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BEN MINTON

Interviewed by Catherine Jones
9 December 1987
OHRC accession #88-65-1,2

INTRODUCTION

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I, Ben Minton, hereby give
Interviewee (please PRINT)
my oral history interview with Catherine Jones,
Interviewer (please PRINT)
which was conducted on 12/9/87, to Indiana University.
Date

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In full accord with the provisions of this Deed of Gift, I hereunto set my hand.

<u>Ben Minton</u>	<u>12/9/87</u>
DONOR	DATE
<u>Catherine A. Jones</u>	<u>12/9/87</u>
INTERVIEWER	DATE

PAOLI PROJECT
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

Biographical Data Sheet

I. INTERVIEWEE/NARRATOR DATA

Full Name: Benjamin Minton
(First) (Middle) (Last)

Address: Rt. 3, Paoli, IN 47454

Phone: 812-723-2425

Date of Birth: 12/11/1906 Place of Birth: Paoli

Sex: M Ethnic Origin: ?

Education: 7th grade

Occupational History: started working at 11 yrs. old at Handle Company; went
to Michigan to work for seven years, and returned to Paoli during the Depression;
resumed work at the Handle Comp. and worked there till retiring.

Special interests, hobbies, etc.:

Father's Name and occupation: farmer, logger and factory worker

Mother's Name and occupation: housewife

II. INTERVIEWER DATA

Full Name: Catherine A. Jones
(First) (Middle) (Last)

Local address: 211 S. Grant, Bloomington, IN 47401
and phone

Permanent Address: 11705 Eden Glenn Drive, Carmel, IN 46032; 317-844-7935
and phone

Date of Birth: 8/8/59 Place of Birth: Staten Island, NY

Association with the Paoli Project: graduate assistant and researcher 1987-
88.

Subject of interview: life history review; work experience

Number of Tapes: two

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

INTERVIEWEE: Benjamin Minton

INTERVIEWER: Catherine A. Jones

SUBJECT: History of Paoli

DATE: December 12, 1987

TRANSCRIBER: Paul Russell

Jones: [I'm Cathy Jones and I'm here with Ben]...Minton, at his home in Paoli. Let's start out at the beginning. Can you tell me where you born and...

Minton: I was born in 1906, just about a mile straight back here. And then, the schoolhouse was built the year I was born, the schoolhouse here.

J: The schoolhouse here that you now live in was...

M: ...yes, was built the year I was born. And we lived there until I was eight years old. Then we moved to town. You know where Mitworth's (?) is?

J: Where...?

M: Mitworth's, there on the West Main Street as you come down.

J: Mitworth?

M: Yes, and that there, it's a filling station right across, well, it's right where you turn to go over to the schoolhouse. You know where the schoolhouse is?

J: Yes. Yes.

M: It's right near it.

J: Oh, sure, sure.

M: And we lived on a, on that bank just the other side of that...well, it's a Mitworth's now, it's a automobile parts now. We lived just the other side of that.

J: Now, were both of your...where were your parents from?

M: Well, they was all born in Orange County. [cuckoo sounds]

J: And how about their parents?

M: Their parents was born...well, my granddad was born in Virginia, and he was in the Civil War, and in some way they got out here. And he was married three times. He married, the first wife died in childbirth. And left one daughter by her. And then, my dad's...my great-, my grandmother was, they had three kids, his second wife.

J: This is on your father's side, right?

M: Yes, on my father's side. And he had, they had three kids by him. And then she died, I think she died of T...of TB or what. Anyway, she died. And then, he married the third wife, and they had one boy.

J: Any daughters?

M: No, just that one boy...

J: Just the one child?

M: ...well they was two daughters, one by his first wife and one by his second wife. And then they...on my mother's side--now, she was born down in, oh, Prospect; do you know where that is?

J: I haven't been there, but right. It's...

M: But if you turn off there at Prospect and go back, oh, north.

J: About how many miles from here?

M: I'd say it's about 11 miles. And her name was Runyan. And they...I couldn't say what year they got married, but they born in the '70s. So, then they...Mother died when she was about 69, and Dad died when he was 85. So, we grewed up just like normal kids, you know, just...they didn't have things to play with like they do now, they...if they had anything to play with, they made it.

J: Right. So, when you say "just like normal kids", I've grown up in such a different time, maybe if you can tell me more about what it was like, you can help me understand it better.

M: Well, it's a...they...we just made, like you want a sled, you made it. They didn't have boughten sl--well, they did, but you couldn't afford them. [laughs] Everything back then, well, you taken...well, a dollar...ten cents an hour was what you got. That don't sound reasonable, but that's right. It was...your wages was ten cents an hour.

J: At the time when you were...?

M: When I was growing up.

J: That's what your Dad got?

M: My dad, when he were out, he, I think he might have got, what he done was more farming and logging, that's what he done for a living. Of course, he made a little more than that. But just, if he went out on common labor, it was ten cents or twenty, twenty cents was top! In World War I. Twenty cents an hour was tops. For most all factories. And then your...back in different, it finally got up to twenty cents, or twenty cents an hour. When I started work at the Handle factory in 1936, I got twenty cents

an hour.

J: Wow. Let me back track for just a second. You said that you grew up...

M: Yes, about a mile that way.

J: ...about a mile that way. Now, how many brothers and sisters did you have?

M: I had two sisters and three brothers.

J: Two sisters and three brothers, so that's six kids altogether.

M: I really had four brothers, one of...my oldest brother died when he was four years old. But I have one brother living now. He's set to be 88 the fifteenth of this month. And...

J: Is he still in Orange County?

M: No, he lives in Bloomington.

J: In Bloomington. And how about the rest of your sisters, then?

M: They're all dead.

J: Oh, gosh, I'm sorry.

M: One of them died in California, and one of them died in DeSoto, Missouri, and my brother, younger brother, he died in Oklahoma.

J: Gosh.

M: And other brother, he died in Bloomington. They used to run a lighting shop up there, before they retired.

J: When you were a kid growing up, your father was a logger, you said?

M: He hauled logs and cut wood, and just one thing and then another, just to _____. He hauled logs for different people and

he cut...a fellow by the name of Stout gave him, I think it was 40 acres of that, after he cut the timber off of it. And he give him the, aw, everything on it. Needed to hew, cross-ties you hew with a broad axe. He give him everything down in that wood and everything. And he would go in there and cut pole wood and pile up enough for about 100 cord, and then he'd hire somebody to come and cut it for him, then he'd hauled that and sold it.

J: So, after your father cleared off, cut and hauled, I guess, the prime wood, then Stout let him cut off other stuff for his own?

M: Yes, they cut the big timber off it first, and then, they give him everthing else on it, if he could just use as he pleased. He cut it for wood or cross-ties or whatever he wanted to. And then, they sold it, I mean, then they plowed it up--or they call it--used a jumping shovel. I don't suppose you ever heard of one, but it was a plow, just a single plow, about, oh, the top of it was about that high, and then, it come down to a point like that. Then, it had kind of a knife with the thing; it went down so it'd cut the small roots, but the big root, it'd jump over it. And they broke that and put it in corn for two years, and then sowed it in grass.

J: And did he also make a wage, your father?

M: Make a wage? Yes, he sold that wood for a dollar, well, it was a rick, it was what we call a cord, but it was a rick. A cord is four by four by eight. But...

J: I meant, for the people he, you know, he cut and hauled for...?

M: Well, he just sold it around over town.

J: Ok.

M: To different people. You know, they used to burn wood and coal--well, they burnt more wood than anything else, back when I was growing up. And he'd fill up their wood houses in the fall of the year for the winter. And he got a dollar a rick for it. We call it, it's a third of a cord, really.

J: So, then, was he allowed use of land as a means of payment for the work he had done for the...?

M: No, that's just what he got, that wood that he took off of it, that was for his...that was his pay.

J: Right, OK. Right. Exactly.

M: When he cut the wood or cross-ties, whatever he sold off of it, he got it for his own. He didn't have to give none to nobody.

