

**SAN PIERRE REVITALIZATION PROJECT
ORAL HISTORY**

ST: Sarah Tannehill, interviewer

JW: Jeanette Hine Wobith, interviewee

ST: *I am in the home of Jeanette Wobith, and it's the 28th of July 2005, and we're in Jeanette's kitchen; we're doing an interview for the San Pierre Revitalization Project. Jeanette, you can go ahead and begin with your family names.*

JW: Oh, my dad's name was Raymond Herman Hine, and my mother's name was Mary Anastasia Laken Hine. And I'm the oldest of, well, six children, and I was born in '27, my sister, Phyllis, was born in '28, and my brother, Bill... we lost a boy in between... and I don't know what year my brother Bill was born in, but he's 73. And my brother, Ray, is 67; and my brother Larry is 65.

ST: *Okay. Can you give me your exact birth date?*

JW: Mine? January 24th, '27.

ST: *Can you tell me what you have there about your family then?*

JW: Well, it says ethnic background. My dad was pure German, and my mom was Scotch-Irish. She had red hair and freckles, and a temper that went along with it! [laughter]

ST: *[laughter] She was such a character!*

JW: Oh! She was! And she was a character after my dad died. She really let loose and had a ball, because she was kinda held down when dad was alive.

ST: *Oh, well, and I remember her being a spitfire then, so it must have been 'katie-bar-the-door!' after he died!*

JW: Oh yeah! You know kids are usually scared of their father? Well, we should have been scared of my mother.

ST: *While we're talking about your mom, can you say a little bit about the things that she used to do... I remember people talked about her knowing 'charms' for removing warts and things like that...*

JW: Yes. She got that from my dad's mother. She got that from Grandma Hine, and she used to take a potato and cut it in half – you don't ask any questions! – and she did something... I don't know. Grandma would never tell me – she told mom. And then she buried this... and you're not supposed to ask any questions. 'cause grandma took... oh, I had a big one here [gestures]... great big, the size of a pea! And it just used to bother me. And I had about twenty of 'em here...

ST: *Jeanette is showing some areas on her right hand.*

JW: And grandma went down, and she did this, and... I was just a kid... well, I wasn't a kid, I was about 18, and I said, "Grandma, I've still got 'em." She said, "I told you, you don't ask no questions!" Well, time went on, and one day I looked down and my warts were all gone, and I don't know where they went! And mom could do the same thing.

ST: *So it must have been a German charm she used.*

JW: It must have been, I don't know.

ST: *Fascinating. I always wanted to know more about that.*

JW: And see, they called my mom Stitch, and I believe they got that... well, Stasia, but Stitch... most people called 'em Pete and Stitch. And I believe my mom got Stitch from sewing. She made all our clothes, we never bought anything. We took hand-me-downs

and she'd remake 'em, and that's what we wore! 'Cause we weren't rich, we were poor, and all we had was kids! [laughter]

ST: *[laughter] Rich in kids!*

JW: And I was born in the Depression, and I didn't know we were poor. Everybody else was poor, except a few, like Duane Dolezal, my cousin. His dad run a store. And then the teacher's kids, they had a little bit more, but on an average everybody was in the same predicament. We used to get orders from the government and my mom canned *all* summer long.

ST: *When you say 'orders from the government,' do you mean surplus food, or something?*

JW: No, we'd go to the store, and they would get an amount of money at the store that we could buy, and we would buy what we needed, and they'd keep track of it 'til we had it all used up. And then we also got orders from the government. We used to get some blankets, and oleo, and sugar, and cornmeal, and flour. And I used to... Sis and I had the job of mixing up the oleo, 'cause it come in a white brick? And first it was a powder, and we'd play in it, and mix it and make animals! [laughter] And it was fun! And I know kids nowadays; when they come home they have so much good food. When we come home from school we'd have a white sugar sandwich... that was our thing. And I tell my granddaughter now how we used to live and take baths... "Oh, how gross! Oh, how could you live that way!" I said, "Well, it didn't hurt me! I'm still livin'."

ST: *That's right! So are you talking about sharing water?*

JW: Well, we used to put tubs out in the yard in the summer, and we put two there. One went in the woodshed, one went in the garage, and dad and the boys'd take baths in one, and my sister and I and mom would take a bath in the other. And in the winter, we had one in the kitchen. We put papers around the tub... we'd all take a bath in the same water, but we washed our face at the sink. My granddaughter thought that was awful – just *awful!* Well, maybe it was! But hardly anybody had a bathroom... maybe one or two or three people in San Pierre had a bathroom! That was a luxury. And I know McCauley's had a

bathroom, but they didn't have any water in the tub – they'd have to carry it! [laughter]
Which was ironic!

ST: [laughter] That came later. Get the tub, and then you can get the water. You're such a great interview and storyteller. I'm just going to let you go through the questions, and then as things come up I'll ask you questions that come out of what you're telling me, because you're on fire. [laughter]

JW: [laughter] Well, I lived in San Pierre 42 years before I moved to Judson. I married a man from Judson or I probably would have still been in San Pierre.

ST: And that was Frank [Ono]?

JW: Well, yeah. And then I moved back to San Pierre, 'cause I divorced him, and I don't think he ever... see he got the Congressional Medal of Honor, and I don't think he ever forgot the war. He was very mean. And I moved back to San Pierre, and I stayed there 'til 1966. I married Dorwin, from North Judson, and we lived there four years after we got married, and then we bought a house here in Judson and moved over here. And my son graduated from San Pierre, and that was the highlight of my life! Going to basketball games with him, and I know I never missed a baseball game or a basketball game from the time he was in fourth grade. And I love sports. I was athletic; I played ball in school, and I played ball after I was married, 'til I was 40... that's why I'm in the shape I'm in! [laughter] That's the year in San Pierre they had an unbeaten basketball team – '64. And everybody was... I think the town was deserted when they would go out of town, and everybody in town was at the game. And it was wonderful, just wonderful! Absolutely wonderful.

ST: You must have had a lot of feelings about that school.

JW: Oh I did. I remember when San Pierre consolidated with North Judson, and a friend of ours went down past the school at night, and it had... I looked at the replica of the school... you know, they have a model... and it had "North Judson – San Pierre High School" on it, and when... that night, he come, and he said, "Jeanette! You won't believe, I went by the school, and guess what? They had 'North Judson High School' on it!

And I said, "WHAT!" Well, 10:30, 11:00 at night, I had ten people in my house in Judson from San Pierre. And they had a meeting, and then on Thursday, and I bowled on Thursday, and my husband said, "You don't go anyway, 'cause you got a temper, and you're gonna make a nut of yourself!" So he says, "I will go talk for you," which he could do; he was very good at... he was always an emcee, and he was good. So he went and talked for me, and it cost the school \$4,000, but San Pierre is on there... [laughter] I was happy; I was very happy, and it really upset me. They said, "Well, it's gonna cost us \$4,000!" and Dorwin said, "This is the way it was supposed to be, and that's the way it's gonna be." So it was.

And well, I lived there 42 years, plus other years, and I live in North Judson now, but my heart's still in San Pierre. My first memories of the town... I can't remember much... just playin'. I played with Shirley McCauley, and Lorene Kulske, and Marilyn Clausen – we were very close – and the Kilgore girls. We did a lot of playin' ball, and let's see... I played ball with all my friends. I was always playin' ball. The kids always said, "We gotta listen for your dad to whistle, and when we hear you whistle, we better leave!" 'Cause I was late for a meal! [laughter] My mom was a homemaker all her life. She never worked out... well, with five kids, you don't really work.

ST: That was full time.

JW: That was full time. She did a lot of sewing for people, that she did.

ST: Oh, so did she take things in, or did she make things?

JW: She took things in to sew, and mending, and she made all of our clothes. We got a lot of our clothes from my dad's sister's daughter – they had a little money – and they'd discard theirs, and they were always a little bit older, but we didn't care. We didn't care.

