

Myron [Mike] Edward Rux

Narrator

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Greenfield Historical Society

Interviewer

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At the home of Mike and Eleanor Rux

Rockford, Minnesota

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RM: Today is September 19, 2013, and we're with Mr. Rux. Could you please spell your name?

MR: R-U-X.

RM: And your first name?

MR: Mike. Myron. Nobody knows me by that.

RM: Myron would be M-Y-

MR: R-O-N

RM: Mike is what people know you as?

MR: Yes.

RM: Do you have a middle name, too?

MR: Edward.

RM: Nobody calls you by your middle name?

MR: No... that's worse than Myron [both laugh].

RM: You've lived in the area all your life?

MR: Yes. I was born on the farm out there, the one my great-grandfather homesteaded.

RM: Which farm was that?

MR: Henry Greeling farm. I was born there. At home, like most people in those days. Right now I think there's a gal by the name of Sarah Bolman owns it now. We sold it when my Dad died in 1968. Since then there's a couple...French...bought it. The Superintendent of Hennepin County Parks. When he died, they sold it, probably to Sarah.

RM: What's the address?

MR: It's County Road 10; I don't know what the real address is. It's where Vernon Street runs into County Road 10. If you go straight across, you're in our farm.

RM: How long did you live out there?

MR: Twenty-one years. Until I went in the Army. Found out there was something better than shoveling out behind cows and horses and pigs and chickens and everything else that left something behind.

RM: You were done with the farm?

MR: Done with it.

RM: That's interesting. A lot of people never leave it.

MR: I know. Talking to one guy I played baseball with, he said he'd farmed for...I don't know, at that time it was like thirty or forty years. Never took vacation. Farmed seven days a week, about a month later a bull cornered him and killed him.

RM: So the service didn't, but the bull did?

MR: Yes. So you know, farming wasn't all too healthy back in those days, because everybody had a bull, you know. No artificial stuff then.

RM: What years did you serve in the Army?

MR: '55, '56. All in Texas. Well, most of it. Fort Lenard Wood, Missouri, and then Fort Bliss, Texas. But I got stuck there as a cadry [cavalry??] instructor. So that's about it, most exciting thing that went on there. Went to California and picked up an AWOL and brought him back. That was about it. Other than that, there wasn't much going on. Got a new batch of recruits in every 10 weeks, running them through the mill [laughs].

RM: What were you training them for?

MR: It was mostly second advanced training, so it was anti aircraft artillery, you know. Did mostly 90 mm, 75 mm, and 40 mm antiaircraft guns. That's why I wear these [points to hearing aids].

RM: They forgot to give you the ear muffs...

MR: [laughs] You never had anything then. There was no OSHA, there was nothing. Probably could get some cotton balls and stuff them in there that was about it. That was pretty loud. We had the closed rack half tracks with four 50 caliber machine guns on it and you sat down on a middle slate thing and two of them were right here and two of them were up there [indicates with hand]. I tell you, when you cut loose on four 50s...it was *LOUD*.

RM: So you decided the military life wasn't anything better than farming?

MR: No, no. I was in with a sergeant; he had been through World War II and Korea. He was a Sergeant First Class. Charlie Roman, from Tennessee. Helluva guy, you know, but he was a little outspoken. As I say, he'd been through World War II and Korea and this was 1956. He told the Second Lieutenant to kiss his behind. When I got discharged, Charlie had lost all of his stripes and he was in the stockade, so I said, "No, this ain't for me." [laughs]

RM: You came back here?

MR: Yes, came back, worked for FMC in Fridley for a little over thirty-nine years.

RM: What did they do?

MR: It was Navy ordinance planning. Made missile launchers, gun mounts...part of the tanks for the M-1, turrets for the tanks for the M-1 Abram, made a propulsion system for submarine, which was top secret. I get a top secret security clearance about two years before I retired but I was the only journeyman on second shift, so...millwright. Journeyman millwright [laughs].

RM: You worked second shift?

MR: Yes. Most of the time, yes.

RM: That doesn't leave you a whole lot of time for fun around here.

MR: No it didn't because I worked part time at Hamel Building Center during the day, so I put in sixteen hours a day at the two jobs, plus travel time. Only slept for four or five hours a night. That went on for sixteen years and that was the end of that.

RM: That's when you quit the second job?

MR: Yes [sighs]

RM: You got married somewhere in there?