J: And you mentioned he farmed too?

M: Yes, we had...we owned 36 acres back there.

J: Thirty-six acres. At the time, was it all farmed?

M: No, part of it was pasture. It was about 12, about half of it was tended.

J: What all did you and your family grow out there?

M: Where'd we all grow up at?

J: Yes.

M: Well, we all grew up right around here.

J: No, I'm sorry. In the garden, what did you all grow?

M: Oh, in the garden. I wondered.... Beans and beets and peas, just a normal garden. We grew lettuce and greens, mustard

greens and stuff like that.

J: Did you sell any of it...

M: N.

J: ...or was it just for the family?

M: No, they used it for their own use, all of it. They canned it. Of course, they didn't freeze it. Didn't have no freezer back then. [both laugh] We used canned corn. Now, they didn't have sweet corn back then. It was rare, sweet corn was very, very rare. They used regular old field corn, when it was open _____, and it was, if you got it just right in the roasting ears, it was--and you added a little sugar to it--and it was just as good as...or we thought it was then.

J: There were six kids, right? How did you all divide up chores? What kind of chores did you have to do, growing up?

M: Well, we just had, some of them were carrying wood or, if you're big enough, you cut wood. Just things like that, or maybe, milk, go milk the cow or feed the hogs or feed the other stock, or some stuff, just different things.

J: Would girls, would your sisters...?

M: They helped their mother in the house. Like washing dishes and stuff like that.

J: OK, and probably learning how to can and do all that stuff like that?

M: Yes.

J: So, it was the boys who were mainly doing the chopping and the hauling and stuff like that.

M: Yes.

J: Now, why did your folks move into town?

M: Well, he was...his later years, he worked at the furniture factory.

J: And it was called what?

M: Oh, it was called...it was Knox-Hutchison's Furniture Company.

J: OK.

M: He worked there for several years and then, finally, he went to Bloomington, and worked for Showers, at Bloomington, for, oh, he was there two or three years.

J: Well, do you know why he gave up hauling and logging here, to go work in the factory?

M: Well, he just got...there wasn't enough money in it to make a living, so he just went to the furniture factory, and then he worked the handle factory, where I was, for quite a little while, too, in his later years.

J: Now, when you still lived out, out here in the old place, how close were your nearest neighbors?

M: Closest neighbors? That's about, not over a quarter of a mile.

J: Were there...can you give me an idea of, say, how many families lived close by?

M: Let's see. One, two, three, four, five...six, seven, eight...about nine. About nine, describing a circle (?).

J: About nine? Do you remember them pretty well?

M: Yes.

J: Did you know them pretty well?

M: Yes, we knew them real well.

J: What was...what kind of relationship, I guess, did you have with your neighbors?

M: Well, one of them was my uncle. That was John Mann, he lived just a little ways southwest of us. And...well, in fact, our place joined his. Then, Maris (?), they lived over on the main road over there. And oh, Jones--same name you are [J laughs]--lived back, and that's where we lived for nine years. Yes, I believe we lived there nine years. No, seven years. There's a barn, big red barn--course, it's about rotted and fell down, now, but the house sat back of it, and that was where Cy Jones lived. He had a orchard in front of it. And then, Langfords, they lived on around the corner. And Weeks's, they lived right over here. And Egbert Jackson lived right down here. And...well, it was Bill Jackson, that was his dad. And then, that's how come...Bill Jackson and my dad...my dad traded our 36 acres and the house and barn for a house in town.

J: Oh really, with Jackson?

M: Yes, with Bill Jackson. And then, John Jackson, he lived down here where that new house is right on the edge of the curve. And the Thompson's, they lived on, up there just where you turn off, well you know where the historic place is there. That's where they lived, the Thompsons.

J: Right. Would you spend much...let's see, were these neighbors people that you saw often?

M: Yes, we saw them practically every day. You know, we'd see them every week, you know, and they--people used to visit a lot, back when I grew up. They don't do it anymore. Very seldom

ever see a neighbor.

J: Tell me what it was like when you saw your neighbors a lot, since I can't imagine that real well.

M: (simultaneously) Well, you know, you just talked about, oh, different things, farming or maybe what you was doing, or timber or just, you know, just first one thing and then another.

J: Would people, would people just stop by to say Hi, stop by for a cup of coffee or something?

M: Yes, they'd stop by and they'd talk maybe for 15, 20 minutes, and then go on about their business.

J: So, say, in a day, would a couple neighbors stop by?

M: Probably, yes.

J: Probably. Out of the names that you mentioned, I recognize a couple names. I realize that some of those people are still here. The Langfords and the Weeks and the Jacksons.

M: Well, there's just...only the Langfords is one of the older one's granddaughter. And one of the--well, grandson and granddaughter. The Langfords. And the Jones, there's none of them living.

J: Do you now have neighbors that you don't know?

M: No. Well, yes, I do, in one sense of the word. Those ones right where you turned around at the curve, these people in the trailer, but one of them is a little bit of a relation, she's the one that lives in the second trailer. But I don't know what her name is really. It's a cousin of mine, or I mean, a second cousin of mine, his daughter.

J: But you're not clear on...?

M: But I never did meet her or anything. But she lives in that second trailer, but the ones that live in the first trailer, I don't know them, and the one that lives in that big brick house, back off the road a little ways, I've never met him either.

J: Do you ever visit with your neighbors around here?

M: Yes, some, but not too much. We, well, we meet and talk, maybe just, you know, a little, but not...we just don't visit together.

J: But it's not like you'd go and stop by their house and stay?

M: Yes, no. But if you need one of them, all you got to do is holler and they'll be there. It's just...people don't, as I say, they just don't visit like they used to. They got so much activity, you know, other things they've got to do, and used to, women didn't work, they stayed at home and took care of the cooking and the kids, and the housework and stuff like that. But anymore, practical every woman works. Not all of them, but they more of them doing, than don't. Now, this lady that lived down here, Brinkworth, she works. 'Course Charles, Charles Jackson, that lives over there, just 'fore that you turn, where that curve is, him and his wife don't work. They're both retired. And, but William Carl Weeks, he worked for State, and his wife was a teacher, and I imagine them people in the trailer, both of them work. Now, that one that lives in the second trailer, I don't think she does, she's got a young baby.

J: When you moved into town, you were eight years old. I'm wondering, did people there still visit?

M: Yes. Yes. Maybe...they visit with...the whole town, I mean,

lots of people would come in and visit at, oh, different times of the week. But as I say, anymore they don't visit. But as I say, if you need one of them, they're right there.

J: What was it like, being a kid around here?

M: Well, we just all played together.

J: Boys and girls?

M: Well, yes. Boys and girls, both, just played together.

J: Would this be...did you play mainly with, you know, your brothers and sisters? Or just all the kids in the neighborhood?

M: Well, the neighbors and stuff like that. Then, when we moved to town, why we, oh, a bunch of us boys would get together and maybe walk to French Lick and back.

J: Walk to French Lick? How far was that?

M: About 12 miles. Eleven miles.

J: Why would you walk to French Lick? [laughs]

M: Just to be a-doing something. And then, maybe we'd walk to Orleans. Go down the railroad track.

J: Did you stop at places along the way?

M: No, we just, just...oh, just mosey along, just to be a-doing something. [laughs also] But I started work at the basket factory. Of course, it burnt, that's where Cornwell's was and it burnt.

J: That, wait, that was Cornwell?

M: Yes. You know where Cornwell's was?

J: No, I don't.

M: Well, you know where all that lumber's at down there? As you come down West Main Street? All that lumber right along the road,

right across from the filling station there? That 76?

J: Gosh, I don't think I've noticed it.

M: Well, there's a mill, Farlow's, it used to be Farlow's Mill.

J: Oh sure. OK. Right.

M: Just the other side of...just this side of that, that used to be Cornwell--used to be the Basket factory, first. I started working there when I was eleven years old.

J: When you were eleven?

M: When I was eleven years old. Ten cents an hour.

J: What were you doing?

M: Carrying water.

J: Carrying water?

