

SAN PIERRE REVITALIZATION PROJECT
ORAL HISTORY

ST: Sarah Tannehill, interviewer

MG: Mary Margaret Good, interviewee

DG: Dixie Good, daughter of interviewee

[This interview took place a couple of months after the death of Don Good, Mary Margaret's husband. Mary Margaret passed within a year from the day of the interview, and we are grateful to Dixie for her support in getting Mary Margaret's memories on tape.]

ST: *It's July 17th, 2007. This is Sarah Tannehill. I'm in the home of Beverly and Marc Santicola in Bass Lake, Indiana, and I am taping an oral history interview with Mary Margaret Good. So, Mary Margaret... do you prefer to be called Mary Margaret, or just Mary, or...*

MG: Mary Margaret, maybe, huh?

ST: *If you would give me your full name, including your maiden name, and then the names of your parents.*

MG: Well, Mary Margaret Sparks Good. And my parents were Joseph and... [laughter] my parents were William and Anna Bachhausen Sparks.

ST: *Bachhausen... was that your mother's maiden name? That sounds German?*

MG: Yes.

ST: *And Sparks?*

MG: We traced it back to Irish and English, wasn't it? Pennsylvania Dutch type of coming in, but I think they traced it back more to like England.

ST: *Okay. It has an English sound to it. And when were you born?*

MG: March the 13th, 1924, in Chicago, Illinois.

ST: *In a hospital?*

MG: Yes, in a hospital.

ST: *Well, you're unique among many of your era! Most were born at home, especially if they were here!*

MG: Yes. Right. I was a caesarean, so I was a little bit... *really* unusual! [laughter]

ST: *Yeah. That must have been a very different process back then.*

MG: I would have thought so. They went to Chicago on the train; the doctor put her on the train with the nurse, and they went to the hospital in Chicago.

ST: *Was she already in labor, or was it totally planned?*

MG: No. It was a labor deal, where she was in labor and they knew it was going to be difficult.

ST: *It must have been quite a train trip!*

MG: Yes! I would have thought. No, I would have hated to do that. [laughter]

ST: *Did she ever say anything about that trip?*

MG: Not particularly about the trip, just that the nurse that went with her was... I don't know if she was his wife already then, or if they got married... you know, she just worked in the office. But they were husband and wife later on, anyhow.

ST: *The doctor and nurse?*

MG: Mm-hm. From North Judson.

ST: *So is that where your family was living then – North Judson?*

MG: They lived at San Pierre.

ST: *In town or outside?*

MG: No, we lived on a farm.

ST: *And do you have brothers and sisters?*

MG: One brother.

ST: *And what's his name?*

MG: Chester Sparks. [He was born] 1916, on July 22nd.

ST: *So he was older than you... by quite a bit!*

MG: By quite a bit!

ST: *Wow, that's an interesting spread! [laughter]*

MG: Well, I don't know. Maybe she wasn't supposed to have children or something after him; I don't know how that was.

DG: She talked about that, that... she said one time that she didn't do anything not to have children after Chet was born; that she just didn't *have* any, so, you're right, it must have been something like that, because I remember her commenting about that.

ST: *So we've already talked about the ethnicity of your family... were any parents or grandparents immigrants?*

MG: My grandfather, Joseph Bachhausen was from Germany. I think he came when he was about 16 or 18... it was to keep out of service, I think, you know, where they were taking them into the army.

ST: *World War I?*

MG: No. Well, yeah, I suppose it would have been, wouldn't it?

ST: *Or would it? It must have been earlier than that.*

MG: Yeah, it would have been.

ST: *There was a lot of fighting going on in that part of the world for such a long time.*

MG: Yes, yes.

ST: *Do you know what part of Germany he was from?*

MG: I think it was like Berlin, wasn't it? Around that... we never traced much back on the genealogy line, so I don't actually know. I don't remember what my mother said.

ST: *So you're a lifelong... well, now you don't live in San Pierre, but how long did you live in San Pierre?*

MG: 'Til 1953, so '24 to '53.

ST: *So you were raised there. Can you share any of your earliest memories of the town?*

MG: [Pause.] I guess except for the two stores, Dolezals and Kingmans were the stores at the time, and of course the bank on the corner...