MR: I was married before I went in the Army. Well, two days before I went in. We'd known each other all the way though high school. We got married two days before and she stayed back here and kept her job at the grain exchange. I sent my allotment home, about fifty bucks a month, you know? I think I was getting \$60 and send \$50 home. Didn't get rich, but as I say, she worked the whole while I was gone.

RM: What's her name?

MR: Eleanor Morin. M-O-R-I-N. Other than that, after that it was four kids, ten grandkids, and eleven great grandkids.

RM: Do your kids still live near?

MR: Two of them do. One lives by Lake Sarah, one lives in Buffalo [loud street noise] the youngest daughter—what the hell is that?

RM: Life [laughs].

MR: The youngest daughter lives in Arizona and my younger son lives in Hawaii.

RM: Hawaii?

MR: Yes.

RM: A good reason to go get a vacation.

MR: Yes, every winter. Other than that, that's about it, that I can think of [laughs].

RM: When you did have time for fun, where did you go, what did you do?

MR: First we had a pull trailer and a couple motor homes. We had a lot in Wisconsin, and then we had a couple acres in between Maple Lake and Silver Creek. So we'd go camping when the kids were home, about every other weekend. After they left, the wife didn't like camping, so we sold the motor home. She doesn't like the drive. She wants to fly and get there and get back.

RM: So then for the bars and things, you said you did your fair share of drinking?

MR: Well, yes, all Germans do that [laughs] Lake Sarah...we'd get a bottle of Morgan David for ninety-eight cents, get all squirrely on that. I want to say the first beer I had was out at Brookside when I was fourteen, I think. I was just a freshman in high school.

RM: Where was Brookside?

MR: If you go up here and cross the bridge, take the first right, go across the rail road tracks, and that first sharp bend? It was right on the left side, right there. Yes, it burnt down when I was in high school, about '48.

RM: '48?

MR: Yes, I suppose around in there somewhere. We had the Transformer; I've had a few beers there. Wally's resort, Bud Epple's...

RM: Can you describe what they would look like for me?

MR: God...nothing special, you know. They were just a bar with a few tables. Nothing special about them that I can remember. Brookside was very small place, you know—probably twelve feet wide and twenty feet long. Just the bar and a few stools. That was about it. The Transformer wasn't much bigger. It was square, a squarer building. I don't remember if they served any food or not, I don't remember. Then Lake Sarah was just...most of the time we didn't have 50 cents to get in, so we just sat outside and until about an hour before closing time. Ben Mitchell would take the turnstile off. Unless I came with my baseball uniform on. He was a big baseball fan, he'd let me in free then.

RM: You played ball?

MR: Twenty-five years for Rockford and Loretto, Buffalo and a few other teams I was drafted with...Maple Lake, Dayton, Annandale, and Delano. I'm in the Northstar Hall of Fame from Loretto.

RM: Now those were local guys that played. Do you remember any of the names that you played with?

MR: Rockford was the Conzets, Dixons, Schultz, Levine, Lemmage...Loretto was the Klaers, of course, Claperts...can't remember the other guy's names. The last year I played was '73, so a long time ago.

RM: Yes. Some of the other guys were saying they went from ball games over to the dance hall?

MR: Sometimes, yes, and then a lot of times we'd go to the Rockford House, which burned down in '83. Doc Torblea owned it and he was one of our fans, so he'd give us free beer after the game.

RM: That's helpful!

MR: Yes [laughs]

RM: You go where the beer is [MR laughs] I understand the Rockford House was a little bit fancier?

MR: Well, yes. At that time the bowling alley wasn't on it yet, so it had...that's where we had our wedding reception. They had a dining hall, a bar...it wasn't real fancy, but it was, you know about as good as any place around here.

RM: Can you tell me about having your wedding reception there?

MR: Well, isn't much to tell. You know, we...my wife was Catholic, I was Lutheran, so...

RM: I didn't think that was legal.

MR: Yes, well, it was barely [laughs]. They didn't let us in the church; we had to get married in the Priest's house, in Hamel. Like I said, we had our reception at the Rockford House and we had our dance at the Rockford Village Hall, over where the library is now.

RM: It was just the meal that you had at the Rockford House?

MR: Yes.

RM: Do you remember what you ate?

MR: No...cripes, I don't remember what I had yesterday [laughs]

RM: Were there a lot of people that you invited?