M: I carried water from that well across from the Handle company there. I carried two ten-quarts buckets at a time. I had a...you seen, over in Japan, how they yoke around their ____

J: Yes.

M: That's what I...one of the carpenters down there at the mill...down there at the factory, he made me one of those, to go over my shoulder. And I carried two buckets at a time.

J: How long a haul was it from the well to where you had to carry it? As an eleven-year old kid, how long did it seem?

M: Well, it was...oh, it's about a half a quarter, I'd say, to the well, and picked, pumped the water in the buckets and carried it back down there and then we put it in a big, oh, oh, what, it seems to be, it was like layers of crock. You know, made out of crockery, they put in metal, but anyway, I kept that full all the time, for people to drink.

J: And you said it was a quarter?

M: About a half a quarter.

J: About a half...

M: ...of a mile.

J: Ok, Ok. Alright.

M: It was that...you know where the Handle factory is?

J: Yes.

M: Well, it was right, right, just a little ways down from where the corner...the east side, the east end of the Corn--or the Handle factory is. Right there, oh you don't know where anybody lives down here, I don't imagine.

J: Some, some.

M: But it was Howard Lindley, you know where he lives?

J: No, I don't. Unfortunately.

M: Well, he lives right across from the Handle factory, right down, you have to go climb down in _____, it's a real old house.

J: How many hours a week were you working?

M: I worked eight hours a day, five days a week.

J: Were there...?

M: Yes, five days a week. I made 80 cents a day.

J: What would you do with the money?

M: Well, I bought clothes.

J: Now, you bought them yourself? Or your mom would buy them?

M: Yes, I bought them myself.

J: You bought them yourself. Did you keep all that 80 cents a

day?

M: Yes, I kept it all.

J: Or did you give some to mom to help her out?

M: Well, if she needed any money, I'd give it to her, yes. And I went from there, when I was 16 years old, I went to the Chair factory. It was a cabinet factory, then, and worked there 'til--I mean, carried water there, too. And I got 20 cents an hour there. And then, as long as I kept my water jug--they had them big five gallon jugs; you fill them up and then turn them upside down--and as long as I kept those full, I could do anything I wanted to do. If I wanted to...they had craters that crated this furniture up in, you know, wooden crates, and they hired me, give me so much an end for making the ends that went on these crates, and I made about, maybe, five or six dollars a week extra over there.

J: Well, let me back track for a bit. Why, at eleven years old, did you start to work?

M: Well, I just wanted to work. I didn't have to work, but I'd just rather work than do other things.

J: Were your brothers working?

M: Yes, they worked, too. That is, I don't think they started...well, my...when Roscoe one (?)--he's the third, third kid--he, oh, he worked the basket factory, too, but he was older than me.

J: I guess what I'm wondering is, was it customary for young boys to start...?

M: (simultaneously) Yes, it was customary for them to do it.

J: OK. But yet, you wouldn't give the money to your mom? It was

money that you used...?

M: It was money that if I wanted to give, if she needed any money, well, I'd give it to her, if she didn't, why I just keep it for myself. And then...

J: You'd go to school...I guess, school was...

M: Yes, I went to school. I went to the seventh grade. I was going to school here when I quit, and I went, then I went to work up to the cabinet factory, then, and I worked there 'til I was 18, I think. Yes, I worked there 'til I was 18, and then, I quit there, and I went to Grand Rapids, Michigan.

J: When you were 18?

M: When I was 18.

J: Why did you decide...or why did you stop at seventh grade? Was it just pretty customary then? Or...?

M: It was customary then. Very seldom that--of course, people didn't have no--you see, when we was going to school here, when you went, oh, say, in the eighth grade, then you had to take a test before you go to high school. And that wasn't right. If you passed your eighth grade, you should've went right on into the high school, just like the ones in town.

J: Ohhh...

M: The ones in town didn't have to take the test. But the ones that was in the country school, they had to go take a test before, you know, school started in the fall of the year, before they could go to high school. And then, most people didn't have no way of getting there, to high school. Of course, we lived in town, but I decided I wanted to go to work, so I just...of course, it wouldn't hard to find jobs back then. Of course, they didn't pay

much, but it was a living.

J: But did you have any idea, then, what you wanted to do? As a kid?

M: No. No, as I say, I just went to Grand Rapids, Michigan, and I worked with a seating company up there. Made, oh, theater seats and church seats and stuff like that. It was the biggest seating company, made chairs, what ___ chairs, called it seating company, that was the biggest one in the United States.

J: Two questions. I know lumber's always been real important here in Paoli. At that time, were those furniture companies employing most of the people in the town.

M: Yes, you can see that, oh, the furniture company, they started in the late 1800s. There was a...then they went bankrupt in the early '30s. And then, the Chair company bought it. And they made chairs--I can't think of that fellow's name, that bought it. They came from Orleans over there. There used to be a chair company over there. Then, they moved it over here to Paoli. And they made chairs for, oh, several years. And then, they went to...now they build office furniture. You know, chairs and stuff like that. Well, they build desks, too, but they build them over at Orleans. The desk plant's over at Orleans, but they build the chairs over here.

J: And I understand that they were a major employer of men in the town?

M: Yes. Well, you see, then we had a tomato factory here, but it was only, guess you might say, seasonal job. It was way up there on top of that hill from...used to be a big smoke stack standing up

there. It burnt too. But it's, they took dynamite and blowed it, drilled a real big hole underneath there, blowed it down (?). But, the when I, as I say, when I was 18, I went to Grand Rapids, Michigan.

J: Why did you, why did you decide to leave and why did you choose Grand Rapids?

M: Well, friends of mine, fellow I run around with and his brother and his wife and his--one of his brother's already in Grand Rapids,--and he said there's lots of work up there, so we just went up there. Made a lot more money. I think I was getting, I think I started out around 50 cents an hour, and down here, I was getting about 20. [laughs]

J: So, were you going just to try and better your opportunity? Or...?

M: Yes. And then I went to...now, on account of I got laid off there and I came back home.

J: How long were you up in Grand Rapids?

M: I was there altogether about five years. Then, we went to...

J: Who did you live with while you were up there?

M: I just lived in a room, just a room and eat in a restaurant. Just get a sleeping room.

J: Did you have...like who'd you run around with and stuff like that for fun?

M: Well, we just had different friends up there to run around with. And then, I came home and then I went back. Then I started working for Leonard Refrigerator, they made ice boxes.

J: You came home because you were laid off?

M: I got laid off. Then, I came home. Then I worked up at Bloomington a while. And that's where I was working when I got

married. I was working in a box factory, up there, at Bloomington (?).

J: Is...how did you meet your wife, by the way?

M: Well, I met my wife when I was 16 years old. And we went together for quite a while, and then we, when I went to Grand Rapids, we kind of split up. And so, then I came back home, we was going together again and....

[END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE]

M: ...then 23. I was 22 when I got married.

J: And how old was your wife?

M: She was 22.

J: She was 22. Had she worked? Was she working at that time?

M: No. No. Well, she worked, done a little housework for different people before [cuckoo chimes] so--you know, it wasn't like it is. So we got married on the ninth day of February, and I wrote...you see, I got layed off up there at the refrigerator plant, ice box plant, and I came home, and I went and started work up there in Bloomington in the box factory. When we got married, why I wrote up there, this, well, he's a boss of mine, and asked him about a job, and he told me to be there the next Wednesday, ready to go to work. And then...Calvinator owned it then. They bought it from Leonard Jacks (?). It was Leonard Ice Box, and they bought him out, and I went to work for them, and the...I asked how my job was there. We was just a-staying with a couple up there that I'd stayed with before, and she'd--this

lady, she was a cripple; had one leg was, oh, about that much shorter than the other--and she didn't charge my wife no board, all I did was pay my board, and she just helped her. She had, well, she had three boarders. And I went and asked this company how my job was, or whether I was, you know, suited. They said, "Well, as long as you do what you're doing now, why, you have a job here as long as we run." So, we went and bought us a home up there. And in a year's time, they went bust--well, in 1930-29, they went bankrupt.