ST: *Who were your friends growing up?*

MG: Del. [laughter] Del and Germaine Will... or Germaine Jones. Those were the two, and then after we moved on the second farm, Marilyn Clausen, er... McCullough... you know, I got acquainted with her. I guess that was about right. And of course I had lots of different friends, but...

ST: *Those were the closest.*

MG: Yeah, where we stayed overnight at each other's houses, and stuff like that.

ST: *Wasn't that fun?*

MG: [Laughter] Yeah, it was!

ST: *Bev and I still do it! [laughter] Um... first boyfriend?*

MG: [Long pause followed by laughter.]

ST: *Or crush... and you don't have to answer! [laughter]*

MG: [Laughter] No. I'm not answerin'!

ST: *It wasn't in the questions... So we were talking friends. Do you remember any festivals or regular, annual events that went on in the town that were memorable?*

MG: Not too much in San Pierre, I don't really, except for free shows... you know, we always called it The Free Shows. And the ballgames, you know they always had about three baseball games a week, but that's... that I remember, the fairs from North Judson and Knox, and like that. And we used to go to LaPorte and that type of thing.

ST: *So as you were growing up on the farm in the San Pierre area, what did you do as kids? How did you... I mean I know you probably had chores to do; everybody had chores. But when you weren't doing chores, when you were doing things with your friends, what kinds of things did you do? It doesn't have to be any big thing, just an activity.*

MG: Well, other than just going to each other's houses and whatever games you got up to play... like, of course, I'd go to Del's a lot... her family... and there was several of 'em there, so you could always organize a game.

ST: *Baseball or softball?*

MG: Not so much ball. We skated in the wintertime, and... oh, I don't know. We used to dig caves and play store [laughter]. That type of thing.

ST: *Where did you ice skate?*

MG: Well, we went to English Lake, I think it was. Lomax or English Lake; where the bayou type o'... would freeze over, you know. And then we went out to Alberding's. They always had a low spot usually in the field, and Uncle Charlie was always the kind of person that could find a pair of skates for anybody that came out there. [laughter] He always could rig up a pair of skates. So everybody just came out and got involved.

ST: *And what was your educational background?*

MG: Just high school.

ST: *And that was...*

MG: All at San Pierre; all 12 grades was at San Pierre. So I was lucky! [laughter]

ST: *Yeah, yeah. That's also a rare thing now.*

MG: Yes, yes.

ST: *What do you remember about that experience? For example, did the teachers encourage students to go on with education, what kind of teachers were they... you know, that sort of thing.*

MG: Well, of course you had the two grades in one room for one teacher; that I remember. But as far as going on to college, I don't think... it was probably encouraged, but most people didn't have the money to go, like... they didn't have provisions made for... going, if they didn't have the money... I didn't go, but I know other people did, but it wasn't a big percent. You know, if you had a couple kids out your year, you were lucky. So, I enjoyed all my teachers [laughter]... I couldn't complain about my teachers! I liked school.

ST: *Did you? What subject did you like the best?*

MG: Literature... not math too much.

ST: *No.*

MG: I liked it all right, but I wasn't that good at it.

ST: *You had an uneasy truce with it.*

MG: [Laughter] Yes!

DG: And you were in the band!

MG: Yeah, that's right. I was in the band. We had one of the first bands, you know, and I don't know if it was... from what year. There probably had been a band years and years and years before that, you know, but we had... a guy came and offered to be a band director, so we did have one of the first ones, and then, of course, it got to be a county affair where there was four schools, so we did quite a bit of traveling, you know. We went to... Chicago to that inner... what was that park?

ST: *Riverview?*

MG: Yeah, Riverview. And then you'd go to Indianapolis, you know, to the State Fair; so we had some trips out of it.

ST: *Was that Mr. Carruthers?*

MG: That was Mr. Carruthers, yes. We had Mr. Bucci, B-U-C-C-I, was our first one. And we just had a small band there at San Pierre.

ST: *B-U-C-C-I, you said, like Bucci [boo-chee]. And then Carruthers replaced him?*

MG: Yes, right.

