, uh, Gladdy, uh, gave him, gave him, oh when Thad before he was married even, you know, he gave Thad a few hundred dollars to buy out some guy that was leaving. And so he's acquired, uh, I think now that he and maybe one other person, or maybe he alone owns that farm up in the mountains. A place to go and hunt's all it is.

DLM: Is that where they just were, they just went hunting, uh, Thanksgiving weekend?

PMB: Well I don't know whether they went to that farm or whether they went to the last farm that, uh, he and Sam bought, I don't, while they were up hunting they found this farm adjacent to the one that Thad has [DLM: Um, mmm.] was available for sale and it, it's a beautiful place up there they tell me I never have been up there, they say it's level alot of it and it's right on the river, [DLM: Um.] and uh, and they, uh, went over to Marlinton, and uh, it, it was up for sale for I don't know how many acres, close to a hundred acres for seven thousand dollars see up in the mountains [DLM: The property . . .] the property doesn't bring much. And so, uh, Thad went over to Marlinton to buy, uh, to get the money from the bank to buy (laughs), he's good at that.

DLM: Yes, I know he talked my husband out of (laughter).

PMB: So he went over there, and uh, made application at the Marlinton Bank and wanted the full amount, you know, [DLM: Um, mmm.] and most banks want some of your

money in the deal too, you know, but he wanted the full amount and, and so, uh, he, the man told him says we can't do that. And Thad said what do you mean you can't do that? (Laughs) so he got the loan, they borrowed the full amount and bought the little farm [DLM: Yeah.] and so now that sounds like, you know, having two or three farms but Thad doesn't want to, anyone to think he's [DLM: Oh.] affluent when he isn't, you know.

DLM: He's so funny, (laughs) he just really is.

PMB: He owns a house out on Endwood Drive too, but it ain't much, the payment. He still, he kept his Guyan property and . . .

DLM: That's, uh, uh, a storage area, uh . . .

PMB: Where he has a warehouse, [DLM: Yeah.] yeah, up in Guyan, Guyan Avenue, uh, huh.

DLM: Now he just recently purchased (inaudible) trucking.

PMB: Yes, yes, uh, huh.

DLM: And has bought a few more trucks and put Carolynn behind the desk and decided to make a good go out of it.

PMB: (Laughter) yeah he's doing very well.

DLM: Yes and I'm thrilled. I don't think there's anybody that couldn't be happy with Thad. We're, we hated to leave, leave him cause he worked with my husband.

PMB: Oh at, is he still with New York Life?

DLM: Yeah.

PMB: Oh yes, uh, huh.

DLM: And we just, we just hated to lose him but a person like Thad you just, [PMB: Uh, huh.] you know, he's going to be miserable if he's unhappy.

PMB: People were so good to him when he started out he had

people calling him up, you know, giving him four and five good prospects at a time and all, had so many friends, [DLM: Yes.] and uh, that's, there were two or three insurance companies wanted him, you know, and they were calling up and talking to Carolynn trying to get Carolynn to influence him and all which was a man at New York Life or another company that said any man that can get eighteen thousand votes in Cabell County has to have alot of friends.

DLM: It was [PMB: Huh?] Jack (laughs).

PMB: So, uh, (break in tape).

DLM: That he spent good money going after the sheriff,
[PMB: Um, mmm.] you know, [PMB: Um, mmm.] uh,
I'm sure . . .

PMB: But, uh, there's no future to this, uh, political business, you know, really he would come out of it as, you know, sheriff and then where do you go from there.

DLM: It's, it's kind of a duty business, you know.

PMB: It's, uh, well I'm just glad he didn't get into, and do you know what, uh, some of the people I know downtown George I. Neal, for instance, uh, his wife told me she worked for Dr. Werthammer there in the arcade, their office in the arcade too, and uh, she said, "We voted for Thad, both of us, but," she says, "Do you know what my husband said this morning?" Said, "He's glad he didn't get it, said that he thinks he deserving a better thing," (laughter).

DLM: Yeah.

PMB: And I appreciated that and I thought well that probably speaks the sentiments of alot of people, you know, really because I don't know, course he would of been a good sheriff and he would have been, and uh, like I heard someone say Mr. Henson said, "Well there's one thing you can be sure of, if Thad gets it we'll have an honest sheriff."