J: Oh, the Depression.

M: And of course, that fizzled out, and I lost everything I had, about 2000 dollars back then. Two thousand dollars was a lot of money. [wry laugh]

J: Yes, right.

M: And I never left my address to where I was a-going. And this Leonard, he was a, boy--he was a fine fellow. He just, he just hated to anybody, you know, being out of work. And he told Calvinator if they wanted to, they could go ahead and run, and just pay them as they could. And they come out of it, and they're still running up there now. And if I'd a had a forwarding address, why, they'd probably called me back, but I didn't, and we just lived hand to mouth for about two years, just kept jobs...

J: Up there?

M: No, here.

J: Here.

M: No. We came back home.

J: Yes, I figured. Would you have rather stayed up in Michigan?

M: Well, no, I think I done the right, we done the right thing

by coming back. You see, I got the job there at the Handle factory. And I knowed every, what I was going to make every week, _____ I worked there 36 years, and I was off three days on account of being sick.

J: Wow!

M: So, I knowed what I was going to make ever week.

J: So, you're saying, as it turns out, you came back and you got a real secure future, and a real secure life and you didn't have to worry.

M: Yes.

J: Were you also glad to be back home in Paoli? Or...?

M: Yes, I was glad to be back home. 'Cause we knowed everybody down in here and in a city, you don't know your next door neighbor.

J: What was it like adjusting to Michigan, that way? You know, to Grand Rapids that way? I mean, here you are, you grew up in Paoli and people visited each other and all that?

M: Well, as I say, it was a friend of mine, two friends of mine was...wanted to go up there, and I just went with them.

J: Was it strange? I mean, how did the city seem at first? Did it seem real cold or...?

M: Cold. Well, as I say, you don't know your next door neighbor. Course you get acquainted with people you work with, but as far as the neighbors concerned, they don't neighbor.

J: So, it's funny. You get to know people at work, but not the people that you live by.

M: Yes, that's right.

J: Yes, it's different.

M: All cities is that way.

J: Did you get used to it in a short amount of time?

M: Yes, you get used to _____. You just go along with your friends and forget about the rest of it. In fact, I worked for Howard Leonard for 48 years, after I quit, retired from the Handle factory, I went out to...they own, him and his boy owns, uh, dimensions (?)_____, where they make the skids, when they first bought it, for the furniture factories.

J: Dimensions? (??)

M: Now, they're in dimensions (?) more effective at maintains in dimensions, started making parts for different companies.

J: And it's called...?

M: My l_____

J: M_____

M: My-lin.

J: My-lin, oh, yeah, right.

M: It's out on 56, out toward Salem.

J: OK.

M: And I done their finish work out there for twelve years. I didn't work every day. Maybe I worked for a week, maybe I'd work only two or three days a month, but if they'd had any finishing, I'd go out there and finish for them.

J: How old were you when you retired from...?

M: Sixty-five.

J: Sixty-five. Did you want to stop working at that time, or...?

M: No, I never wanted to stop, but...

J: Have you yet?

M: Yes, I've quit since my wife's been sick. I hadn't done nothing. Just sit around. That's...I don't like that. [laughs]

J: I'm sure you're anxious for her to come back and get things back to normal again.

M: Yes.

J: Well, when you were at the Handle company, after you came back from Michigan, can you tell me what you were doing and what your wage was and all that?

M: Well, I worked in the Croquet and Bat Department, when I first came back. And then, when World War II came along, I was running a saw lathes. There was a saw, about, well, an inch and a half wide, and you got half cutters, pincers, and half, or center cutters, there's four dif...five different kinds of teeth in it, and there's a way it set, and then, you put it in a lathe, and it travels. And you got a pattern there it runs on, whatever that pattern is, when it goes through there, it makes whatever that pattern is. If it's a single-bit axe handle, why it makes a single bit, stove bit makes a double, or just hatchet or whatever pattern you put in there, that's what it makes. And I run those for seven years. And then, they built the first finishing room plant, and I, then they put me in as a foreman over the, in the finishing.

J: When you were working for seven years, that was--what--about 1932 you started?

M: It...I started in '31, I think it was. Not '31, I'll take that back. (laughs) I never started 'til I was 36, 'cause they didn't own...they bought that company...see, that was the Columbus Wood

Turning Company when it first went in there, and that was built in, I think in the 16s, I mean in the teens. It was built sometime in the teens, and then they sold it to a fellow by the name of Emmet Willington and Boots Farlow. I don't know whether you ever heard of them or not?

J: Yes, Farlow I have.

M: I...then, I started in the Croquet Department and Bats. They made them...well, when they first started, they used to turn the handles, and then they, some way, they got into bats. And then, with the bats, they had a lot of off balls. You know, like a notch or something like that. And they'd use off their off balls, it started croquet. Still croquet. So, that a way, they was in bats and croquet both. And handles. So, then in later years, they built first finishing room and they run bats for not too many years after that, and then, croquet, they quit it in eighty-something, '84, '83, or something like that, on account of that parts got hard to get and.... Course they was the biggest one of those in the United States, on croquet. They put out thousands of them. And then they, in 19-- , well, in the '50s, they built another building for finishing room, it expanded, you know, for TV, started using a lot of legs. About all those TV sets had legs on them, back then, back in the...well, I think it was in the '50s, the '50s or early '60s. And they put in an automatic spray line, and they go through a booth, and then they had, when this leg got to a certain place, spray'd come on and spray it. And I took care of that. And made colors, all colors that different companies made for Cornwells and Smith Cabinet and Indiana Cabinets and, oh, one down near Albany, don't know what the name of it was, and then

over at Strasbourg (?), it was owned by Chet Smith. And we run about nine thousand legs a day on that line.

J: And this is when you were foreman?

M: Yes.

J: Was there a large increase or some increase in...

M: ...employment?

J: No, in your wage or your salary, with this promotion.

M: Well, I said when I quit there, I was getting 2.65 an hour.

J: And when did you quit?

M: '72.

J: '72.

M: Wages went up quite a bit since then.

J: You certain know a lot about the lumber industry here in Paoli, that's for sure. But I guess your whole life, really, has been spent working with wood, basically.

M: Yes. Yes. As I said, the Cornwell Company, course it burnt in seventy...

J: Was that '76?

M: '74, I think. '76, something like that. I know I'd already retired when they burned.

J: I heard that was real bad for Paoli, because they were one...

M: Yes, well, you see, they had...

J: ...they were one of the major employers.

M: ...500 employees. But now, Brittney is...they took a big part of that, they got over 300 working for them. And then, the Chair factory up there, they got quite a few people working there. And the Handle factory, of course, it's around a hundred now. And

Wabash got about 90. And My-lin out there's got fifty-some odd, I think. So, it's...there's quite a bit of work just around here in Paoli.

J: Yes. And it's diversified among different companies, not just one or two.

M: Yes. Yes.

J: Would you socialize very much with the men that you worked with?

M: Well, yes, we was all friends, you know.

J: Were you friends before you started to work together? I mean, were they...?

M: Well, a lot of them, yes. A lot of them that were good friends. Course lots of them died since I started work there. You know, the older people. I don't know any of them hardly up there now. They've either died or retired from up there. There's practically all new...practically all of it's new help up there now. They's very, very few people working ther now, that worked there when I did.

J: Really. Is that...?

M: See, I been quit for near 16 years.

J: Is that a funny feeling to go to...?

M: I don't go up there too much. I...kind of seemed like home, and it makes a fellow feel kind of funny being, you know....
But...

J: Yes. Well, so, what was that like? I mean, here you'd work with people that you knew well, but...so, I mean, they were...

M: Well, it was, oh, it was just a pleasure to go to work, really.

J: Oh, was it really?

M: Yes. As I say, I went to work lots and lots of days that I didn't feel like it, but when you get to work and get busy doing something, you forget about it and get to feeling better.

J: Just because you'd get so involved, 'cause you had to concentrate?