ST: *So what instrument did you play?*

MG: Trumpet.

ST: *I think my mom played that, too. Well, she played a bunch of 'em, but I think that was one of them. What did your parents do for a living? I think I know the answer to this.*

MG: Farm, yeah. Early years, before she was married, housework was about the only thing a lady got to do, and originally there was a hotel that's being restored there at Medaryville. And at one time, the Sparks's ran – my grandparents – were in charge of the hotel, and then my mother worked for 'em. And she came out of Chicago, and then they moved to Judson, and back to Chicago, and back to Judson, back and forth like that. So when she was a young lady, she worked there for them.

ST: *And your father... before farming? Did he always farm?*

MG: At one time they worked at... East Chicago... the mills... what do you call that?

ST: *The steel mills there?*

MG: Steel mills or something... I don't know if that was what it was or not. But it was something like that. He and my mother's brother would travel up there and back.

ST: *Did your father already have a farm when he got married?*

MG: No, we rented. The first... not Fitzgeralds... the Fitzgeralds were involved some place... no, it wasn't them, though... I don't know! I'll think of it someday! [laughter]

ST: *And what kind of work have you done, other than raising a family?*

MG: I worked at the garment factory at Medaryville in the office for 11 years.

ST: *Right after high school? During?*

MG: No, right after high school.

ST: *Yeah, somebody else mentioned the garment factories in Medaryville.. and did North Judson have some, too?*

MG: They had one, yeah, but I always worked at Medaryville.

ST: *So then after that, you were a stay-at-home mom, or did you...?*

MG: Yeah. When I got married I moved over to Monterey, so that's where I've been ever since. Well, we really moved to Lawton first... do you know where Lawton is?

ST: *No!*

MG: It's one of those towns that used-to-be. [laughter]

ST: *Oh! Oh.*

MG: On the way to Winamac; from Monterey to Winamac, in between them. [laughter]

ST: *Slightly bigger than Radioville?*

MG: [Laughter] Exactly. We lived there about... how old were you when you started school, six?

DG: About five.

MG: We probably lived there six years. And then we had built this house in the country in Monterey, and we've lived there ever since. 1959, I think we moved there.

ST: *So you must have known... at least known of... my aunts, Jenny and Agnes that lived in Monterey... and Charlie and Harry?*

MG: Sure!

ST: *We only visited them a couple of times over there... it was like stepping back into the past!*

MG: [Laughter] That was the past, wasn't it?!

DG: [Laughter] It's still that way!

ST: *Yeah.*

MG: Don used to take a ride around there every so often and talk about where the Beckers lived.

ST: *It was so amazing going to visit them, because it was the two old maid women, and the two unmarried uncles, and then... Andy!*

MG: [Laughter] Yes! Andy was as much of family!

ST: *Yes. You just don't see that much anymore... I haven't actually seen it in a long time.*

DG: Unless you go to Amish country.

ST: *Oh, I know... it really had that flavor to it!*

DG: Yeah, they did live that way.

ST: *So you knew them, too.*

DG: Uh-huh. In fact, I think I had Jenny for... maybe third grade or something, when she was still teaching. It seems like I did have her.

ST: *What was your religious background?*

MG: Always at the church at San Pierre, at St. Luke's.

ST: *St. Luke's... your whole family came out of that, mom and dad?*

MG: My mother was Catholic growing up, and then they didn't join the church of San Pierre until... I don't know what year they would have joined... but they joined there then. But I always went there from a child. And Johnny Dolezal was our first teacher in Sunday School.

ST: *Thank you. In your years in this area, was there ever a thought of relocating somewhere else... some other part of the country? I mean, some people move to Florida, some people move to southern California... you were always...*

MG: No. We were always around San Pierre. Of course, mom and dad, I suppose, they had lived a couple of different places before, but mostly... well, like my dad had gone to Alabama with his folks... I suppose it was with his folks yet... to live for a short time, you know, when he was growing. But our family had always stayed in San Pierre... except at the game preserve... they lived out by the game preserve for awhile. That's where my dad's parents were.