DLM: Yeah. He probabaly would have worked himself to death trying to [PMB: Yes.] keep everybody else honest.

PMB: Yes, yeah, and it's, it's, I always think that things happen for the best.

DLM: Um, well you imagine people that, you know, I think you were well acquainted with the Fesenmeiers, weren't you?

PMB: Um, mmm.

DLM: Now that's the house that Karen's daughter live in now?

PMB: Um, mmm, yeah Margreete and I were friends since we were young girls, you know, she, uh, I worked for the telephone company she was always a secretary downtown but we knew each other in church and in the citality and all that and she was one of the loveliest people I ever knew, Margreete, she had more charm than the average person, and uh, she told me when, uh, we were talking about the house it just, it had been on the market, is this on here?

DLM: Um, mmm. Yeah.

PMB: It had been on the market, you know, for, uh, oh quite a while, we had it listed in our company for, uh, sixty thousand. Pancake and Bunch both had options that after ours expired, and uh, they had it up around fifty or sixty thousand. Maybe ours was sixty five, anyhow we knew it was too much because the house needed so much as, you know, [DLM: Um, mmm.] so, uh, Margreete and I happened to be talking one day and, uh, I was, I was wanting to list the house again, and uh, I, I, she brought Thad's name up, you know, and Thad had been looking for a long time and I never would go along with, well I never had found anything that I would recommend to him, you know, for what he could afford and, and what would suit his needs for. So then, uh, I told her that Thad might be interested in it because he had had me to check on this one up here on the corner, this yellow brick on the corner of, uh, 14th street and 6th avenue and I had talked to the man and he's, uh, retired from the gas company and was going to live there

indefinitely and so there was no promise there, and uh, so the, uh, I think I told Margreete that he might be interested in it, and so, uh, she says, "Do you think he would?" And I said yes and she said, "I'd like to sell it." She wanted to leave Huntington and go to live with her daughter. She, she was sort of afraid in that big house all by herself, [DLM: Oh, it's huge.] uh, huh. And, uh, so I told her I would talk to Thad and she said, uh, I said now Margreete, she said, "I would let Thad have it for thirty thousand." I said you would? And she said, "Yeah, I'd let him have it for less than anybody else." And uh, so, uh, I said something he said, "Sure." That's when I mention that he said, "Oh boy, sure thing." But then she told me she talked with Johnny and her brother-in-law and they, they didn't think she should take thirty thousand for it even if it did need some doing.

DLM: Um, mmm.

PMB: So, uh, they finally settled on thirty-five.

DLM: Well I believe Karen told me that she didn't want the house torn down, that's the one thing she didn't want, [PMB: Yeah.] she wanted people to live in it.

PMB: Yes and she wanted, and she thought it would be so nice for Thad to be here and send his children to St. Joe and all like she did, she said that she'd like to have someone in it that would be as happy as they had been.

DLM: Uh, huh, [PMB: Um, mmm.] that's nice. Now they owned the brewery [PMB: Um, mmm.]. Now I remember it as Little Switzerland, is that the same one?

PMB: Um, mmm, [DLM: Now . . .] they named it Little Switzerland, did they name it that after it was bought out or before, I don't remember but I know it was called Little Switzerland I believe that was after the Fesenmeiers sold it and the new company took it over, they renamed it from Fesenmeier Brewery to Little Switzerland.

DLM: And what was that beer company down there in the west, east end that was torn down, it's torn down?

PMB: Oh yes, and it was a landmark.

DLM: It was beautiful, wasn't it?

PMB: Yeah, yeah so many people hated to see that place go because it had just been there so long, you know.

DLM: Did you know her husband?

PMB: Frank?

DLM: Um, mmm.

PMB: Oh yes, he was a wonderful guy.

DLM: How did he get into the beer business?

PMB: Oh that was for generations.

DLM: Oh really (laughs).

PMB: Uh, huh. Yeah, it'd been in the family, uh, quite a while.

DLM: Uh . . .

PMB: Uh, his father I believe I don't know all the details about Franklin's family but, uh, it was a family thing, it was runned by the family, different members of the family. There was the Kernies, the Fesenmeiers, Lensenmeier worked there but I, uh, he may have just been an employee. But it, it was a family own thing and they, I think they came here from Pittsburgh down to here.