My dad, when I was young in high school, we was on WPA, and the rec room – he got a big raise – he was recreational leader. We used to make pictures and burn pictures, and stuff like that. And later on, he got to be a heavy equipment operator with Local 150, and we finally got on our feet. We finally got a car! We never had a car. Never. My dad played baseball every summer, and he'd get rides with other people, and we had to stay home unless the game was in San Pierre. And they took big boards and made a square,

and my sister and I used to sell pop at the ballgames. It was out behind Mary Helen's house – the ball field – when they lived in town. I loved sports. I really love sports. I still go to all the basketball games and the baseball games here. I love it. And I help... whatever I can do at the concession stand. We have a bunch of really fun people working there.

ST: Great! So you're still really active with that.

JW: Oh yeah, I love it.

ST: That is wonderful. And were your siblings also really active in sports?

JW: My son went through college on scholarships – basketball scholarships. And he got a scholarship at Lamar University for his master's for two years. And he's doin' wonderful. He's doing wonderful. And he's so good to me! And I always say, "Terry, I feel so guilty, you know... you don't have to..." He says, "Whatever you want, you ask." I says, "I'm not askin' for nothin'." "Because, I remember, Mom, you did without and give to us kids when we were young... I knew what was goin' on!" But he worked. He worked from the time he was ten years old, on up. And we didn't have a very good life, because I'd left my husband when my daughter was eight months old, and no support, not a dime. Raised 'em by myself, and didn't ask for no help.

ST: Now, did he see them?

JW: He saw my daughter, but he didn't see my son, 'cause he [Terry] didn't want to go with him. He remembers what happened when I lived with him. So he didn't really go with him – he always had an excuse; he had ball practice, or he had to work, or whatever. So, as time went on, when he got older, he did visit his dad, but when he was young, he kind of lost respect. But he said he had a good life! You know, I always figured maybe I didn't get this, he says, "Mom, I had a real good life! I didn't have nothin'... I was just like the other kids!"

ST: Yeah, which is what you said about your childhood. When you're surrounded by people who are kind of in the same...

JW: He never had a car, like some of the kids in school. We lived close to the school, he walked. And if he had to go in a car, he went with his friends, 'cause I couldn't afford a car. I was lucky I had an old '36 Plymouth or somethin' that I run around in, but...

ST: So how old were your kids when you married Dorwin?

JW: Terry was 15... let's see, Terry was born in '46, and I married Dorwin in '62; and Genelle was just a little one. And I remember our wedding night, she cried and wanted to go with us. And finally she went home with Dorwin's sister! [laughter]

ST: I assume it got better after that!

*JW: Oh yeah! He'd never been married, and I was 35 and he was 34, and he went up and down the street, he said, "Oh, I forgot to ask you to our wedding! Come on and go!" I thought, *Dorwin!* I tell ya, he had more friends and he told more jokes... he was a big joke teller, and in college he was an emcee a lot. He loved life. He lived it fast and died fast – he died when he was 48.*

ST: Oh my goodness... 48! What a shame.

JW: Yeah. He had a massive coronary right in front of me, and I... went ballistic. It really was bad.

ST: I'll bet. Were you at home?

JW: Yes. It happened on... football night... homecoming, and he'd driven the fire truck, and he came home and his friend was at the mortuary, and he says, "Oh darn, I forgot to go down to the mortuary and see Don Williams," he says, "Oh, I'll go in the morning." Well, he did, but not the way he had planned. He had a heart attack that night. Thank God his brother and sister-in-law was there.

ST: So you weren't all by yourself.

JW: No, and their son and wife was there with me, because I couldn't remember anything. I was rollin' on the floor like a maniac, and the EMTs come in and was gonna take care of me, and she said, "Not her! In there!" But I didn't know what to do! I found him like that. I went to bed, and then I got up because I heard this gurgling sound, and I saw him, and oh my God! what a terrible sight! So I don't ever want to have to see that again.

No, I've worked hard all my life, but I loved it. I started out as Rosie the Riveter after I got out of high school. In LaPorte. I made Liberator fins, and I liked it. And then after I got married I worked at Kingsbury Munitions Plant – I was a powder dipper. And then I worked a couple years at San Pierre at the nursing home, and then Duane Dolezal asked me to work for him at the store, and I worked there 12 ½ years, and altogether, then I went to A&P – you remember A&P?

ST: In North Judson?

JW: Yes, and I worked 30 years in the grocery line, and I loved workin' in the store. 'Cause I love bein' with people.

ST: And then it's just a parade of them all day!

JW: Yeah, yeah. I loved workin' in the store. They closed this one in '76 – they closed this one here. Then I drove to LaPorte for seven years.

ST: Oh my goodness! [laughter] You found your niche!

JW: [laughter] Well, I love my job, and I had a year to go to get ten years to get my... so then, I was gonna quit after ten years and work with my husband, 'cause he worked and didn't send out any bills! So I thought I'd be with him and I'd send out all the bills, y'know. He was very lax. [laughter] Well, he died in October and I said, well, I'll just stay there. So I stayed there 'til they closed LaPorte in '82, and then I was in bad shape. I couldn't find a job, nobody wanted to hire me, I was 55. So I cleaned houses, mowed grass, painted walls, painted cabinets... I did anything! To keep my head above water. But I love

work... I love to work. But I can't do nothin' now. My back is... I got hit by a car when I was a sophomore in high school? Julius Kracht hit me, right in the back. Cut my hand, knocked the headlight off, and he drove over me and then backed up and over me and he coulda killed me, but it was snow. And I've got deterioration of the spine now.

ST: *Well, it's really remarkable that you've been able to still be so active... so athletic... with an injury like that... that happened when you were young!*

JW: Yeah, I was a sophomore in high school. It was on Valentine's Night! [laughter] We were goin' to the school for a dance, I'll never forget it. And when we was comin' out of McCauley's house, and Shirley stood there with her mouth open – she couldn't say a thing – she saw it happen! And I was heading for a big telephone pole, but I didn't make it, and I knew I couldn't get up, so then Mr. McCauley and Bud come out and picked me up and carried me in the house, and Mrs. McCauley come runnin' with the towel, and I said, "What are you doin'?" and she said, "Well, you're hand's cut!" I didn't even know it. I didn't have any pain; I just couldn't feel anything. So for two weeks I couldn't walk. They took me to LaPorte, took x-rays of everything but my knee, and when I went to get out of bed I threw my knee back in. I think the whole hospital knew it, too. Oh, God, did I scream – it was awful! And I've had trouble with it – playing sports I had to keep it wrapped. But I played softball 'til I was 40, and then somethin' told me *you can't do this anymore*, so then I coached the kids. Coached the girls. I loved sports.

ST: *You managed to find a way to stay involved in it.*

JW: And it said here [pointing to list of questions], would I like to spend the rest of my life in San Pierre? Yes, I would've! I would've! I'd still been there if I hadn't married a man from Judson. But we found a big old house – 'cause I love big old houses – and we got a good price on it, so we bought that and remodeled it.

ST: *And is this that house?*

JW: No. It had 13 rooms in it. [laughter] It was Dr. Davis' house, and he had an office built on the side; and we used to use the office as a party room, 'cause my husband was a partier. He took an old-fashioned refrigerator with a motor up here and put a hole in it, and had a

big drip pan and a keg of beer inside all the time! But then after he died, I had my friend make it into an apartment and I rented it out. I had furniture all in there, and I rented it out furnished to one person. But my kids insisted I sell it, 'cause it was just too big. So I found this one, and I remodeled this one from top to bottom.

ST: *Really! It looks great!*

JW: It's a small home, but it's all I need. It's all I need. It'd be better if it was clean, but she's comin' next Saturday. [laughter]

ST: *I haven't noticed any actual dirt...*

JW: [laughter] Well, I try to keep stuff picked up... And you wanted to know who influenced me the most? I think my mom and dad. I was kind of a hard luck kid. Everything always happened to me; I don't care what it was, it was *me*. And I made a bad marriage – I run away and got married, because they didn't want me to go with him, because he was divorced. And nobody's gonna tell me what to do – typical teenager, you know, stupidity. But... so anyway, through all my trials and tribulations of that marriage, and I think I left him five, six times, and my brother-in-law always moved me back to San Pierre, and before he could get me moved all the way, Frank was movin' me back home! [laughter]

But my parents always stood behind me, and then it got to the point... let's see, I had my daughter... I left him the last time and I was pregnant and didn't know it. So then my mother said, "You gotta go back; give the baby a name." I said, "It'll have a name... I don't want to go back! I can't stand him!" So I went back. And I stayed a year, and then I left, and I never went back. And my dad cried, he was so happy the day that I left him for good. I lived... oh, let me see... I married him in '46.