MR: I suppose there were like forty, fifty probably, between the two relatives. Well, most of my relatives didn't show up, because I married a Catholic, you know. That was taboo. But they got over it. Most of them did [laughs]

RM: Well, good. It makes Christmas difficult otherwise.

MR: Yes. Other than that? I don't know. It's about it. Not too exciting of a life.

RM: Were there other parties and receptions that were held at the other resorts or establishments?

MR: I don't remember...you know, it was a long time ago. We went to a couple receptions at Shady Beach. Some of my son's friends got married that lived over that way, so they had their reception there at Shady Beach.

RM: What kind of time frame was that?

MR: [exhales] See, he graduated in '78, so probably been about 1980, somewhere round there.

RM: That one was open for longer that the Lake Sarah Pavilion was?

MR: Yes, oh yes...yes, I don't remember when...they said they took Lake Sarah down board by board. I always thought it...if I remember, I thought the damn thing burned

down, I don't know...might not have, but I thought it did. But friends of our owned the...I say, the owner, Ben Mitchell, was a baseball fan, so, then Margie, his niece, married the manager of the Loretto baseball team. Betsy and her husband owned Vergin Sales over here. I've known them for a long time.

RM: Yes, she told me about making popcorn over there.

MR: Yes...yes. And Carol, she and her husband own a golf course, I think they still own it, I don't know. They used to. And the boy, I never knew him.

RM: Did you ever get together with those people in high school?

MR: No. Knew them after high school. No, I didn't know them, except from them popping popcorn. I never personally knew them.

RM: The high school kids didn't go down to the dances and things?

MR: Yes, we did. Some of us, not all of us. Few of us did.

RM: What drew you down there? What was fun about it?

MR: It was the only place to go! You had to go over there or you had to go to a bar, one of the two. Other than that, you know, there was nothing special about it. If you wanted to go listen to Whoopee John [laughs]

RM: Not your favorite band?

MR: No. And Wally Pickle [laughs].

RM: You didn't like the polkas?

MR: No. Still don't [laughter].

RM: What kind of a German are you?

MR: I know! Not a dancer for one thing [laughs].

RM: Did you like watching?

MR: No, not especially. It was someplace to go and that was it. I mean, at that time, nobody had a cabin up north or...after the ball game that was about it.

RM: You just hung out and talked?

MR: Yes. Try to pick something up.

RM: Something, as in a girl?

MR: Yes [laughs].

RM: How'd that work for you?

MR: Not very good [laughs].

RM: I heard it was quite the place to meet people.

MR: Oh, yes, lot of different people met there.

RM: You said the resorts were still drawing people in during this time for vacations?

MR: Yes, yes. I don't remember when they closed along [Highway] 55 there. I think they were still open when I got out of the Army in '56. I couldn't tell you for sure. The farmers never went to the resorts.

RM: Farmers didn't get to do anything fun.

MR: That's true. That's why I'm not a farmer. It was like being in jail, milking every morning and night.

RM: It doesn't leave a lot of free time. How did the visitors in town interact with the locals?

MR: In town, you know, like Rockford, there weren't any visitors that I can remember. Anybody that's a stranger who was going to come in...it was just farmers coming into town, selling the eggs on Saturday night and getting their groceries. That was about it.

RM: The people who came to the resorts usually stayed out on the lake?

MR: Yes, far as I know. I never knew of any that came in around town here.

RM: Did you ever go fishing out there?

MR: No, I grew up right on the river, so I fished there, mostly. That's all we had to do in the summertime, was go fishing.

RM: On the Crow?

MR: Yes. Working on the farm. Other than that, well, what we had to do was go fishing.

RM: What did you catch in the river?

MR: Mostly bullheads, carp, that was about it. A few suckers.

RM: Had the nice muddy flavor!

MR: The bullheads were pretty good. Skin them, so they were pretty good. Carp we'd just feed to the chickens. Suckers had so damn many bones in them you couldn't do nothing with them [laughs].

RM: I'd heard some of the bars had coon—

MR: Coon feeds? Oh, yes. The Transformer had them a lot. Other than that, I don't remember any of the bars in town had them except the Transformer, that's the only one I can remember.

RM: Did you ever go?

MR: Yes, they're good.

RM: Tastes like chicken?

MR: [laughs] I don't remember it tastes like chicken, but it was good. In fact, we raised coons on the farm for awhile. My Dad had a twelve by twelve cage and raised them. He'd kill off the ones in the fall, keep a couple breeding couples and kill off the old ones and skin them and sell them off for, I don't know at that time what he got for them...seventy-five cents, probably a dollar for a coon?