DLM: They have alot of beer places like that [PMB: Sure.] now did they haul their beer at first in wagons and things like that or do you remember ever riding in a wagon?

PMB: When I was a little girl, [DLM: Uh . . .] uh, in Virginia.

DLM: Did you live on a farm in Virginia?

PMB: Well I never lived on a farm but my grandfather did, and we spent of course alot of time with our grandparents

from time to time and they had, uh, stock and everything that's on a farm, [DLM: Now what were your grandparents . . .] and we, uh, went wherever we went in a buggy [DLM: Really?] with my grandmother when I was a little girl, uh, huh.

DLM: What were their names?

PMB: McGraw.

DLM: They were McGraw.

PMB: My father's, uh, huh, I never had very many relatives. My, uh, father was an only child and my father and my mother was an only child so we didn't have uncles or aunts and cousins like a lot of people have so we, uh, uh, our family my mother's and father's family were ten children see and they needed, see they were from a family where they were the only ones so they got married and had ten children. That happens frequently, [DLM: Um, mmm.] because people are lonely growing up by themselves and when they get married they want children, and uh, so there were ten, ten of us in the family and we were very fond of our grandparents we, we loved um they were real wonderful people, and uh, but he was a real Virginia farmer, and uh, I often think of how independently they lived, you know. They, they supplied everything themselves, they was very little they had to go to the store for. I remember one time when I was with um (laughs) they had moved from, uh, Bath County, Virginia which, uh, uh, at a place called Callison, and uh, they had a farm there and they sold it and my grandfather bought this farm at Calhan, Virginia. Which was in Allegheny County and that, so when they left Callison we were living at Jenkins Ford then, and uh, they asked my mother could I go with um to this new farm and she let me go course they were like my parents I never got homesick hardly over there. So we, I went, I must have been four or five years old, [DLM: (Laughs) that's young.] um, mmm. And, uh, and I, back then we use to have such severe winters and in Virginia especially, and uh, I remember that very severe winter when it was impossible to go to the store and (laughs) my, they, they always had coffee, my grandparents always had coffee at meals, and uh, so they ran out of coffee so my grandmother she knew what to do

she made postum.

DLM: What's that?

PMB: Postum is a, is a drink that, uh, it, it's along the line of coffee. People use, some people would use postum and some use coffee back in those days. Now I don't know what the original postum was made out of but my grandmother made it out of, uh, wheat, uh, well I don't know now, it was after the wheat was thrashed I think [DLM: The chaff?] uh, huh, [DLM: The chaff?] yes, and uh, she put it in the oven and stirred it and browned it and watched it very carefully and when it was just right she let it cool and then she put it in a jar and they used that for coffee until the weather got so they could go to the store (laughs).

DLM: Now would you ever think of something like that, I never would.

PMB: (Laughs) and you know they had everything, they had everything, uh, sugar and flour they had, they went to the store for and coffee.

DLM: Now what kind of sugar did they use?

PMB: Granulated.

DLM: White [PMB: Uh, huh.] or?

PMB: Uh, huh, white, uh, huh. And, uh, but they had just about everything you would want.

DLM: Well do you remember during a time when there was an awful flood around here, I believe the date was May the 30th in 1927?

PMB: Twen--, thirty seven.

DLM: Thirty seven?

PMB: Wasn't it?

DLM: I don't know, you would have been married then.

PMB: There was a 19 and 13 flood that was very devastating, it was all over the United States. 19 and 13 flood that was the real bad flood and the next flood was in '37, the next bad one.

DLM: Is that where all these towns got their floodwalls,
[PMB: Um, mmm.] they started building them?