M: Yes, you was involved in what you're doing, why it just takes your mind off of your, off of you and you feel better.

J: Would you have much time to socialize with the guys there, or were you pretty busy?

M: Well, you know, at noons...they didn't have rest periods back then. Now, any more, some of them has two of a morning.

J: Two a morning?

M: The Chair factory up there has two rest periods every morning. And one in the afternoon.

J: Wow! That's the most I've heard of.

M: But they don't...back then, you worked from seven o'clock 'til twelve, and from one o'clock 'til--you only took off an hour for noon, you know, one o'clock to whatever time you quit, whether it was five or six o'clock.

J: Well, I mean I assume you could leave if you had to go to the bathroom or...?

M: Oh, yes, you could go in...if you had to go to the bathroom, or anything like that, of course. But...

J: But just to stand back and have a cigarette or...?

M: Cigarette, no. Couldn't do that. Now, Handle factory, you could smoke...go out and take a smoke, but most companies,

you didn't smoke in the factory. Only at rest period, I used to smoke at rest periods, when they started having rest periods. Before that you didn't.

J: I guess that could also be safety too, in a sense, I mean, with all that wood there. You mentioned something about work seeming like home.

M: Well, it was just another...my second home, really. [laughs] I put in so many hours there. Sometimes, I'd put in 15, 16 hours.

J: A day?

M: A day.

J: Why?

M: Well, it had to be got out.

J: Special orders and such?

M: Yes, special orders, and you had to get it out, so...

J: Would everyone be expected to...?

M: No, not all of them, but they'd be, you know, a few of us, work like that. But it's like when I worked the tomato factory, too, before I started the handle factory, and those tomatoes, sometimes you'd work 24 hours. You see, your tomatoes, that's something you cou--they don't keep, you had to get rid of them. That was an interesting place to work.

J: Was this during the Depression when you were just doing odd jobs?

M: Yes. It was in the...I started work there when I was...in '33, I think, '32 or '33, tomato factory, and, you see, the tomato factory, they had great big concrete tanks, two of them, and the farmers would bring their tomatoes in there, and they'd, you had a grader there, see what they was, and then while he was grading, he'd

empty them in this big tank, and that, of course, that washed them. And then, they had a...oh, a conveyor that took them up and put them on another conveyor, and then they'd go through--long as from here to the bathroom or longer--and then they had water running on them, still washing them off, and then they'd go...and then, ladies setting on each side of that conveyor, grading tomatoes, keep the...take the rotten ones or bad blotch or stuff like that out. Then, they dropped down into a cyclone. You know what a cyclone is, but it's a great big thing and it's got big wooden paddles on it, and then, it's got a big screen on the bottom of it, like a colander, and that...oh, course, was propelled with a big electric motor, and that would really spin, and it'd take that there, them tomatoes and knock the pulp out of them, and they'd go through the screen, and the peelings and the seed would go on out another conveyor and go on outside. And then, they'd go on...it was a factory built on three different levels, the high one, you know, where the grading was--there was four, four different levels--way up high, was a building up there, and then, they just kept a-dropping down the concrete steps, maybe oh, six or eight feet down, and they'd go down to that level, and it's was all flowing downhill. They didn't have nothing to...didn't have to pump anything, it was all just flowed downhill, and they was the first people what put tomato juice on the market. They couldn't patent it, on account of it being made in the home, but they was the first ones that ever put it on the market, tomato juice.

J: And how long did you work there?

M: I worked...I worked the Handle factory in the winter time, and then, in the summer, and then in the fall, I'd go back up tomato factory and work. I worked there about nine fall...you know, nine years, just in their season. Course their season only run about three months.

J: Well, how about...what would happen at the Handle factory?

M: Well, the handle factory, what we, what I was doing down there, it would drop off, see, didn't...I had to either...and the handle factory was good to me, they let me go up there and work them three months, and then I'd come back to the handle factory as soon as I got done up there. And then, sometimes I'd go work up at the tomato factory...or I mean I'd come back down if they needed something done, I'd come back down to the handle factory and do that of a night, after I got done up there, but sometimes you just worked, as I say, when tomatoes started to coming in, why they had to be worked up.

J: Was that something that was expected of people that worked there?

M: Yes. About everybody would...

J: Just understood that...?

M: Never complained, they just...

J: Yes. Getting back to the Handle factory for a moment, you were talking about how sometimes you end up...it was necessary to work late at night...to work some long hours.

M: Usually worked 'til about nine o'clock at night.

J: Usually?

M: Yes.

J: From seven o'clock, you said, 'til nine o'clock?

M: Well, see, you had off an hour at noon, and off an hour at supper time. Then, you'd go back and work 'til eight or nine o'clock at night.

J: Was this because you were foreman and you had more responsibilities....?

M: No, I wasn't foreman then, I was just working, just common labor. But...

J: Would everyone...I mean, who would....?

M: No, they wouldn't. Just maybe two or three'd have to come back and work like that.

J: Would they ask you or would you volunteer?

M: Yes, they'd ask us to come back. Lot of times, you know, there's a order of bats or something coming out, you had to go back in and brand them, get them branded and packed, and in time to ship them out.

J: Well, I guess I'm just curious, I mean, was it something that you wanted to do because, you know, the company felt like home to you and that, or did you kind of have to do it, or....?

M: Well, it wasn't really have to...in a way, it was and in another way, it wasn't, but of course back then, you grabbed every dime you could get. It was just a necessary thing to do, if...when you was a-working.

J: I guess, of course, by that time you were married.

M: Yes.

J: And you had kids?

M: Yes, I had four kids.

J: And you had four kids.

M: When we moved here we had four kids.

J: This house, the old schoolhouse, when did you move here?

M: Moved here in '41.

J: In '41. Where did you live during the Depres--I mean, around that time, when you were here?

M: I lived over on Cy Jones place, over there we were talking about. We lived over there seven years. And when we first came back from Grand Rapids, Michigan, we lived with her mother for a while. My wife's mother.

J: Did you notice...you bought this in '41...did you notice very many...you'd been away at Grand Rapids for a while, five years or so. When you came back, did you notice many changes or any kind of changes that had taken place?

M: No, no, not a great many changes. About everything was just about the same as when we left.

J: When did things start changing a bit more?

M: Well, in ___ World War II, then things just started to...

J: What were the changes with that?

M: Well, there was just more work, you know, was available, and then people just got, well, they got cars. That's when the cars got, you know--a lot of cars. [People didn't visit other people, you had someplace else to go. They'd just...[chuckles] go to Bedford or Bloomington or Indianapolis or Louisville or.... They was, you might say, on the road all the time. But back when they was horse and buggy days, why it was either walk or...[laughs] And they didn't go like they did and they visited. In the...when we first moved on the Cy Jones place over there, we took--well, they did it before, too--when they thrash wheat, see they cut their wheat,

chopped it, and then the thrashing machine come along, and thrash your wheat or oats, whatever there was, and all the farmers, all the neighborhood around here, would join in and come in and help you thrash. Then, when you go done there, you'd go to the next neighbor 'til you got the whole neighborhood done. And then, in the fall, you come in and you cut your corn and chopped it, and they come in and shred your corn, and they done the same thing, they went around and all of them helped 'til everybody's crops was in and they don't do that anymore.

J: This is how you remember it when you were a child?

M: Yes.

J: What other kinds...?

M: Even when I was, after I was married they done that.

J: Oh, really. Was...you moved here in '41, was it still being done that way?

M: Not too much, no. You see, your combines come in then. So, that's why...see, there's a big change. Your combines that come in and think some of them's got six and eight heads on them, they get six and eight loads at a time.

J: ...So, in a sense, you didn't need your neighbors to help you out the same way?

M: No, because you see your, most of them owns their own combines and they don't...but they won't step in. Used to they didn't know what a baler, hay baler, was. They shocked it or wind-rowed it, picked it up with a wind-row and put it on the wagon, and took it in, and throwed it off. And now, they got, it's the wrong time of the square bales, and it's a lot easier to get rid of it, then. Now, they got them big round bales and one guy does it all.