RM: I didn't know that happened.

MR: He's the only one I knew that did it.

RM: Where did he sell the pelts?

MR: I don't know, I don't remember where he sold them.

RM: It's interesting. Did you do any hunting?

MR: Yes, did pheasant hunting mostly. I did duck hunting, but I didn't care for duck that much. I mostly liked pheasant. I never went bear hunting. Didn't care for venison that much. So just pheasants from the farm, round the country or...

RM: You said Highway 55 went between two of the bars?

MR: Well, it came right here though town, across the other bridge, came down where the barber shop is, made a hard left, went up here to this corner, out toward Buffalo. So it was right down the main drag, Highway 55.

RM: Then you said it veered off of County Road 50?

MR: Yes. Where the old town hall is. Went off to the right. I don't know what street that is or what the name of it is now, but that's where 55 split off from 50, came out right this side of where Ingleside Well Drilling and Engineering is by Loretto.

RM: You said that was where the Transformer Inn was?

MR: No, the Transformer was up on the Greenfield Road, and right where the plant was, the Transformer was right alongside the transformer.

RM: It was across the street from another one?

MR: Yes. Sipe's Bar was kitty corner across from... well at that time it was [Highway] 55.

RM: How did Highway 55 being right there by those bars help them?

MR: Well [chuckles] at that time there wasn't a helluva lot of traffic, you know, so I don't know. It helped them. It was the main drag coming out from Minneapolis. Came right through downtown Hamel and then went to Buffalo and Maple Lake, and so that was about the only main drag that you could—well, Highway 12 was there, too.

RM: Otherwise a lot of other roads were still gravel?

MR: Yes. County Road 10 was gravel until I was in high school. They black-topped it, you know. Highway 55 was black-topped back as far I can remember, because that's where the Leiderback came in, the bus stopped down in there for downtown.

RM: Which bus?

MR: Leiderback?

RM: L-I-E?

MR: Leeder—Bach...L-I-E-D-E-R-B-A-C-K I think. They were local, but actually they had a farm right west out of town here on 115.

RM: They ran the bus?

MR: Leiderback...and then what the hell was the name of it changed to? Somebody bought them out. Can't remember what it was called after that. But they had a terminal this side of downtown Minneapolis, I don't know where, somewhere around 7th street. I was there once, can't remember exactly where it is.

RM: Where did it start?

MR: That I don't know. I only rode it once and that was from here to Minneapolis and back. Went in grade school. I think we went to the [mutter] or the circus or something like that, some damn thing. That's the only time I ever rode it. Course, then they had passenger trains that were still going through here on the Soo Line.

RM: What year did those stop?

MR: Oh, God...I suppose about the end of World War II, somewhere around there, because I know when I was in grade school at Country School at Twin Ponds, our teacher had to send a telegram for something or other. I had to bike from Twin Ponds up to the depot up here to send the telegram.

RM: How far of a bike ride was that?

MR: About four or five miles, I suppose.

RM: The depot was still running in the '40s when you were in grade school?

MR: Late '40s, yes.

RM: How many trains would come out here?

MR: I don't know how many would come through here.

RM: Did you ever ride it?

MR: No, no...no only rode one train in my life and that was to go pick up that AWOL in California, which was nice. We rode First Class going out, but coming back we had to be handcuffed to him the whole time. That was no fun. It took a two day train ride.

RM: Boys are always into trains and motors and tractors and things, did you ever go down to the depot and just watch the trains?

MR: No, nope. Could hear them from the farm, sometimes, if the wind was right, but I don't remember...I mean, nobody ever [mumble] or whatever it was.

RM: Could you hear the bands as well?

MR: No.

RM: You said that Hillcrest was also Dorn's resort?

MR: Well, if the location is right on here [points to paper map] that's known by what I knew it was Dorn's. Maybe they called it Hillcrest, I don't know, but I would know it as Dorn's resort.

RM: Was it the Dorn family that owned it?

MR: Yes.

RM: What were their first names?

MR: I don't know, I have no idea.

RM: Then there were other resorts that you remember, like Mielke's resort?

MR: Well, I was up there once because Joanne Rogers was a grade ahead of me in school, so we were out there once for something or other. I don't remember how many cabins he even had. I think he had the cabins and that was it. But it couldn't have been a helluva lot of them.

RM: They were wooden cabins? Can you tell me more about them?