PMB: Yes, uh, huh. We had just bought the house on 29th street, see we were married in August of '36 and in December of '36 we bought this house up on 29th street (microphone is moved) I had, uh, some money, and uh, that I had, uh, saved during the years, and uh, I also had AT&T stock that we bought [DLM: Uh, huh.] through the telephone company on a payroll deduction plan, you know, Gladdy had, uh, a little bit and we put it together and made a down payment on, uh, on the house up on 29th street and that was in December and then by the 7th of January it had eight feet of water in it (laughs). We'd never moved into it we was living right over here on 7th avenue then, and uh, right next door to Jim Donahoe, do you know where Jim Donahoe lives and then next door to what is the, they call, is the MA Huntington Apartments and we lived in the downstairs of that apartment building, and uh, so we went up, and uh, we got in a boat and went over and got out of the boat onto the porch roof and went in through the window. And it was a duplex of sorts, it was that way when we bought it, it wasn't a regular duplex as we build um now but it was a big house that had been divided and two doors on the porch and on the first floor there were three rooms and a bath but the lady who owned it had always rented and she lived in the other part which was, uh, three rooms down and four rooms up, seven rooms and we added another one too while we were there. But, uh, it, it was really some flood, just the cottages around there you could just see the chimneys sticking out just water everywhere and then I remember riding in that water in a boat, you know, I thought well now this is kind of funny, and uh, we got, didn't get in the upstairs and the people who lived downstairs in the apartment had moved upstairs with their furniture, you know, [DLM: Oh.] and their place was just, you know, with water up to the, way up to the ceiling. And, uh, it was a high ceiling with all new facing, and uh, so we

were so, uh, discouraged with it, uh, that, uh, we knew we were under contract to buy it and we had bought it from a friend of ours, Mrs. Marooney, and uh, so I wrote her a letter, she lived in Newark, New Jersey and I wrote her a letter and I told her that we would be glad for her to keep the money that we had paid as a down payment and use it to put the house back in order and release us from our contract.

DLM: Did she?

PMB: So here she came down from Newark (laughs) bringing the stock, she hadn't cashed it, AT&T stock and all and she told me, she says, "Now you know I wouldn't stand in your and Gladdy's way of getting a home for anything," and she said, uh, "If, if you don't want to go through with your contract I'll give you your money back, but," she said, "If you'll stay here and, uh, live here," because she was carrying the mortgage too [DLM: Um, mmm.] we hadn't gotten any money from the bank she, we paid her the down payment and she was carrying the mortgage. And, uh, she said, "I'll tell you what I'll do," she said, "I will buy all the material for the new walls and the new floors and whatever's needed and paid the contractor to redo it if you and Gladdy will just get it ready for the contractor after the water's, you know, after the devastation." So we had to shovel out sand and this, that and the other and clean the place up and get it ready and then the, uh, contractor came in and put in dry wall and, uh, fixed it up real nice. So I told, uh, my husband I said now you know Gladdy she didn't have to do that and I said if she's good enough to do that for us and keep her end of the bargain that good we'll keep ours. So we stayed and let her fix it up, and uh, we never regretted it, it was a, was a good home there, you know, and the children had a good place to play and very good neighborhood, and uh, so we paid her I expect around, uh, seven thousand rent but we had this place paid for in, oh we, we got rent off of it too see [DLM: Um, mmm.] and we applied the rent, oh I, the rent, oh I think we had it paid for in about eight years. And, uh, then, uh, we improved it, did alot of nice things to it and built a new room on the back for a dining room, we had had a big living room combination living and dining room, and uh, so that way we moved our

dining room back we had very pretty paneled and nice room back there, and uh, then, uh, we sold it for twenty thousand [DLM: Oh.] so we, you know, we did allright on it.

DLM: Hum, did quite a . . .

PMB: It had a nice big lot and a nice, [DLM: Well . . .] real nice place.

DLM: Did you have alot of sickness during this flood, I mean wasn't it typhoid that comes with all that water or something?

PMB: It could but if the proper precautions are taken it, it doesn't, [DLM: Well . . .] there's always that possibility, but uh, that didn't occur here. And maybe, maybe other places, uh, it may have occurred but to no great extent that I ever remember reading about, but that can happen and I notice in Europe especially where the sanitation isn't as good as it is here that it, that the chances is greater [DLM: Um, mmm.] of a disease and things like that but in a country like this, you know, where the sanitation is and the water systems and all that are so well cared for, uh, there's no danger really. I don't remember of any cases there could have been a few isolated cases but I don't remember them.

DLM: Well there's such a change between medicine before and now, like we were talking about most people have their children at home, did you, or did you go to the hospital?

PMB: For what?

DLM: To have your children.