J: Oh, right.

M: So, it's awful big change in the last 50 years. Last, well the last 30 years, a lot of change in the way people handles things.

J: What else do you remember neighbors doing together when you were young?

M: Well, we used to have wood cuttings.

J: What was that for?

M: Well, they'd go in, you know, like people was sick, it was same way with crops. If you was sick, your neighbors would come in and do all your work for you. They'd cut your wood and they'd get your corn shredded or your wheat harvest or...all that stuff. They'd come in...the neighbors'd come in and do it.

J: Wow.

M: But anymore, they don't that. They just...

J: What would someone do now, I wonder? What would someone do now, I wonder? Would they...?

M: Well, if you need help, they'll come in and help you, yes. But it's what I say, they just don't do like they did back when we was growing up.

J: How do you feel about, about these changes?

M: Well, it's just that's it comes draggling (?), you just, you just come in with it just like...

J: You don't notice it until...

M: You don't notice it 'til you go, you just go into it, just like it's come...the different changes, and it doesn't seem like, it don't, it really don't make really any difference. So you just

get used to it and don't pay no attention to it.

J: Did you suddenly have one time when you realized, "Wow. Things have really changed!"

M: No, no necessarily. It just...it's, as I say, it's just been a kind of a gradual change and it's just...it's...

J: Well, if I were to ask you when were or when are the good old days in Paoli, what would you tell me?

M: Well, I couldn't say it's much difference than it is right now, really. As I say, it's just come in gradual, and you don't really pay any attention to the changes really. Just gradually comes in and you just get used to what it, the way it is, and go from there.

J: So, in a sense, you're saying, things haven't really changed.

M: No, they really haven't. As far as living's concerned, you just, as I say, you just go in with it.

J: It seems like it's the same because you're just going along...

M: You're just going along with it. But it's...we've had a good life, but we've had, sometimes we had some pretty tough times. Back when we first got married.

J: Going up to Michigan, and then during the Depression and stuff?

M: Yes, and coming back here, you see, and then, you had, well, just whatever job you could catch, that's what you took.

Sometimes, I walked...me and my brother-in-law walked five miles, cut logs all day. And walked back home at night.

J: Was your...did you have kids yet, during this time?

M: Yes. When I had, when we up to Michigan. Harold, he was born in Michigan, and Thelma...or Trudy was born there in that house up

there, you know, as I said, the other side of the porch place (?).
And Thelma, she was born there, too.

J: So you had...?

M: We lived in two back rooms, back there, on the, my dad's
place.

J: So, when the Depression hit, you had how many kids?

M: When the Depression hit, we had all of them by the end of the
Depression.

J: You had four of them.

M: All four of them.

J: Was your wife working too, if money...?

M: No, my wife never did work on public work. All she done was
take care of the kids and housework and cooking and canning and
stuff like that. That's all she done--but she had a job.

J: Oh, doing all that. For sure, for sure.

M: She had her hands full. So, my Bob, he was born over on that
place, Cy Jones' place over there. And moved here in '41, he was
four years old.

J: Did you ever expect or want one or some of your kids to go
into the wood industry or what?

M: No, whatever they wanted to do. As we told all the kids, if
they wanted to go to college, we'd find some way to send them.
So, Harold, we asked him if he wanted to go, and he said no. He
was going to...he went and he was drafted into the army. And when
he come out of the army, why he went to school, to college.

J: On the G.I. Bill, though, right?

M: Hmmm?

J: He went on the G.I. Bill?

M: Yes. And he took banking. And Bob, he took agriculture first, and then he taught two years, I think it was. And then, he went to New York, Syracuse, New York. He got a grant through the government. And they sent him to Syracuse, New York, and he took up science. He got his master's there. And then, he come back to Noblesville, and he's been there ever since. [cuckoo chimes]

J: And how about the girls?

M: Well, the girls, they got married just as soon as out of school.

J: Just as soon as they were out of high school?

M: Out of high school. So, they...well, Thelma...Vivien, she got married sooner than Thelma did. Thelma got married, oh, long about the summer.

[END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO]

J: Why did you decide that, or think that if your kids wanted to go to college, you know, that you'd be willing to help them out? Did you think college was important?

M: Yes. I think that college is very important to children, any more, especially.

J: Why?

M: It's...I got a grandkid, Harold's boy. He started to college, and one of his teachers--he went to the teacher; Marty, I don't know whether you know or not?

J: In fact, he was at the house the day I was there, yes.

M: And he went one semester, and he got disheartened and quit,

that there...his teacher just...well, he just give the teachers the devil all the time. And it disheartened him and he just quit. But I think I've got him, we've got him talked in, he's going back this fall. I hope. I told him, I said, "You don't know how much, how important that is to you, to get you a education." And he'd make a wonderful teacher, for he likes kids and kids likes him. And that there is...that is something.

J: That's a gift.

M: Yes, it's a gift.

J: It is a gift. Well, why do you think college is important? Is it for, to help you get a job? Or...?

M: Well, it's for, it's to help you get a job and you get, you can get a job if you take the right training, you can get that much more money out of it, and you won't have to pinch pennies so. You take, when we growed up, why every penny counted.

J: When you were a kid?

M: Well, like when we was kids, and even up 'til ,you know, a few years ago, things been a little.... Of course, we, when we first bought this place, I made \$12.60 a week. And had four kids.

J: This was in 1941?

M: Yes.

J: And you made...?

M: \$12.60 a week.

J: Did you have to buy everything or did you have a garden?

M: We bought everything.

J: You bought everything? All your food?

M: Well, we, no, we always raised a garden. But your

necessities. Of course, we always had chickens. And we always had our meat, hogs, something like that. And, but your flour and your sugar and stuff like that, you had to buy and your kids clothes, clothes wasn't high back then; you could buy a pair of jeans for 59 cents, and, but...and our house payment was \$12.00 a month. So, we paid it out in less than ten years. So, we just, we just watched our p's and q's. [laughs]

J: Did you feel like you were really, you know, that you had to struggle to make ends meet? Or, I mean, did you worry about money, particularly having gone through the Depression?

M: No, we knowed, as I say, the job I was working on, we knowed that we was going to get that money every week, and we got down to living that means. We didn't, you know, well, if we...when we bought anything, we knowed, we had it figured out if everything, you know, went like it was, that we could pay for it. We never bought nothing unless we knowed we could pay for it.

J: You always knew the bottom line?

M: Yes. And my wife, she was the same way. She was real saving and so, and that there, that helps an awful lot.

J: Oh, yes.

M: She's been a wonderful wife.

J: Yes. Do you think, having gone through the Depression, and...?

M: That helped a lot.

J: Helped in terms of making you more aware of money?

M: More saving, and watching where you spent your money.

J: Yes. Yes. Is that something that you think you tried to knock into your kids?

M: Yes, we always tried to, you know, well, they're the same way. The kids are the same way. They...

J: Well, I guess your son's president or vice-president of the bank.

M: ...they don't jump in things that they can't see their way out.

J: When they were growing up, is this something that you really tried to teach them or do you think they just learned from seeing you?

M: Well, they just really learned from the way we lived, I think, more or less. And they always worked, they worked every...mowed the yards and stuff like that, when they was just big enough to push a lawn mower. Get out and make themselves a little extra money.

J: Do you think your kids were extra-good about that or do you think...

M: Yes, they was good, and they was good about saving their money.

J: How about...[long pause]...There is one thing I wanted to ask you about and that was, I was wondering, you know, what role the church played?

M: Well, we belonged to Ames Chapel Church down here.

J: To Ames?

M: Ames, you go down hundred, well, it's 150 and 56, together. Go down, and there's a big graveyard out there, right along the road, that's where we went to go to church.

J: When you were growing up around here, was there...?

M: Well, we went, we first went to Meth-or to Baptist Church, when we were kids. Until...and then, we kind of went to the Methodist Church there in Paoli, that there on the, this side of the square, it's not the Methodist anymore, but they sold it to some other church. The Methodist is out on 56.