MR: No, I don't remember [mutters] probably just...even at that time, they didn't have running water, they had outhouses...I imagine they had electricity then, but wasn't inside of them so I don't...

RM: There was a sweet shop there too?

MR: Not that I remember. Could have been, but I don't remember one.

RM: There was like a gazebo...?

MR: That was the next resort down.

RM: At which one?

MR: Would've been [papers rustle] ah...Fredericks resort. It would have been that one, Fredericks resort. It was right on the other side of the railroad tracks.

RM: Did you ever ride your bike down there?

MR: No, no...always see it from the highway.

RM: Did your classmates go down there and—

MR: No.

RM: Hang out more?

MR: No.

RM: So it really was just for the resort people that were going there. I'd heard there were some pretty heavy, flat bottomed boats on the lake?

MR: I don't know, we never went fishing there. I imagine at that time that...that's all they had was wooden, flat bottom.

RM: Why do you think Shady Beach kept up so much longer than the other ones?

MR: That was the newest one there, you know, Wally Georges built it, I don't remember exactly when, but he lived in it with his family. Part of it was a bar but I think they had food there. I never spent that much time there either. Probably...I don't remember when that closed, but it's been closed for a long time.

RM: So for you, growing up in town, it was a whole different world.

MR: Oh yes. Like I said, I grew up three miles out of town. The only time I saw town was Saturday when we sold the eggs and got the groceries. That was about it, till I got in high school.

RM: And then?

MR: School obviously, playing ball, I started playing town ball when I was fourteen.

RM: Would you ride your bike in for that, too?

MR: No, my dad usually came in with me. He brought me in for baseball games.

RM: You met the town kids then as well as the country kids?

MR: Yes, when I started high school, yes, yes...well, most of them were from out of town. There was only, what? One, two I think that lived in town, actually. The others were country kids.

RM: You'd gone to the one room school house before that?

MR: Yes. Eight years.

RM: How did it change when you went from the one room school house to the high school in town?

MR: Not much change that I can remember. Oh I say, we're all country kids except for two of them that I think lived in town here. So it wasn't much that change.

RM: You still knew each other. The middle school was the high school?

MR: Yes, the one right up here.

RM: On the hill.

MR: Yes. That was the only school, twelve grades.

RM: So everybody went to the same school.

MR: Yes, we were the biggest class that started there in '47. There were twenty-four of us. We ended up with fifteen graduated.

RM: Really? People just—

MR: Moved away, one went in the Army, went to Korea...that was about it. Like I said, the rest of them all moved away.

RM: How did you get to school, then?

MR: School bus. We had three busses [laughs].

RM: Quite the fleet!

MR: Yes [laughs] two of them went to Hennepin county, one of them came over to Wright county here. Some of them [the students] had a pretty long...you know, they went out all the way to 116 by Hamel

RM: They'd really pick everybody up!

MR: Yes. Well, I could have gone to either Buffalo or Rockford. Both busses came by.

RM: So why did you choose Rockford?

MR: It was closer to home, you know? Why the hell would I want to ride all the way over there to Buffalo for? I didn't know anybody there, I know people here.

RM: Sure. So baseball was your entertainment?

MR: Yes. That was about it.

RM: Do you remember how many guys were on the team?

MR: Well, in high school we didn't have enough kids for a football team, so we all we had were baseball and basketball. I suppose there was ten, eleven, twelve of us.

RM: Was it expected that you were going to play baseball?

MR: Not really. I never had a baseball in my hand until I started high school.

RM: Why did you join?

MR: What else are you going to do? [laughs]

RM: Something other than farming!

MR: Yes [laughs]. That's all there was...baseball or basketball.

RM: You must have liked it, you stuck with it.

MR: Oh, yes. I lettered four years in baseball and three years in basketball.

RM: You played both? Which did you like more?

MR: Baseball.

RM: Why?

MR: Just liked it more. I was a pitcher, so I was into the game all the time. It was more fun.

RM: What was your favorite throw?

MR: Fastball. That's all I knew how to throw. Like I say, I never had a baseball in my hand till I got into high school [laughs].

RM: Didn't they give you some training?

MR: No, we never had any training. We never had a decent coach until I was a senior. We never had a uniform until I was a senior. Before that, we had some guy who thought he knew about baseball but he didn't know diddly [laughs]. But then, like I say, my senior year, we got a guy who knew what he was doing. That was the only winning season we had.