PMB: Oh yes, I had them all at St. Mary's.

DLM: At St. Mary's?

PMB: Uh, huh.

DLM: And do you ever remember anybody having any children at home?

PMB: Yes, oh yes, my mother had all of her children at home and my grandmother was a wonderful midwife. She went all over the neighborhood and helped mothers.

DLM: Well how long did she usually stay with them to help um out?

PMB: Few days.

DLM: A few days?

PMB: A few days. It was, uh, she usually helped them with the birth more than anything else and gave advice and help that was always in a family, there's always people to do and back in those days especially there were relatives and friends and neighbors who always helped out, and uh, but my mother had all of her children at home. Her ten you see. Now my sister who lives, uh, up on, uh, Rotary, they have a place right in Rotary Park up there . . .

DLM: Is that Clara's mother?

PMB: Uh, huh.

DLM: Clara Laferty's mother?

PMB: Yes, do you know Clara?

DLM: Yeah, I worked with her first couple of years.

PMB: Oh, where?

DLM: At Kay's, Kay's Jewelry.

PMB: At Kay Jewelry, oh yes, uh, huh.

DLM: I know your sister.

PMB: Clara, you know her, well now Cleo she had, uh, most of her children at home.

DLM: Uh, I didn't think she had many children, I was thinking that only Clara was

[PMB: Nine.] oh, I was wrong

(laughs) [PMB: Um, mmm.] nine?

PMB: Um, mmm, they was nine, yes. My sister, Paula, has eight, she had nine and I had six. Some of my sisters and brothers didn't have any children.

DLM: Um, mmm.

PMB: But we like big families, and uh, there's nothing like a big family, it's wonderful. People don't know what they're missing that don't have big families and when you get older that's when it's the greatest. People who grow old without having a family are really to be pitied, they're, they're lonely and they don't have anyone to do for them to take an interest in um. I was reading a little story in there this morning that was so sweet about a little boy. Just talking, you know, he was, he was a little boy that had been asked some questions and he was just talking and I thought it was so sweet and it reminded me of our family alot and he was talking about what his mother taught him, you know, and one of the things, uh, among others was she, uh, she taught us to pray and she taught us always to go to church on Sunday we, uh, ought to go on Sunday. And, uh, uh, alot of other nice things and I thought well now you know that, that, that's the way we were, you know, we, my husband was a good Catholic, came from a fine Catholic family, and uh, he was very, a very good example for the children, and uh, so they, they were taught, you know, everyday when I watched those children I would think, at the end of the day, most days I would think well everything's gone pretty good today nothing went too bad, now maybe tomorrow'll be better (laughter).

DLM: Well Carolynn and I talk every once and a while on the phone and we talk bits and pieces because that's about what we get in [PMB: Um, mmm.] and I often wonder how people who have big families raise them today because everything seems so expensive, it's so difficult you can't, you know, there so many children getting into trouble. Why do you think that's so?

PMB: (Sighs) children, I believe, get into trouble mostly because they haven't been taught properly at home. I

believe if a child is raised up in a good Christian home with a good example before him, and uh, good training he isn't going to stray too far from that. He will get the right values in life and I don't think he'll go far, I really don't. People now, the trouble right now is people have forgotten about God. They think they don't need him anymore and alot of people are lost, they don't know whether there really is a God or not. They haven't had the background, they haven't been taught, they haven't had the example and they had some disenchantment too, you know, and uh, they've forgotten about God. Well now when people forget about God and think they can go on their own why they, they're in a pretty weak situation. They're not going to go very far and it's awful easy to get off of the right path, and uh, because they don't feel they have anybody to answer to. But I believe that a child that's taught to pray and, and given a good example I don't think he's going to go very far astray, I really don't.

DLM: Well I just, you know, often wonder because Thad and Carolynn they have seven children and they're all really wonderful and you'd think somehow somebody's got to be awful in that family but they're just all great kids
 [PMB: Yes.] and [PMB: Yes.] I guess it's just examples [PMB: Uh, huh.] and husbands now.

PMB: Uh, huh. Now my hus--, my husband's family, uh, they were all good people, nine children, they were all good people.

DLM: Huh.