ST: *And how old were you then, when you married him?*

JW: Oh, I was 18, and I married him January 7th, I was 19 on the 24th. So, I don't know, it was just somethin' I shouldn'ta done, but I done it, because kids do things they're not supposed to do! And I told my mom, if you'd 'a let me go, I probably wouldn't 'a never married him, but you said, "*You can't go with him!*"

ST: And you, I think, I'm just sensing, maybe were a headstrong person!

JW: Oh, I was! I was! I was... all kids are nowadays... worse than they used to be. No, my mom and dad, they taught me how to manage money and how to be a good person. Because my mom and dad were good people, and they... they offered to help me, but the only way they helped me, mom babysit with Terry, and later on, then, I lived in San Pierre, and I lived right behind the store, so Genelle used to stay in the store with me. And at Christmas time – she was probably seven, eight – she used to wrap all the Christmas presents people bought! [laughter] And she was so thrilled that she got to do that, and it helped me out – and she did a good job of it! She's still a very precise person – very precise, but she's not like me. She's exactly like her dad. She looks like him, she's shaped like him, and she acts like him.

ST: Really – in what way?

JW: She's more... easygoing. She's slow, and that's... with me, I'm hyper. Terry is me over and over and over, and he's shaped like I am. He's me and Genelle is Frank. [laughter] But she was eight months old when I started going with my second husband, and they idolized each other. He idolized that baby!

ST: Boy, that's a bit of luck!

JW: Yes. His parents – his dad especially – didn't want him to go with me, because I had two kids... and I can see his point! And he even went to the minister and had him tell Dorwin "You stay away from that woman." And my husband told him, "You take care of your church, and I'll take care of my own life." [laughter] But we were happy. We spent... oh, let me see... over 23 or 24 years together, so we were happy; we were very happy.

ST: And just because you mentioned the church, what church were you married in?

JW: Lutheran. I was Catholic, but he always said, "My wife would sit next to me in church." So I was a divorcée, and so I changed. I went to his church, and I said, "Well, if I feel like

I go to church [sic], maybe I'll consider joining your church." Well he belonged to the Missouri Synod Lutheran.

ST: That's very strict.

JW: Yes. And you know, of course, the Lutherans opened arms to get a Catholic in there! [laughter] Maybe I shouldn't say that, but they did! Anyway, I joined the church in '59, and I never go back to being Catholic, 'cause I like where I'm at.

ST: Where was the Lutheran church in San Pierre.

JW: In Judson. Now it's up across from the Judson Food, and it's a Baptist church. We built a new one out here on the edge. We have a Lutheran school and church.

ST: Was there ever a Lutheran church in San Pierre?

JW: Well, I think the Evangelical Reformed... now it's called, what is it, the Church of Christ? It used to be Lutheran. When my grandma and grandpa and them started that church... my dad's parents helped start that church, it was Lutheran. But they've went from one thing to another and now they're the Church of Christ. They've got a nice minister there now. He's real friendly, real, real friendly.

ST: Now that's not the one that Del belongs to?

JW: It is.

ST: Because I seem to remember that there were three churches on the main street, and then there was another one south of...

JW: There was. South, behind the Catholic church hall... there was that Evangelical Something, and then there's the Catholic, and then there was the Lutheran. Now there's no church in that one... I think somebody lives there.

ST: Yeah, I think I passed by there the other day and it looked like a house that had been a church.

JW: It was a factory, it was everything since... it's been through the mill... I don't know what else I could tell you.

ST: Well, we've got a lot to talk about in terms of the changes you've seen in the town in the course of your life.

JW: Well, the changes in San Pierre is bad, as far as I'm concerned. People have sold their homes, and then also own 'em and rent 'em out, and they've rented 'em to people that don't take care of 'em, and this is why we really need a revitalization of the town. It's bad, bad, and badder. And I just wish that we could get a little, like, Burger King store here, like Family Express with gas station or something there, to give the people something... that's what they need to keep it going. And there's a lot of new homes out in the outskirts! It's unbelievable! I didn't know all those homes was down by the cemetery – I didn't know all them were there. I knew one was, but I'd never driven back in there.

ST: You mean the cemetery on the eastern side, not as you come in from the north.

JW: Yeah, you go down past where Mary Helen used to live and down back in the woods, and there's four or five homes back in there.

ST: Yeah, I was surprised yesterday, too, to see all the building. And there are homes built south, too.

JW: Yes, there is, too. And there is also west – out west towards Soplanda's road.

ST: And is that where there's talk about a subdivision?

JW: Yes, it's a subdivision out there. There must be eight or ten homes out there, so... I just wish we could do something and get rid of those slum things there. They look awful!

ST: *It's really shocking, and it seems like it happened in a relatively short period of time, because not having lived there for a long time, but then periodically coming back and visiting, it's like, at one point it was kind of the town I remembered, and then the next time I came in, I couldn't believe it.*

JW: Yeah, well I miss the store so much and the school. That's what I miss, is our high school and the store, 'cause I loved workin' at Dolezal's store! I really did! I practically run the thing for Duane and Francis; I worked very hard. And I got real mad at them, because Francis hired a woman in there, and I'd worked there 12 ½ years, and he started her out for the same money that I was making, and I practically did all the ordering and everything in the store. And I got kinda upset, and I went back and I told him, and Francis got mad... he got so mad at me his teeth flew out! And I said, "Well, you know what you can do with your store?" You can guess. And Duane, 'course Duane, he's the pacifier, "Oh now, Perk!" That was my name, Perk. That was my name through 12 years of school, Perk. Perk or Perky. My neighbor couldn't say Jeanette, so he called me Perky, and he said, "Now settle down. Just go home and come back!" and I said, "No! I want my check, I wanna go home, I'm quittin'."

He said, "No, no, no, no, no, no!" And you know Duane... so I just walked out and never went back. Then John Smrt called me to work at A&P. And I said, "Well, I really don't want to work." He said, "Well, just work for me during the holidays, I really need you." I said, "Okay, during December, Thanksgiving, and New Years, I'll work." Well, I worked for... [laughter] 17 years I worked there! That was a little different.

ST: *[laughter]... yeah, not what you'd planned! But it doesn't sound like you have any regrets.*

JW: No. I love workin' in the grocery store. I worked hard. I really worked harder at San Pierre than I worked at Judson, 'cause I helped unload the trucks, and stamped, and carried heavy boxes of tin cans, and I worked really hard there; but I was younger!

ST: *Yeah. You can't do stuff like that as you get older.*

JW: No. I was young and I worked real hard. But I enjoyed it! And if somebody didn't do something to suit me, "Git outta the way! I'll do it myself!" [laughter] That's the way I was.

ST: *[laughter] You probably knew how to do it right.*

JW: I did! I did! I wanted my work done right. 'Cause the kids were always supposed to rotate, and I remember Eric Cramer – I sent Bob Cramer home one day, his son? And they were supposed to take 'em all out, wipe the shelf, and rotate. Change prices if they had to. And Eric Cramer come in, and he said, "What happened?" and I told him, I said, "I told him they all had to rotate the cans, and price 'em if they needed," and he said, "Wasn't he doin' it?" and I said, "No! And I told him two or three times!" and he said, "Good! Send him home again if he ain't doin' it." [laughter]

And then I worked in LaPorte, and that's when my husband died, and I was only off two weeks. I said, I've gotta go back to work. I can't handle this. I gotta go back to work. So my boss put me in the back to check in vendors, and the mop room was back there, and it was the stinkin'est mess. The kids, you know, they'd mop stuff and leave a mop in a slimy bucket. Well I asked him, I said, "Could I clean that mop room?" He said, "If you want to!" So I washed down the walls, and I put all the mops in bleach and cleaned 'em all, and had the guys put up hooks, and I hung 'em all up. But I made a mistake; I put bleach and ammonia together and about killed myself.