RM: So it was tough to go up against the other teams?

MR: Yes. As I say, we never had uniforms or anything, you know. You had a bunch of farmers [laughs] ...

RM: Little different than it is today.

MR: Oh yes, god yes. My grandson just graduated last spring from Highland Park, Texas, and there are five hundred and some kids in his grade. He played baseball. They got two sets of uniforms—they have travelling uniforms and they have a home uniform. They don't go to games in just an old school bus, they get a charter bus, you know. Yes, it's a *lot* different [chuckles]

RM: What are the benefits and the...not benefits...to this?

MR: I don't know. You got a lot of benefits. Like I say, we had to go by car to away games. We had a couple guys that could get a car and then the coach would drive his car, so between about three cars; we'd get enough guys in. Sure isn't like that with the charter bus and all that, you know [laughs]. No, it's unbelievable. The high school he went to had a football field that, well, of course, Texas is football crazy, but they had a football stadium that they built that most of the colleges around here would...they had an indoor soccer ball practice field.

RM: A little different from your basketball, court too, I imagine?

MR: Yes, the old Town Hall where you had braces across the ceiling, so if you shot from a long ways out, you had to shoot over one of those braces [laughs].

RM: You made sure you were a little closer?

MR: Yes.

RM: What position did you play in basketball?

MR: Center, or forward. Center, mostly.

RM: Did you have a little more luck with coaches?

MR: No. no [chuckles] no...we had this one coach, his name was Buckles. I don't remember his last name. He came to practice one time and he had some new plays. He got them off of bubble gum cards! Yes! We didn't have much for coaches...except, I say for our senior year. Then this same guy that coached baseball, he also coached basketball...it was a little better [laughs].

RM: Wouldn't happen today either, would it?

MR: No...no. Christ, now they have coaches, assistant coaches, and assistants for assistants...

RM: Did the kids care, though?

MR: No...you know, we didn't know any better. You know, they'd just longer play and didn't give a damn.

RM: Was something fun to do.

MR: Yes.

RM: What else was there in town for places to eat and things to do?

MR: The café down there...it's always been a café as long as I can remember. That was the only place to eat back then, until the Rockford House got going and they had food. Otherwise, it was just that café down there, it was the only place in town to get a malt or burger or...

RM: You'd go down and do malts and ice cream?

MR: Whenever we could afford it, which wasn't too many times.

RM: How much were they?

MR: You could get a burger and malt for fifty cents, you know. I don't think it was even fifty cents. It was fifty or less, you know, it wasn't any more than fifty cents.

RM: Where did you get your money from in high school?

MR: Working on the farm. Then when I started playing baseball I got a little under the table money.

RM: How'd you do that?

MR: Illegally [laughs] That helped out a little, you know. My first year I played I got twenty dollars for the season. Twenty bucks at that time was a lot of money when I say malt and a burger was fifty cents.

RM: So that was just to stay on the team? Just think how many uniforms you could have bought!

MR: Yes! [laughs].

RM: How did World War II affect things around here? Like the cafes and bars?

MR: Nothing except for rationing, you know. Sugar, gas. If you wanted to get a tube of toothpaste, you had to turn in the old tube, otherwise you couldn't get a new one. I think that was the only thing that was rationed...sugar and gas that I can remember. You had, you know, gas stamps. Other than that, it didn't affect anything I can recall.

RM: How old were you?

MR: When the war started? Nine.

RM: Did you have any family that served in the war?

MR: Yes, a few cousins, but they all made it through, so you know, none of them, nobody got killed in the Second World War. Oh yes! I did...one of my cousins was in the Navy and he died when the U.S.S. Indianapolis was sunk right before the end of the war. He's the only one. That was on my mother's side.

RM: how about Korea?

MR: No...not then. A few classmates went through Korea, they all came back. One of them got shot up a little bit, but none of them died over there.

RM: Did you enlist at the same time as your classmates?

MR: No. I went all by myself. My other classmates, they went in the Air Corps, but that was four years and I didn't want to spend four years. I went in the Army for two years.

RM: When you came back here, did the town look different to you?

MR: It hadn't changed that much. Of course, we didn't come right back here. We didn't come back here until 1980. Otherwise we lived on Pioneer Trail, up by Loretto. But no it, hadn't changed all that much. Well, it had a bakery in town. No, the bakery started actually when I was in high school, but Lunds owned it when I got out of the Army. Other than that, it hadn't changed at all.