PMB: And, uh, in my family I, uh, they had their little troubles from time to time but in the end they all turned out okay and they're all in the church, and uh, and we often think it was my mother's prayers, she was such a good woman. My mother was an educated woman, she's a schoolteacher, and uh, she helped us alot, you know, course she had ten children and she couldn't do much, uh, outside the family but, uh, she was, she really taught us the right things and we talk alot about her because she was so wonderful.

DLM: Well your mother, how did she get her training to be a schoolteacher, do you know?

PMB: She, she graduated from, uh, the college at Glenville, at, use to be called the State Normal, [DLM: Um, mmm.] and uh, she finished then taught several years, she was from Mercer County.

DLM: Well how many years of school did they have to go to before they went to college?

PMB: I don't know, [DLM: Did they go . . .] truthfully.

DLM: Go twelve years like we normally do?

PMB: I, I doubt that, I doubt that, although all of her family there was most of um were schoolteachers, there must have been seven or eight schoolteachers in her, with her cousins around, uh, and I don't know where they all went to school. But she graduated con--, at, use to be called Concord [DLM: Um, mmm.] and that's where she went to school, and uh, I know lawyers and different ones graduated from there because when we moved to Huntington there was some lawyer downtown that she had gone to school with over there and they, uh, had quite a reunion, but uh, but you know back in those days the, the schooling was so thorough, uh, when you, uh, went through a grade, uh, you really knew something, and uh, and they, they depended so much on the speller and the reader and the dictionary, the meaning of words, you know, and my goodness my mother she, there wasn't a word she couldn't spell and know the definition of, you know, and she was so much help to us. And I know even when, uh, Jimmy Powers, uh, my, uh, sister Cleo, you know, Clara's brother Jimmy he was, uh, having trouble with his algebra here at St. Joe and he just couldn't get it through his head well my mother knew that algebra upside down and backwards. She never forgot it and she took him and gave him lessons, you know, till he got it through his head and . . .

DLM: I've taken it two or three times at different levels and can't remember any of it (laughter), that makes

me feel kind of dumb. Well now you're quite an educated person, how far in school did you go?

PMB: Oh, I'm not very educated honey like my, like Steven now wa--, my, my uh, you know Steven, don't you?

DLM: No, I don't know Steven, I just met Thad and Jerome.

PMB: Well now Steven, uh, graduated from Morehead, well he went to school at Marshall and transferred to Morehead, graduated from Morehead and then taught in high school up at, uh, Sanford, Ohio for two years and then during that time in the summer he went over to Athens and (coughs), excuse me, did graduate work, and uh, and finally got his Ph.d.

DLM: Oh that's right, uh, [PMB: Uh, huh.] Thad's talked about him.

PMB: And I said to him one day, that made me think about it, uh, we were talking about something and I said now you know I don't have too much education, he says, "Mother I think you've got alot of education." (Laughs) I thought well that's nice, Thad to say it [DLM: It doesn't matter.] on account of having, uh, the mother that we had we were taught so much at home too, you know, and uh, I didn't finish high school, I went to high school but I didn't finish, uh, during, uh, World War II my father wanted me to be a schoolteacher so badly too but my sister was working over in Covington, Virginia at the papermill and the boys were having to leave so fast they were hiring girls to do the boys' work, you know, [DLM: Um, mmm.] the men's work at, at the papermill and, excuse me, they were paying such good money or what seemed like such good money to us and I guess it was back in those days. So she wanted me to come over there, my grandmother lived in Covington, Virginia at that time and she was staying with her, and uh, so, uh, she wanted me to come and mom let me go, so I quit high school. And, uh, but then I took, uh, courses after that and when I was in Parkersburg I took, uh, a business course and, they were teaching uh, uh, at the Y, they were teaching English classes and I took those and after it all in all I maybe got the equivalent of a high school education.

DLM: You have the equivalent of a high school education (laughter), I think you could take most college courses and past um (laughter).

PMB: (Laughs) oh thank you. But, but I've had alot of experience in my life and I have lived a, a full life and a happy life, very happy life and sometimes I think oh dear something's surely going to happen to me I've been happy all my life, [DLM: Oh.] it's been too good. Uh, but uh, I worked for the telephone company, I went to work for them, uh, uh, I think I was eighteen something like that and, uh, (break in tape)..