ST: *Oh, that's very dangerous!*

JW: Oh, I about fell out of the room! I was...

ST: *... overcome, I would think!*

JW: I was. But he told me, he said, "Jeanette, that mop room has never been the way it's been..." laughter.

ST: *Well, probably no one wanted to tackle it!*

JW: And I cleaned the bathrooms upstairs. I cleaned the women's bathroom. I didn't clean the men's, I cleaned the women's, 'cause the girls were slobs. They didn't do anything, and I said, well, we had a nice bathroom. So I cleaned the bathrooms! Scrubbed it on my hands and knees, and... whatever! But that's the way I was! I was bossy – very bossy – and I had a lady tellin' me... [gestures to stack of papers] this is all my stuff, I belong to so much stuff, and I'm the president of the scholarship fund at the alumni. And then I go to meetings for the alumni, and then I'm membership chairman of the Legion Auxiliary, which is a big job. And then I'm Poppy chairman, and all this stuff. I just leave it sit in a corner!

ST: *Well, you'll be needing it!*

JW: I said, if I put it away, I need it, so I leave it. I just... I loved to work before, but I don't wanna do nothin' now! I went from one thing to another [laughter], 'cause I've got a bad back, and my knees didn't turn out very good. I had the one operated on twice, and it just didn't... my knees just didn't turn out. My knees aren't as bad as my back. I can handle my knees, but sometimes I have to have help getting up from a low seat. I usually carry a pillow, which is embarrassing, but what are you gonna do?

I play a lot of cards. I love to play cards. I go every Tuesday afternoon, I go to Bass Lake.

ST: *Oh, you play with Ed! Ed Kesl!*

JW: Yeah! I got him to come, finally! He's been here every summer.

ST: *Well, he rearranged his interview schedule yesterday so that he could play cards!*
[laughter]

JW: Yeah! I finally got him to come. I took a ride around the lake, and he happened to be out, and I said, "Ed, why don't you come and play cards?" And by gosh, he came! And he enjoys it! So we play pinochle, and then I come home, and I got about a half-hour rest, and then I go down to the Legion and I play euchre. And then I belong to a pinochle club; we have club once a month, and we go to other people's houses – there's eight of us, and

we go to each other's house and then they have dessert. We used to cook the meal, but we're all old now, so now we all go out to eat, and then they fix dessert. I love life! I do.

ST: You do! You're very engaged in everything that you do; and a lot of passion about whatever it is you're doing.

JW: Yeah. And I go to every basketball game, home and away. I love the school, and I help in the concession stand when I can. I can't stand a long time. When we have hot dogs, I usually sit and take care of them [laughter], but we got a new coach now, and I'm happier. Thank God!

ST: I guess the other one wasn't satisfactory.

JW: No! After four years of nothin'!? I told the school board member on the way out after the last game, "Well, I'll tell you one thing, Mr. Jahein, you got this coach next year, you won't see me here to a ballgame!" He says, "I know. Everybody's tellin' me that." [laughter] So they got rid of him. Thank God. And we got a local boy – he went to Bethel College in South Bend – and he's good. He's very good. He's a nice young man, and he'll work 'em. So I'm sure they'll do good; so I'm happy finally!

ST: Ed Kestl, when I spoke with him yesterday was telling me about the coach in San Pierre when he was in high school there.

JW: Eby.

ST: This was actually George Miller.

JW: Oh, George Miller! Yes, yes.

ST: And he had named him as one of the people that had influenced him the most.

JW: He was a... he's a good man, yeah.

ST: And I hear he's still around.

JW: Yes, he is. He lives in Knox.

ST: *So we may try to talk with him, too.*

JW: Umm. Terry, my son, must have loved him... Max Eby. Max Eby went to Valpo University, and San Pierre was the first school he was a coach at. He must have liked him, 'cause he named his son Jason Max. Eby had a lot of influence on my son.

ST: *Did he?*

JW: Yes, yes he did. And my son screwed up two years of college. He had a scholarship to a Jesuit college in Mobile, Alabama, and he played basketball there, and he was wonderful, and then his girlfriend here started goin' with somebody else. He called me – he was home for Easter – and he called me when he got back and he said, "I'm quittin'; I'm comin' home." I cried for two weeks! Didn't do me any good! He quit anyway.

So the next year him and his buddy, they were goin' to go to St. Joe at Rensselaer, So we borrowed money and he borrowed money, so he went down there. Well, he'd come home every week, caroused around and drank, like kids do! Another year screwed up! Well, Mick Eckert – Alvy Eckert's son, Mick, and Eby – they were coaches together, they said, "That boy is too smart not to go to college!" They got him a scholarship in western New Mexico, and he come home one day, and he said, "Mom, I'm gettin' married!" I said, oh, my God. "No problem," he said, "No problem, I'm just tired of runnin'!" So he got married July 27th or 8th, and he left on August the 1st – him and his wife – for New Mexico, and he went through college four years in three years, and ended up on the dean's list.

ST: *Wow! Oh you must have been so proud of him! And so relieved.*

JW: Yes, I was. And then, his coach there got him a scholarship at Lamar in Beaumont, Texas for his master's. And him and his wife were custodians at a dorm, and they got all their food and everything for nothin', and I remember my husband and I went down to Beaumont 'cause they had their baby finally – five years, they were married – and they

had cement blocks with a board on it for end tables. They didn't have anything! And they went and bought an old iron bed at some sale, and I said, "How could you sleep in that thing!" It had a mattress about that thick! [laughter] I said, "You'd be better off sleeping in a dorm!" He said, "I know, but I have to stay here," 'cause they had a monitor. They could listen to any room in the whole dorm. So they got everything for nothin', and he taught basketball, and got his master's, did real good, and he got a job with Wickes at Beaumont.

ST: What was his master's degree in?

JW: He had two. Economics and business. He's very smart, very smart.

ST: Yeah. Economics is not easy!

JW: And then he got a job there at Wickes at Beaumont, and he did so good they transferred him to Anthony, Iowa. While they were there they had a tornado! Scared him to death! And then they transferred him to Omaha, Nebraska. And then they transferred him to Tucson, Arizona. And then they transferred him to Fremont, California – see, Wickes does that. When their managers do good, they give him a raise and move him to someplace where they need him. Well, he said, "Listen, I've got two kids, and I am tired of this movin'." So he got a headhunter, and this guy found him a job in Vegas, and he took it. And he's been there ever since, but now he has his own business. He worked for Houston Lumber, and I think he worked there seven years. And these two guys were doin' a... somethin' for the owner... and they came there and they thought he was makin' too much money, 'cause he got a percentage of the sales and whatever.

So they asked him to breakfast one day, and when they got ready to go, they said, "Hand over your keys." He said, "What do you mean, 'hand over my keys?'" He said, "You're fired." He said, "What!" He said, "You're makin' too much money; you can't make that much money!" Terry said, "Well, I don't know why! I get a percentage, the boss said what I get, and... besides my regular wage." "Well, nobody's worth that much."

So he sued them, and he won. [laughter] He won. And then he found three other guys and they went into business for theirself. And after five years.... they each invested \$150,000, and within five years he bought 'em out for a million apiece.

ST: *Wow! They did well.*

JW: And then his wife got sick, so he sold to another conglomerate, but he run it for 'em, he was manager. And they do good out there! But their CEO, and they had – I don't know how many stores, other places – and they went bankrupt! But not Vegas! So he bought it back again. [laughter] He bought it back for a little bit on the dollar... I don't know what he paid, but then he lost his wife, and he was very lonely. Then he went with this girl four years or five, but anyway. Now, my daughter's son – the middle son – went out there. He offered him a job, and he started a lumberyard in Parump – you ever heard of Parump? It's about 30 miles, Brian said, from the California border. It's west of Vegas on 160? It's a little town about the size of LaPorte. And they're all so laid back, and so, oh my! Brian said you can't get anybody to do anything there! But Terry bought a trailer court...