J: Right.

M: And that's where we went when we was kids.

J: First to the Baptist and then to the Methodist. And then, when you grew older, do you still practice the same religion?

M: Yes.

J: Yes? Methodist?

M: Yes.

J: Were very many of your...was church...did you go to church every Sunday?

M: Well, we did, oh, 'til my wife got sick. We haven't been to...why, last Sunday, I went to church, but, oh, it's been about a year since we went to church, on account of her _____

J: Yes, sorry to hear that. [pause] When you were in town, you know, when you and your wife were here raising kids, were there many social events that went on with the church?

M: Well, yes, they...oh, Harold, he was manager of the basketball team. Bob always went to the games, but he never was, you know, in the games or anything. But Harold never did play, but they always liked, they're crazy about sports. Their whole...well, the boys is, the two boys is, the girls don't care too much about sports. Course they was in, the girls was in a lot of different things, in the...

J: In high school?

M: In high school, yes. Had one of them sororities and stuff like that, they was in that.

J: Why did you, if I can ask this, go on and practice the same religion as your parents? Was it...?

M: Well, we just grewed up that way when we was kids and we just kept up the....

J: What do you think about the way, you know, kids sometimes are today? Sometimes they will go on with the same religion, sometimes they won't.

M: I don't know, I just...I guess it's just their belief and they just, they just change.

J: Have your kids all pretty much gone on with it?

M: Yes. Yes. Yes, Bobby, he goes to United Brethren, I think. Yes, United Brethren at Noblesville and Harold, he goes, he used to go to Ames, and then he changed, went out, on account of there wasn't no, weren't any young people down there, anymore. Used to be a lot of young people down there. Anymore they're, you know, they're all grewed up. He started going out here to the Methodist Church, and William, they go out there to the Methodist Church. And Tom still goes down to Ames. Well, they all went to Ames for a long time. And then, in later years, why, they decided, Harold decided to go out here, to, it was close to....

J: Something just occurred to me. You've lived here 81 years Sunday?

M: Huh?

J: Sunday you will have lived here in Paoli 81 years?

M: Yes.

J: Happy birthday by the way. [both laugh]

M: Outside of that...

J: Outside of the time you were in...

M: ...in Grand Rapids.

J: ...in Grand Rapids. [Was there any time during that time that you ever thought about moving away from Paoli?

M: No. I never had no desire to.

J: Why?

M: Well, it was just...well, we've always knowed the people around here, in fact, the neighborhood, we know everybody. And you go in a strange place, it's kind of, it kind of gives you a funny feeling, really. So you don't know whether to say anything to anybody or anything like that. You just kind of got to gradually get acquainted with them. Some people, some people, they just don't like to talk to strangers. And when you go to a strange place it's, well, you just got to do the same thing all over again. And if you already know your people where you're at, you feel free to, you know, talk or ...different things, so it makes, it makes altogether a difference in a, going to, into a strange place.]

J: Yes. And I guess you've said your kids have all pretty much settled here.

M: Yes. Yes, they all own their own homes.

J: Right. Were you glad that they all decided to stay around?

M: Yes. They've come in awful handy while she was sick.

J: Oh, for sure, for sure. Yes.

M: [chuckles] They was..._____ they were in, she'd come out of a evening and help put her to bed. She couldn't even put no weight at all on her, that left side.

J: Oh, I didn't realize it had gotten that bad.

M: And oh, Thelma'd come out every morning and, you know, help here get her bath and get her, well, she'd fix her breakfast, everything. So, I don't know what I'd done without them.

J: Yes. It must have made you feel good to know that you can depend on your, on your family and kids so much.

M: Yes. But it's...well, I don't know how I could've done without them. I pert near got down, I thought I was going to have a heart attack one time, when I first started to try to get her up.

J: Oh, really?

M: I didn't know how to handle her. After that time, I found out real quick how to handle her. [both laugh] I'd have her to put her arm around my neck and she could help me then. She could take part of the weight, and then I could set her down. But boy, that first time...

J: Oh, so you were just straining trying to pick her up completely?

M: Yes, I was trying to lift her under her arms, and she was dead weight. But we...where we made a mistake, we should have sent her to the nursing home in the first two weeks, and she'd been home now. But they had that--what they call "home care"--and we got the wrong impression of what they done. They...we had the impression they come five days a week, and they come two. And they didn't do nothing, then they really don't...they done what they could do, but it wasn't what she needed. She needed massaging and, you know, hot towels and massage and stuff like that, and

they couldn't do that, because they wasn't a licensed...oh, what do you call it?

J: Practitioner?

M: No.

J: Therapist?

M: Therapist.

J: Therapist.

M: They wasn't licensed to do it, so they couldn't, they couldn't do it. And they said that he would come once or twice. Of course, then they found out later that he couldn't come at all, and he had, the doctor had the same impression we did.

J: Was this home care coming out...?

M: Yes, the home care comes out, see.

J: But was it from a place here...?

M: They're from out at the hospital.

J: ...here in town? From the hospital.

M: Uh-huh, the hospital. And this one woman come three days a week, but she couldn't do it either; all she done was taken, was taken her blood sugar and take it out to the hospital and get the count of it. And so, she wasn't getting no therapy at all, what little walking we done, then she got so she couldn't even walk. And so we just decided that...I hated to...it was the best for her to go down there.

J: Yes, I'm sure it's been hard on both of you to be separated this time. But I'm glad to hear she's getting better, and that's really good.

M: Yes. I think she'll be home Friday.

J: Yes, that's great. Just in time for your birthday.

M: Hmm?

J: Just in time for your birthday.

M: Yes.

J: Let me just look through here and see if there are any other questions. [pause] I guess there is one thing that I had thought to ask you about too. Here you are, you live in a community. Back when you were a kid and when you were younger, and now, too, I guess, you live in a community, you know people, you know?

M: Yes.

J: What's gossip like? I mean, do people tend to know pretty much what's going on with each other, or...?

M: Yes. They kind of know what's going on. I know...when my wife fell, neighbor over here, Charlie Jackson, and he called another one of the neighbors and wanted to know what was going on over here, and the next day, he come over and seen what was the matter.

J: How could he tell something was going on? Was there...?

M: So many cars.

J: OK.

M: Quite a few cars come down here. You see, I called the kids in when she fell, and they decided there was something wrong, and _____ the next day to find out what it was, so...that's what I say, if something happens, one of the neighbors is going to see it, and....

J: Yes, and he'll get on the phone.

M: ...he'll get on the phone, and call the rest of them. So, it's nice to live in a neighborhood like that.

J: Yes, does it makes you feel...?

M: It makes you feel more...more...

J: ...more safe?

M: ...more comfortable.

J: More comfortable, yes. When you were...goin back to when you were younger, maybe, what were the kinds of things that, you know, that would really get people talking.

M: Well, I don't really don't know.

J: Maybe that't too far back. Maybe more, you know, when you were a young adult yourself or when you were an adult. Like, you know, with the guys at the factory and stuff like that.

M: Yes. We just really went with the times.

J: You're saying at different times, different things would get people really going?

M: Yes, you just went, as I say, you just went with the times. If you, when you're growing up, if a bunch want to go swimming, we went swimming. And if they wanted to, well, used to take a slat well, something like a lathe (?). Aw, well, you know what a lathe is?

J: A lath, yes, I do.

M: And then, put a thing on the crosset (?), like that, and then, take a hook that use to have wagon wheels had the band around them, you know, and maybe the wheels, the wagon had all rotted out and didn't have wheels, we'd take them and roll them. Just for a pasttime, just to have something to do, in other words. And then, we'd build sleds and all in the winter time, and people would go to, you know, a big hill someplace and sleighride. I know back in the 1918, this road here was ten foot deep from here

down to the, where it curve down there.

J: What do you mean, ten foot deep?

M: Snow.

J: Snow!