RM: The people stayed pretty much the same too?

MR: Yes, yes, until that time you know, there weren't too many newcomers who moved in. There weren't many new houses built. Later on, they started building divisions all around town here. We got stoplights [laughs].

RM: The mark of a successful town!

MR: Yes. The water tower...otherwise they all had their own wells and own septic systems.

RM: Even in town?

MR: There was a well here, a septic system.

RM: When were the water towers put in, then?

MR: God, it was after I got out of high school, because we owned that brick house over here where the veterinary is now? So I dug the holes for the septic tanks by hand, and that was a year after I got out of school. About '52. There was no sewer or nothing then, yet.

RM: That's a lot of work.

MR: Yes.

RM: Sounds like you were a hard worker?

MR: You know...kept busy. Had to have beer money [laughs]

RM: Now the truth comes out [both laugh]

There was another resort here that you mentioned...Raeger?

MR: That what you call Frederick's resort, over here. A family by the name of Raeger owned it when I got out of the Army. Their son worked at the same place I did. I think they were from Illinois, if I remember right. They just came here in the summertime to run the resort.

RM: And otherwise it was closed up?

MR: Yes, yes. It was all closed up in the winter. Lake Sarah and the whole works, it was all shut down.

RM: The resorts and everything? I know the dance hall closed, but the resorts closed, too?

MR: Oh yes, yes. The only thing, I think, well...I don't know what you call it on here, but we called it Bud Epple's. Elm Beach Resort...I think that stayed open all year. Then Shady Beach resort, the house, the old farm house up on the hill, they kept that open, but the dance hall down by the lake, they shut that down in the wintertime.

RM: Because there was no heat?

MR: No.

RM: You said you worked with Frederick's son?

MR: No, Reager's. Johnny Raeger. We worked at the same place. Well, he married a local girl here, so he stayed around here.

RM: Tends to happen when you marry the locals, right?

MR: Yes.

RM: Where is Eleanor from?

MR: Hamel, yes. Not too far. They were originally from down in Colford, Robbinsdale. When her Dad got out of the Army, he bought the farm by Hamel, that's where she grew up for most of her life.

RM: Because she wanted to get out of farming, too?

MR: She always tells me how hard she worked on the farm, I don't know. You see, there were six girls and one brother. She always says, "Yes, my damn brother always getting to drive the tractor, we had to work!" [both laugh] Then her Dad drove a truck farming, so they picked pickles, cucumbers and tomatoes, and melons and hauled them down to farmers market.

RM: That's some tough work as well.

MR: Yes. Of course, she's short, so wasn't too far from the ground [laughs].

RM: I know how that feels!

MR: Yes, I think she's shorter than you [laughs].

RM: What did the two of you do for fun when you had a chance?

MR: Not a helluva lot. Go to movies at Terrace in Robbinsdale, Lake Sarah...that was about it, before we were married.

RM: So that was the hot date?

MR: Yes.

RM: How long were you together before you got married?

MR: [mutters] six years? Since high school. Since I was a sophomore in high school. She was in eighth grade.

RM: How did you meet?

MR: In school.

RM: She came all the way out from Hamel?

MR: Yes, like I say, her bus went to 116 and Hamel there and up this side.

RM: What about later on, in the '60s, when you were married, what did you do for fun together?

MR: Go to bars with our friends, baseball games, that was about it. You know, had kids on the way from '57 to '62.

RM: Keeps you busy.

MR: Yes.

RM: How do you find life different now, to growing up?

MR: It's a lot different, I suppose. Everything...prices are all higher, you know. We go on vacation, which we couldn't growing up, didn't go farther than Loretto or Hamel, Burschville [laughs].

RM: It was the big day out!

MR: Yes...other than that, nothing. Dull life.

RM: I wouldn't say "dull". You worked a lot.

MR: Yes, like I say 15, 16 years I worked two jobs.

RM: Yes, it doesn't leave a lot of time for anything. Was there anything else about the resorts and the bars that you can tell me? Tidbits?

MR: No, not that I remember...no, nothing. Nothing too exciting.

RM: I heard there were a lot of fights at the bars?

MR: No, not that I remember.

RM: So you weren't in the middle of them?

MR: No, not a great deal that I...no. Once in awhile, you know. There was a...wasn't excessive that I remember.

RM: Well, I would really like to thank you for your time doing this, I really appreciate it

MR: Pleasure.