[SIDE A ENDS HERE]

There was the construction guys, they said, well, they'll take the trailers as offices, so... and they've been a year trying to get all the permits and stuff. They finally opened after a year. They're so slow there, and so laid back, and so... they just don't want to do anything.

ST: *This is how Ireland used to be. Corporations would go in there and open a business there, and they couldn't get... nobody cared! But it's not that way now.*

JW: Well, now Brian's Terry's assistant. Terry's in Canada, out on an island fishin' somewhere. He's never home. He's a golfer, very avid golfer; he's only got a four handicap. Anyway, his assistant came yesterday and spent the whole day with my grandson there, and he said he got so disgusted with these people! He said, "Are they back in the 1920s or somethin'?" Brian said, "Well, this is what I'm workin' with! You gotta understand, if you start pushin' 'em it's not good either." And of course, my grandson, Brian, he's got a nice gift o' gab, and he's a very kind person. So he goes at it a

little more easier than what his assistant wanted to do, you know! He said, "We're sellin', but it's not exactly what they want; but it'll come around."

ST: And why did they open it there?

JW: Oh, my son, he has more ideas than Carter's got liver pills. He had a lumberyard in Reno, too, when he sold to this other company. Well then when they went broke, his buddy bought the one in Reno, and he's doin' fabulous, but it took two years to get that one on the ground, you know, on its feet. He said, "I was really ready to shut it down when it started doin' good!" And now he open up a truss plant, an insulating plant, and a lumber yard in Vegas and the one in Parump. He says, "Mom, I'm never gonna retire." I said, "Your brain must work overtime."

ST: I wonder where he gets that...

JW: [laughter] Mine's forgetful. I'm forgettin' now.

ST: You seem to be doin' fine. It's those little things, day to day, that are hard to keep track of.

JW: Yeah, yeah.

ST: So it sounds like your kids are doing just great.

JW: Genelle, my daughter, after 29 years her husband decided he wanted another woman. She had four children. So they got a divorce, and she sold... they just built a new home, so she sold that, and bought another smaller one on the same line, only smaller. She works at a medical office in the records. She's a very good worker. She's got more jobs shoved on her, 'cause she does 'em. She went into the room where they ordered the supplies, and what a catastrophe. She said, "We got all of this, and nothin' of nothin' else," and she told her boss, "We aint' got..." He said, "That's a good job! Straighten it out and you're the boss there."

ST: [laughter] Kind of like you in the mop room!

JW: I know! So she's got that to do, and she tends bar two nights a week. She loves tending bar. It's a hard job, but she like to be with people, too. We're people-people! And Terry's the same way, he likes to be with people. We always say, when all our family gets together, we have to give each one a number, and if they start talkin' "Shut up, it's not your number!" [laughter] 'Cause we all wanna talk at the same time, and they always say, "Oh, God, the Hines are here! You can hear 'em outside!" [laughter] But that's okay. I used to be at the Legion a lot when I drank. I don't drink anymore, I can't, my blood pressure's... And they used to say, "Aw, we knew you were here, Jeanette! We heard you laughin' outside!" I said, "Hey! That's better than me bitchin'!" [laughter] As long as I'm laughin' you're in good shape!"

ST: *I wanted to ask you, because you're such a mover and a shaker as a woman, how you would describe the role of women in San Pierre.*

JW: I think the women all worked together over there. That's the way it was when I was there; now, I don't know how it is now, but when I was there, I think all the women worked together. If one woman was in trouble, or had a sickness, everybody went and helped. That's what I liked about San Pierre. There was no discrimination of anybody, and we all worked together. And then there wasn't as many young women worked then as they do now, which... all the young women work now. They just about have to! So... everybody was friendly, and the churches worked together. It didn't matter whether you was Lutheran, Catholic, or what you were, they all helped each other – all the women. I don't know how to express it. Everybody was friends of everybody, that's what I remember of San Pierre. A lot better than here.

ST: *Really?*

JW: Oh yeah. There's cliques here.

ST: *Do you think that's because it's a larger town?*

JW: It ain't that much larger! [laughter] But you know, you've got your cliques, and I don't pay any attention to 'em. I try to be friends with everybody. I just go around and say,

“Hi! How are you!” I’ve got a lot of friends. I enjoy life, I really do. If I die tomorrow, I had a good life. You never know. Here today, gone tomorrow!

ST: And you’ve seen that in your own life.

JW: Oh yes, oh yes. My sister wouldn’t listen; she smoked like a fiend, and we kept at her, and Bob, her husband, has had four bypasses, emergency surgery, and he’s still smokin’! But you can’t talk to these people that smoke! Have you smoked?

ST: No.

JW: I never have either. I’ve never smoked.

ST: And especially for you, because when you were growing up, everybody smoked!

JW: My dad smoked like a fiend, and he started out on these Lucky Strikes, and these Marlboros with no filters, and it didn’t help his heart! He had a massive coronary, my dad, but he lived through it! But he had it when he was 62, and he died when he was 68, and I betcha we were in the hospital 20 times in between that with small heart attacks all the time. And they all told him, “Pete! You can’t get mad!” I said, [inaudible] [laughter]. My dad has a very bad temper, and he’d get mad [fast].

*But you know what? That man, he gave Sis and I one million *one-more-chances*. You know, we’d do somethin’ and we’d get punished, and we couldn’t go to a basketball game. My God, that killed me! When I couldn’t go to a basketball game it killed me! So I talked to Shirley and Janice McCauley, and I said, “Why don’t you come up to the house and ask my dad?” So they’d come up there, and you know, we all lived in four or five rooms – seven of us! Five slept in one bedroom,*

My dad and mom never had a bedroom of their own until I got married, Sis got married, Bill got married, then they put the two boys out in our bedroom, and we lived out on the porch that they made into a bedroom, which it was... we had that much ice on the windows, and we couldn’t even see out all winter... we froze, but we were never sick!

[laughter] We were all huddled up, and my sister and I'd go "one-two-three" and we'd run through that cover, and get in bed, and never move 'til we warmed up! [laughter] What was I talkin' about?

ST: Well, we were talking about Phyllis and the smoking, and your dad and the smoking...

JW: Dad smoked, but he eventually had... but my sister got cancer of the lungs, and they give her six months, and they told her in October, and she died in February. But you couldn't tell her! And she was really an invalid when she died. She couldn't get up. Bob had to... I don't know how Bob ever took care of her with no help.

ST: And with his back...

JW: He's stubborn! I'm gonna do it or else; it's my job! So he done it! He done it.

ST: It seems like maybe it was okay for them.

JW: Yeah, I guess. Well, wherever you see one, you seen the other. They were never apart, those two. Never. And you know, me, I've always kind of been on my own. Dorwin worked seven days a week, my second husband. He was in plumbing and heating and air conditioning, and he made so much other stuff for farmers, and he was always workin' and that, seven days a week... it'll kill ya! And it did! And I've been on my own ever since. And he's gonna be dead 30 years in October. [laughter]

I found a friend... a year later. I didn't do anything after he died; I was so depressed, and I just went to work every day, and... come home, and Bob and Sis stopped in, "You're going to the wedding with us. It's an anniversary!" I said, no, I don't wanna go, and they said, "Tough, you're goin'." So I went. Well I was drinkin' a few beers, and I was havin' a good time, and Bob had to go home, 'cause he had to go to work at 4 o'clock. So they went to one of these guys and they said, "George, see that Jeanette gets home, 'cause she has no car." "Yeah, I will." Well, he got drunk and went home. So I don't know, it must have been about 10:30, and this man walked in, and I looked at him, and said, "My God, that's Bill Nichols!" I used to go to catechism with him at San Pierre. He was from Medaryville, but they didn't have a church, so they went here. And he'd been in the army

for 27 years, never married. And I said, "My God, that's Bill Nichols!" So I went up and I said, "Bill, how are you!" And I give him a big kiss. If I hadn't had a few beers, I'd never done that. Well, we went together 22 years.