M: It was three foot deep on the, oh, on the level, and then, it come, blow on, it blowed and drifted in this here, this used to have big banks on each side of the road, and it would fill up, plumb over the fence post. And then, there'd come a rain, on top of that snow, and froze, and you could go anywhere on ice skates, you didn't even have to look for fences or nothing. You just skate anywhere.

J: [laughing] I'll be darned.

M: And you couldn't use a sled. You used a, maybe a scoop shovel or a board or just anything; you'd ride in and slide down the hill. And at recess, noon recess, we'd go over there on that hill over there and slide down.

J: Oh, that sounds like great fun.

M: Yes. But it was...awful cold that winter, too.

J: It must have taken a long time for the thaw, too.

M: Yes. It took horses and sleds to get out of that ten foot of snow. It was about ten foot deep.

J: Did the neighbors get together and...

M: There were all the neighbors and people just got their horses out and slip (?) and opened up the road.

J: What kind of stuff would you do with the family, you know? Were there...?

M: Well, you usually had, you had the biggest part of your stuff

already home. You know, you didn't go to the store but once a week. Maybe once or twice, once every two weeks or something like that to get groceries. So you had your living in your house. It wasn't like having to get out like do now. Go to town every day, and get something to eat, on the table. That's what I say, there's a lot of, an awful lot of difference in the way people lives any more.

J: Well, keeping in mind that at the time you're talking about, there wasn't radio, maybe...

M: No, no radio and no TV.

J: ...and there wasn't TV, so what did people do to pass the time?

M: They'd read. Read magazines or books or stuff like that. Of course, you didn't have no papers, either. Some people did, but where there was one had a paper, why, they was a hundred that didn't. So they just didn't, couldn't, really couldn't afford it. Course, now, if you lived in town, why your paper was delivered to you. But out here in the country, I know, we took Indianapolis Star for 56 years, and back when we first started taking the Indianapolis Star, it was four dollars a month, and we got two magazines besides that, on top of it for the four dollars a month. Now, it's \$75 a month for just a paper. That's a lot of difference.

J: That's a lot of difference, yes.

M: [chuckles] Course, there's a lot of difference in wages, too.

J: Yes. Wow! But for a newspaper, that's pretty expensive. So, you're saying, back then, people, I guess would talk and would read?

M: Yes. They'd go, you know, different places and visit and, you know, talk about different times and different things, and what they was going to do tomorrow...

J: Do you look back on that time as being a hard time or a good time? Or both or...?

M: Well, I can't say we had a hard time. We've had some times a difficult times, and that we _____ of making ends meet, but we always made it, so...and we always had something to eat on the table. We didn't have the finest in clothes, but we had clothes. For we managed to do it.

J: Do you think things have just gotten better or...?

M: Yes, just getting better. In fact, I make more money, now, than I did when I was working, on social security.

J: Isn't that something?

M: Yes. But we lived...

J: What do you think of that?

M: ...we don't live high, but we, we can buy anything we want. We don't charge nothing, we pay cash for everything we get.

J: Well, what do you think about that, that you make more on social security than you made when you retired?

M: Well, it's...I mean, what I mean, I make more now than I did when I quit. I mean, the both those together, see, she drew a pension on me, and oh, she draws half what I draw, and both of us together makes more than I did when I quit work. We're forgetting when we first retired, but each year they gave a cost of living and that cost of living at one time was 20%. Course that shot it way up. So...but it's...but now, we make more than I did when I

quit. 'Course, now, we don't make more than I would if I was to go to work now, but...

J: Sure, but it's just funny to think that...that by just sitting here you make more than...

M: But they's, they's a lots of people, I don't see how in the world they made it. 'Cause some of them only draws about \$200 a month from the time that they...and they don't even own their own home, they got to pay rent and their heat bill and their grocery bill and doctor bills...why, they can't...I don't see how they make it.

J: Are these friends of yours or just people that you've heard about?

M: Well, it's just people that we know here in town.

J: They're older people?

M: Older people, yes. You see, some of them didn't work very much on the social security. And they just don't draw much.

J: So, they get a small pension from work, but no social security?

M: Yes. But they...well, some of them, these real older people, in fact, they didn't even work on it, they just get it, but they don't get much. But they put, a lot of them there people that was on welfare, they put them on social security. But, of course, that hurt the social security, it cuts down on the social security, and then, they, it's...say that some of these people, I don't see how in the world they....I know they wouldn't make it with a doctor bill as high as ours. We spent over \$1300 this year for medicine. That there, that cuts a hole.

J: Yes, yes. [pause] Just one last thing I had wanted to ask you.

You've, Mr. Minton, you've lived here your whole life, and I've been hearing that, say, in the last 15 years, there's been more newcomers coming into town. You know, usually people would

_____...

M: Well, it's, really, it's kids that's grewed up, here in town.

J: Yes. Their parents come, I think, usually to commute, or I'm not sure what.

M: What?

J: My understanding is that a lot of time it's families with kids and they bring the kids here and the kids go to school and grow up here.

M: Yes, grow up here, and then, course, they, as the older people retires, why, some, the younger generation just takes over. Just like it did at the Handle factory. They's a...I don't know, they's a few working yet that was working there when I quit, but there's very few. Most of them, they's all moved out (?). I don't know, let me see, about one, two, three...I know three peoples working there now that was working there when I was. No, no, four, five, there's five people working there that I knowed when I was working there.

J: Yes, but the rest of them...

M: Most of them _____, rest of them. They might be a few more than that, if I, you know, see them, but most of them is, oh, retired or died or....

J: But in town itself, there are more new people. How, does Paoli seem different now?

M: No, it don't seem any different than it ever did, but this newer

generation just keeps coming, you know, growing up. Their kids, and of course, they got a world _____ leaves and goes other places to work...

J: The kids? Yes.

M: Louisville and places like that. Course there's a lot them that works at Crane

J: What's Crane?

M: That amunition place down in, you know...you don't know where Crane is?

J: No.

M: It's about 50 miles from here. My son-in-law...my, yes, son-in-law Don Miller, the one that married Betty, he worked for thirty-some years. But you go own in by Shoals and down in, went past Shoals and down, just about 50 miles from here.

J: So, you're saying that there is change, but it's just the normal generations moving up and...

M: What they do, they work for the government. They make, they ship the powder down there, and then, they make these shells and stuff like that. They fill them with amunition.

J: And the last thing is you had mentioned that out of your four kids, you've got...

M: Fourteen grandkids.

J: Fourteen grandkids.

M: And fifteen great-grandkids.

J: And fifteen great-grandkids. Wow! How many of the grandkids have stayed around Paoli?

M: Well, most of them's away from here. Well, let's see. One of them's in Germany. He's in the Air Force. He'll be back in July.

He's been over there four years.

J: Back to live here in Paoli?

M: Yes, he lives here. That's Lily's daughter--youngest boy. And Kenny, their oldest boy, he lives there close to Indianapolis. And their daughter, she lives down, well, she still lives in Orange County. Thelma's boy, one of them lives at--John _____ -- he lives at Indianapolis. He did live _____, but his job, they moved him to Indianapolis. And Connie, Thelma's daughter, she lives in Bedford. And her youngest daughter, she's over at Purdue now. She's going to school up there. And the other daughter went to Orleans. And Harold's daughter, she lives down in Santa Clause.

J: Which is how far?

M: About 60 miles. I guess her husband's a state police. And then, of course, Kenny and Matt [laughs] they live with their dad. And then, my youngest boy, he's got a daughter and a son that's not married.

J: So, most of the kids, even if they've left Paoli, most of the grandkids, actually, even if they've left Paoli, are still pretty close? Yes.

M: They'll come back often.

J: Well, I guess I should probably let you get on with your day now. Thank you very much, I've really enjoyed talking.

M: Well, glad I could do it, give you what I did. [J laughs] It wasn't really too much, but if it'll help you out, I'm tickled.

J: [both are laughing] It has and I thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

Interview with Ben Minton, p. 54. Conducted by Catherine Jones, 9 December 1987, Paoli, Indiana, Indiana University Center for Documentary Research and Practice, OHRC accession #88-65-1, 2