ST: *Goin' steady.*

JW: Yup. He wanted to get married, and I said, no, I don't wanna get married. I wanna keep my home. He said, "Well, you can keep your home! You can go back when you've got a meeting or somethin'! Just let me know when you're comin' home for supper!" But he was so good to me! Oh, he was a wonderful man. But I was out in Vegas taking care of my daughter-in-law, and he went out in the woods. We had all kinds of animals. We had pygmy goats, we had sheep, we had geese, we had ducks, we had... oh! we just loved... we had 40 acres; we loved it! And we were cleaning all the woods out, cleaning it out? He went out in the morning to burn a bunch of garbage and he fell dead with a heart attack. I had to fly home. It was the worst trip I ever made in my life. So, I really miss him. He was 72. And I was 72; we were both the same age.

ST: *And that was how long ago?*

JW: He died... well, he died in '98. He died on my husband's birthday, August 19th, 1998. And I'm alone again! And I'm not lookin'! I just love my life, livin' alone. I can come and go and do as I please.

ST: *You had two very long, good relationships!*

JW: Oh yeah! Sure! They said, "My God, we wouldn't have nothin' to do with you! You've killed three men!" [laughter] My first husband died in 1980 – he had a stroke and never came out of it. But that runs in his family, that's why my two kids got to watch their blood pressure.

ST: *Oh, okay. I saw an article about him, and his winning the Medal of Honor. I don't remember who gave it to me or showed it to me... it may have been last year when I was here, or my mom might have saved an article from the North Judson paper, maybe?*

JW: Yeah, his picture's on that thing, you know, at the stoplight down here? There's a little round gazebo like – his picture's in the front in brass.

ST: *Because I understand his family had been here for quite a long time.*

JW: Yes, he's got a wonderful brother... his brother had a stroke 40 years ago. He's got braces on his legs, and he's such a nice... him and I are exactly the same age, and he was nothin' like Frank. Frank was a drinker, a card player – he mortgaged everything we had, a womanizer... eight years.

ST: *Nothing but trouble.*

JW: Yes. So I was lucky when I got rid of him.

ST: *But you got a couple of great kids.*

JW: That's what I got. The only good thing I got... and my kids are very good kids. My son is doing wonderful, and my daughter lives on her own... she's on her own. She found a man and they fell madly in love, and he had lymphoma – she knew that – but he got a bone marrow transplant at Indiana U., and you know how men are; he was supposed to wear a mask when he went out. Oh, that's not men! He went everywhere! Well, he got... now I can't think of what he got... tuberculosis meningitis. And he died. They were to get married, and he died on a Thursday. And she just can't find anyone she likes. They gotta have five things. And I said, "Genelle! You're never gonna find a man!" They've gotta have what she has, if not more. They gotta work. They gotta be neat and clean. They can't be a drunk. And they gotta be compatible. I said, good luck! [JEANETTE ANSWERS RINGING TELEPHONE; BUSINESS RE: SP ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP FUND]

ST: *Doesn't seem like it.*

JW: Well, I want to take care of that money, that's what we wanna do for the scholarship fund, you know.

ST: Tell me about the scholarship fund. When did that start?

JW: Oh, boy. It must be 20 years ago. I think... who was one of the first ones? Kim Jelinek, I thought. I can't remember exactly. But we've got over \$275,000, and we just can use the interest only for the scholarships. And what worries me is when us older ones are gone, what's gonna happen? But we've talked about it, and the younger ones that's in it said it will be taken care of.

ST: Now who are "the younger ones" now?

JW: Well, we have Jody Arndt, my neighbor; she was a Paulsen. Heinie's daughter, and then Chuck is president this year, that's Heinie's son. And Ann Eckert was a Vacek, she's treasurer. And on our scholarship fund, I'm the president. Eva Loomis is secretary. Phil Potempa is a member, and Kenny Eckert... we had to take him off because of his health. And he's still not good, so... and he's been treasurer for years. And Carol Yost – Carol Paulsen was on it, and we ask her for advice a lot, because she's good with investments. And, so Eva and I are on everything... two names has to be on every check that we write.

ST: And so what kinds of investments...

JW: Well, we're in the Starke County thing, which I was against to begin with. We invested \$10,000 back; all we get is interest. I didn't like that. I mean I worked too hard for my money to put \$10,000 in here and never get it back. And we've got so many people; it was so good. Chase Gilmore has been wonderful to us. He is a wonderful man. He's given us, probably \$200,000. And I guess we're in his will. So it's got to be taken care of very gentle, you know. And we are gonna have to have a treasurer. So we're just worried that the scholarship fund will go under when all the older ones [go], but now like Jody and like Chuck... and there's the other younger ones that said, no, it will be taken care of... and like Phil Potempa, he's good.

ST: And that's Peggy's son, right?

JW: Mm-hm. He's a nice young man.

ST: *I haven't met him.*

JW: *Oh, God! He's so busy!*

ST: *But I have the cookbook. [laughter]*

JW: I do too! But he lives in Chicago, and he lives at home in his own place there on the farm. But he writes for so many papers, that he's so busy, so we have to kind of go at a meeting when he can come. We usually know when he comes home, so that's when we can have a meeting.

ST: *Yeah, I didn't know he was involved with that, too.*

JW: Oh yeah, yeah. And Chase is gonna have another birthday party... probably be 85. We went to his last ones in Chicago. I still got a bottle of... a quart jar of Kentucky bootleg – what do they make?

ST: *Moonshine?*

JW: Moonshine! I've still got it. That's the prize I got, and I don't even drink! [laughter]

ST: *Perfect for you! [laughter]*

JW: [laughter] I don't even drink! My brother, Ray, says, "Don't you throw that away! I'll drink it!" I don't even tell him I've got it anymore.

ST: *I'm sure it's just improving with age.*

JW: Oh yeah.

ST: *Let's see. You've told me what you're doing now, and a little bit about what you were doing in the past, but if you could look back and see the kind of role that you had in San Pierre, could you describe it?*

JW: I think I was a leader.

ST: *A leader... I would guess. [laughter] I wouldn't think a follower!*

JW: [laughter] A bossy leader, more than likely they'd say.

ST: *Well, that can often be an effective leader.*

JW: Well, I would see things to do, so I would go ahead and get somebody to work with me, and do it! And that's the way I am. I'm still that way. I can't do a lot, but I can sure boss!
[laughter]

ST: *Well, you know, it's a funny thing, but people who don't know how to delegate authority that way have trouble getting things done, and the people that are working for them don't know what to do! So you give directions.*

JW: That's right, they don't. I had problems at the Legion when I was the head of the funeral fund. I couldn't stand and do a lot... I used to. I started the funeral fund. But as of now, I would designate, you do this, you do that, and you do this, and everything run just smooth! And that's the way it has to be in any place. And we still do it at the alumni when we go decorate: *what can I do? what can I do?* So...

ST: *You tell 'em!*

JW: I'm not bashful. I am bossy, I admit it. The one girl I told one time, I said, "Well, you're pushy!" She said, "Well, so are you!" I said, "No I'm not pushy, I'm bossy!" There's a difference. [laughter] And I know it! I know I'm bossy, but when I see things that should be done, somebody has to tell somebody to do it. And some people just stand there and go "Duh. What can I do?" I can't see how people can't see what to do. I can't see how people can't see that! But some of 'em don't!

ST: *You have such an active mind, though.*

JW: I can see.

ST: You see the big picture.

JW: Yeah! I can see ahead of time what needs to be done, and it has to be done, and they say, "Well, I didn't see that." And I get... I could just bubble.

ST: You're pulled by a very strong engine. You have a lot of horses in your engine, and not everybody has that number of horses.

JW: No, that's true. My kids had me a 75-year birthday party – surprise birthday party – I was so shocked! And it was the night of the girls' basketball game over at Knox. And my niece took care of me. She came over and took my car; she said, "I've gotta wash your car today for tonight. I'll leave my car." She left hers and took the keys. They were all at the Legion. My son was here from Vegas; I didn't even know it. And she picked me up, and I thought it was funny: she's goin' to a ballgame. My niece, all she does is work.

We picked up Cindy and Mary Agnes Eckert, we picked her up. She sat in the front, and she was going the back way to Knox to the ballgame. I said, "What are you goin' back in these back roads for?" She said, "Oh, it's shorter." I said, "No it's not, it's longer," and I said, "Would you hurry up! My car goes faster than 45 mile and hour." She gets about two mile from Knox and her phone rings, and she says, "Okay, I'll be right there." She says, "Aunt Jeanette, I gotta go back to the Legion. They got a big leak there and there's a party." I said, "Tell 'em to walk on water! I'm goin' to the ballgame!" I was so mad.

What did she do? She turned and went right back... I said, "Wendy, I'm gonna kick you right square in the rear end!" And I cussed all the way back. Mary Ag is up there in the front goin' [crosses herself], 'cause they knew about the party!

ST: Jeanette's crossing herself to show what Mary Agnes was doing!

JW: [laughter] Oh, I was irate! 'Cause, oh my God, I live for that ballgame, especially Knox!

ST: Especially Knox.

JW: And we had such a good ball team. So we pull in the back of the Legion, and I'm sittin' there, like this, in the back seat. And there's two cops standin' there, 'cause they always have to have cops at a party, whatever. I'm sittin' there and Cindy says, "Oh, ma, now come on!" (All these young kids call me *ma*.) "Now settle down, settle down, we'll be out of here in no time." I said, "Aww, *shut up!*" I was so mad, and when I get mad, I don't know what I say.

Anyway, I was sittin' there, and Mary Ag was up there so quiet, and I looked down that hall, and I said, "That looks like my son! Aw, it can't be my son – what would he be doin' here?" And I guess he saw me seein' him; he came out, he opened the door, and he said, "Happy Birthday!" Oh, my God – I started cryin', and I cried, and I cried. And I wear certain clothes to a ballgame: certain blouse, certain pants. "My God," my daughter said, "I knew you'd have that on!" I said, "Well, I didn't know!" Oh, everybody had a ball! My daughter and my granddaughter cooked all the food. They cooked for 275; it was delicious. And we had a deejay from Elkhart that was out of this world. And my son wanted karaoke, 'cause him and my uncle sing all the time. Oh they had such a good time. My one nephew come up and said, "If nobody's havin' fun here it's their own fault!" [laughter] I'll never forget that as long as I live.

ST: *Oh, that just sounds like a ball.*

JW: Oh, we had a good time.

ST: *Let's just see how we're doin' here [checking questions]. What would you most like to see happen in San Pierre. You mentioned the gas station, and the store.*

JW: Yes. And I'd like to see the Taylor house tore down. I'd like to see the old bank tore down... it can't be fixed. It should be tore down. Homes like that should be tore down to make it look halfway decent. It's too bad that that wasn't made into a post office years ago – which it could've been, when it was in decent shape. And now the post office is... they've got... I don't know. But I just wish that the old slum – like a slum – homes could be gotten rid of, and it would help the looks of the town. And there are some nice homes in San Pierre now! And it could look nice, and just if they had like a small gas station and small, little 7-11, or whatever you want to call it, for people to get milk and bread and

stuff they need. For weekly shoppin' they can go somewhere else. But they really need... that's what I would like.

ST: Is there a doctor there now?

JW: No, no. No, they left.

ST: When I was writing up a letter of support for one of the grants, I listed some of the things that were there when I was a child, and when I looked at what's there now and listed that, it's like... okay, there are the churches, and the bars, and a post office. And there were about nine or ten things that I had listed before that, you know, stores, schools...

JW: Yeah. The Dolezals store was built too big to start off after they... Duane built too big of a store. Now it has got Schumacher's son-in-law's got a shop in half of it. I just wish they could do something with the other half.

ST: I hadn't even seen the inside of it.

JW: It's big.

ST: Oh, yeah, I know the store is big, but I hadn't seen what's in there now.

JW: He has like a painting shop or whatever on one side, and then the other side is where that doctor was, and it's empty.

ST: Oh, that's right, I thought I did see a doctor's name on a glass or something.

JW: It's too bad. They do have a veterinarian clinic there, in the old bank, which she's doin' very well. And they have a library.

ST: Yeah, which they didn't have when I was a child.

JW: And they have the one insurance place and the car sales place there, in my mom's old house. That's where she lived when she died.

ST: Do you think there's any chance of a school ever being in San Pierre again?

JW: There is a school there. It's elementary. It's all kindergarten. The whole town of Judson – kindergarten – goes to San Pierre. All of the six rooms are kindergarten.

ST: Wow. That's probably the biggest kindergarten!

JW: And you know what? The teachers over there love it. They love it because they haven't got all the brass on 'em. They have one boss over there, and they love teaching over there.

ST: Do you think there would ever be a chance of another school... you think that's done since consolidation?

JW: No. No, that's done. 'Cause we built a new middle school, and now we're building on to the high school, and Liberty was built on, too.

ST: Well, the reason I ask is that one of the things that people say repeatedly when I ask "when do you think the deterioration really began," – I mean, I think it's maybe been going on for longer than we think. Like it was maybe even going on when I was a child, but it happened slowly for a while, and then it got really fast.

JW: I think when Dolezals went out and we lost the high school.

ST: Yeah. And I'm just... because the school was such a focal point for a lot of social activities.

JW: Yes! And everybody was involved in the school. We had a following in the school. I think everybody in Railroad Township was a follower. And that's when everybody kinda let down a little bit, when we lost the high school... my son was the last year: '64. And they had the unbeaten basketball team. They went out with a flair! I think when the store closed and the school... lost the high school, people just went kind of [sighs]...

ST: And I just wonder what could replace that, in terms of being that kind of focal point... because it really is like the heart of the town... and there's no heart in the town now!

JW: Well, now I understand – which I haven't been there – but at Christmas, I guess the kindergarten has a wonderful Christmas play... the kids. They said it's absolutely wonderful; they really have a nice one. I don't get involved with the school too much, except basketball and baseball, and I do work the concession stand. And I go out there for the Poppy Program. I go to the art teacher, and they make poppy posters, and we judge 'em for the auxiliary, and give 'em money – that's the highlight of their year, they get money for the best poster. And now, I've had some of 'em go clear down to state in their different categories.

ST: So that's what the Poppy Program is... the poppies of the American Legion.

*JW: And then we sell poppies the first week in May every year [inaudible]. We did real good this year, very good. And you know, what makes me sick, is the kids don't understand what poppies are. I try to tell 'em. If you ever go to the program on Memorial Day, you listen to the poppy poem, *On Flanders' Field*, and you know what it is. And that's why we sell 'em, because we have to buy 'em from the disabled veterans. That's the only way they got to make money. We have to pay to get 'em.*

So I'm active in the auxiliary, too. I give up secretary last year. I had secretary for 31 years, and I said, you know, I'm just tired. I'm just tired... I have membership chairman, poppy chairman, and secretary – the three worst jobs, and I said, I'm gonna give it up. "You'll never give it up!" I did. I said, I just don't want it anymore. My heart isn't in it. Membership and poppies is plenty. But I'm lazy.

ST: Go on...

JW: I'm lazy now. I just... my kids bought me this beautiful TV, and my heart is revolved around TV... and the CUBS! I'm a Cub fan! I'm a die-hard Cub fan. And I get ribbed a lot, believe me.

ST: Well, you have Del on your side!

JW: Always next year! Always next year! But I don't care, I'm still a Cub fan. I'll stay a Cub fan 'til the day I die! [laughter]

ST: *That's a commitment. Let's see, is there anything we haven't covered?*

JW: Search me, I'll blab on here.

ST: *Well, you've done great! I knew you'd carry the day. [PAUSE IN TAPE, THEN RESUMES] I'm sorry, what did you say?*

JW: I said I used to ride to work with Ed's [Kes] dad at LaPorte. We all worked in... my Uncle Bernie, and Ed, and Dorothy Timm and I, we all worked in LaPorte. That's when I was Rosie the Riveter.

ST: *Oh, 'cause he said his dad worked at Allis-Chalmers.*

JW: Well, he was at LaPorte Corporation when I was... that was when I was right out of high school in '44. And then when they closed he went to Allis-Chalmers, yeah.

ST: *You know, I took a class last year on Women in U.S. History, and one of the things we talked about was the way that women went into industry during the war, and then when the war was over they were expected to leave the jobs so that men could have them. Some women had some feelings about that, and some fought to stay in the positions. What was your feeling?*

JW: Well, I figure if the men came home from the service, they should have the job, but I... I quit Rosie's job up there in LaPorte; I got married. And then years later, after I had my son... he was probably six or seven when my daughter was born... he'll be 60 and she's 53... and I was a powder dipper. We made the fuses for... and I got pregnant and they found out. We wore white...

ST: *Smocks?*

JW: No, overalls. Jumpsuits. And white hats; we had to have all our hair covered. And I kept getting bigger ones. I kept getting men's, y'know. I didn't wanna tell 'em I was pregnant, because they wouldn't of let me work on account of the powder with the baby. And I was so sick! Oh, I was so sick. I would go in the bathroom and lay on the lead floor. I would pray that my machine broke down so I could lay... I was so sick to my stomach. And finally the one boss said, "Are you pregnant?" I said, "Well, yeah," He said, "You're gonna have to quit." And that was the last of February, and I had her the first day of May, so I hid it quite awhile. But we had two people killed on our line... five-pound box of powder blew up. Nobody wanted to work on that line, and when I went up there, I didn't know the difference! They put me on the line, what did I know? I was a powder dipper! [laughter] And everything was made out of rubber and lead. It had all lead floors. And you know I'd lay on them; they were so cool, and I felt so... ooh! I wanted to lay down so bad! [laughter]

ST: *But you haven't had any health problems.*

JW: Not really. I've had so many operations, all I've got left is... [WHISPERS] Shut that off... [OFF TAPE COMMENTS] "That's because you used to live such a hard life."

ST: *No, you really seem amazingly present, and it seems like your hearing is good...*

JW: No, I've got hearing aids, but I don't wear 'em. I think that's why I talk so loud, because I don't hear that well.

ST: *Do you have your hearing aids in now?*

JW: No.

ST: *But you've heard everything I've said.*

JW: Yes, because you talk very distinct.

ST: *Oh. I don't mumble.*

JW: No, you don't mumble. People that mumble, forget it. My brother-in-law, Bob, I can't understand what... 'cause he talks to himself. Mm-hrmm-mm. I said, "What did you say?" No, if you talk distinct, I can hear. 'Cause sometime they make me nervous. Not all the time, but if I'm a little rattley, they make me nervous, so I don't wear 'em unless I have to – 4800 bucks! They're terrible.

ST: *Oh God, I know they're expensive. Well, I think we've probably covered everything in my questions. Is there anything that you want to add? When you were reading the questions, did you think, God, she didn't ask about this, or she didn't ask about that?*

JW: No. There was a lot on there that I wouldn't even have thought of. I don't know, I remember when I was a kid... see, my grandma lived next door to us, and my sister and I used to go downstairs, and grandma's sister, Aunt Julie Weinkauff, Mrs. Long, Mrs. Batzka, and Uncle Henry Luken, they used to come in every Friday and Saturday night, and we'd play rummy. And they taught us how to play rummy. Or we'd all sit on her porch in the front on every night, and then they'd talk German, and I used to get so mad, 'cause I know they was talkin' about me, [laughter] but my grandma was such a sweet person. And she called me Girlie – never called me by Jeanette; and she called my sister, Phyllis, Penny. And I never understand where she got this. Now everybody in the family said that I and my brother, Bill was her favorites. I guess we were, but she would always say... I'd say, "Grandma, what is..." I'd ask her... " She said, "Oh, Girlie, I don't know, but you ask me somethin' happened 40 years ago I can tell ya!" [laughter] When she was young, she was about 6 foot 1 or 2. She was real tall, and when she died, she was lucky if she was 5'2". She was all shrunk.

ST: *Was she in a lot of pain, too?*

JW: No. She took care of my Grandpa Hines, which was in a chair for 15 years. Took care of him in bed, and put him on a bed and wheeled him on the porch, and... he had arthritis in the knees and it hurt, so he wouldn't walk... baby. Big baby.

ST: *Did you say their names for the tape earlier?*

JW: No. His name was Herman August Hine. And hers was Sena Katherine Luken Hine.

ST: *And how did you spell Sena?*

JW: Well she spelled it S-E-N-A. Now in the Starke County book it's C-E-N-A. And she had Katherine with a K; and he was Herman August. He died in '92, and she died a couple years later. After he died, she just let loose. You know, she knew she had to watch him. He'd sit on the porch, and he had a corn cob pipe with this blanket over him, and this rocker, and when I was a little kid I'd go up to him and I'd say, "Grandpa, have you got a nickel?" "Oh, I don't know, Girlie. I'll get my purse." He had a purse that you twisted three little twists, and he said, "I got a penny," I said, "Why that's all I wanted anyway." [laughter] I knew that's all I want! You used to be able to go down to Dolezals and buy a big sack of candy for a penny!

He said, "Well, I don't know, Girlie, I don't think so!" [laughter]

ST: *[laughter] Now were they from Germany?*

JW: Yes, they both came from Germany.

ST: *Do you know what part?*

JW: Grandpa came from Posn. That's the northern part, and grandma come from southern. I don't know exactly...

ST: *Posn, yeah, that's like Silesia, isn't it?*

JW: I don't know whether that was a county, but it was up in there, but it was Posn, that's where he came from.

ST: *I think it's part of Poland now... since World War II, it's part of Poland.*

JW: Yeah. But she came from the south, and he came from the north. And she was... three years old or three months when she came, and I think he was eight or ten when he came over, and they settled in San Pierre and Medaryville.

ST: How did they find it? I always wondered, how did people find it?

JW: I don't know. Grandpa worked on the railroad, on the Monon, so I don't know.

ST: Well, thank you very much.

JW: No problem! I enjoyed it. I haven't seen you in years and years.

ST: I know. I think I just saw you in passing at the alumni I went to a few years ago with mom.

JW: I was probably busy.

ST: You were busy. You were very busy.

JW: I'm always runnin' around 'cause nothin's goin' right to suit me, so even when I'm not an officer... I'm not an officer this year of the alumni, but I'm still havin' the meetings here, and I am a president of the scholarship fund, so I got my hands full with meetings.

ST: Well, everybody asked me... that I've interviewed so far... [on] a couple of questions, "Ask Jeanette." One thing was, Ed was talking about a camp by Tefft... I think it was Burris?

JW: Burris Camp.

ST: How do you spell that, do you know?

JW: B-U-R-R-I-S, I think. Burris Camp.

ST: Now did you know about the medicine man who used to show up on Saturday night?

JW: No. I remember the CC Camp, though. See, they had a CC Camp out toward Medaryville on 421, and the guys used to come in town and the Derflinger girls used to sit on the

corner and talk to 'em. That's where LaVergne Bratton – LaVergne Tannehill [sic] – met her husband at the CC Camp. And another woman here, Liz Vesley, she met her husband at the CC Camp. My grandpa was cook out there, and the meat that they didn't use he brought in to us... we wouldn't have so much. My grandpa was a cook in the army in the First World War... my mom's dad. He was a cook.

ST: With the American? Was he American, or was he in Europe?

JW: American.

ST: Let's see, is there anything else here? There was something you said that jogged a memory and now I think I've lost it. CC Camp.

JW: They called that Radioville.

ST: That was Radioville!

JW: To me it's still Radioville. [laughter]

ST: [laughter] Ed was talking about Radioville yesterday.

JW: Yeah. He was close to my brothers. My brother Ray, him and my brother Ray were close.

ST: Well, I'm gonna stop now. Maybe we'll need to interview another time.

JW: Well, that's fine.

ST: 'Cause you're just a wonderful repository of information.

JW: Anytime at all. If you find out you want to know somethin' and I know the answer, call me... if you can catch me home! [laughter]

ST: [laughter] Yeah.

[TAPE ENDS HERE]