ST: *So how old were you when you married?*

MG: Now that's... that's... personal. [laughter]

ST: *[Laughter] We're not doing any fact checking here...*

MG: [Laughter] No, I was 29 and Don was 35, so... we waited awhile.

ST: *You didn't jump in.*

MG: No.

DG: Had some fun first!

MG: Nothing that I regretted that I didn't get to do before I got married! [laughter]

ST: *Well, that's a really... now, I mean, 29 is probably on the young side for getting married.*

MG: Yeah, it wouldn't be so strange now.

ST: *Did it feel strange at the time... to other people? Did they wonder why you...*

MG: No, the only thing that was strange was that after we came over to Monterey, the couples we ran around with that had kids our kids' age were ten years younger than us, so when you went [laughter] out it interfered. I think they were about ten years younger than Don and I, but the kids were the same age.

ST: *And did you wait just because... I don't know, sometimes people wait for economic reasons, sometimes they just feel like they're not ready to jump into that...*

MG: Yeah. I just felt I wasn't ready. 'Cuz we went together for several years before we got married.

ST: *No hurry! What's the rush?*

MG: [Laughter] That's it. That's right. You're married a long time... still married for 54 years!

ST: *Yeah. It recommends that course!*

MG: [Laughter]

ST: How would you describe the roles of men and women during your time growing up in this area, and do you see changes, and if so, what are they?

MG: Oh, other than women have so much more opportunity to get a job in different places, that you didn't have when... in those times... you know, you could either go clean houses for people, or maybe if your parents had a store you might be able to clerk in a store. But other than that, there wasn't too many opportunities to just go out and get a job every place. Where later, they could. And then women could be more independent, because years ago, you didn't have much choice. If you had family and didn't get out and get a job. That was probably the biggest change that I felt.

ST: Of course a lot of that, I guess, began in World War II.

MG: Yes, that's right. That's when the big change started, yeah.

ST: And were you involved in any of that? I mean, I've talked to a few women who worked in munitions...

MG: No. I went to Kingsbury and put my application in, but then I got a chance to work at Medaryville, so I worked there.

ST: Do you have memories of the Depression, or are you too young...

MG: Oh, yeah. I never really felt that it was a depression, you know, like you look back at it, and how bad it really was compared to how you live now. But as far as feeling I was deprived of anything, I didn't have that feeling. Like I said, you got three dresses when school started [laughter]; you sent to Sears or Montgomery's or someplace and got three dresses and a new pair of shoes, and you kept one of 'em for Sunday to go to church or something, you know. But I didn't think anything of it. I really didn't resent it or anything like that.

ST: Well, it probably looked much the same when you looked around you!

MG: Yes, that was one thing, yes, right.

ST: *So you weren't standing out.*

MG: Right.

DG: Well, then you talked about the gas rationing; how you guys would only go places...

MG: Yes. During the war there was a lot of things you did without that you've sort of forgotten... that you didn't have, because you'd only had so many gallons of gas to use during the week, and the same way with your food. There were certain foods you had to get with your stamps, so that was a different kind of a life right then. And like how they darkened the windows and stuff at night, you know, so they couldn't see your lights in your house... things like that.

ST: *How did they darken the windows? With cloth coverings?*

MG: I think just with your shades. You pull your shades down so the lights didn't shine out. Even stores I think did that.

ST: *Oh really. I didn't know that happened in this country.*

MG: Mm-hm.

ST: *So did your husband serve in the military?*

MG: Yes.

ST: *Why don't you say his name for the tape.*

MG: Don. Yes, he was overseas 39 months and was with the... did he call it a repair? There was a certain group of 'em traveled, who were sent different places, so we didn't have the same...

DG: Company, or...

ST: *There wasn't like a unit that he was attached to.*

MG: Yeah, a whole unit that they stayed with all the time. They got moved around a little. I think it was a sort of repair type of group.

ST: *Mechanical. And so was he in Europe and also in the Pacific?*

MG: No. He was on his way to the Pacific when it ended, and so they didn't have to go.

ST: *Did he have many memories of that period?*

MG: You know, he never talked about 'em much in early years, did he? I never heard a lot of stories, but then when he got old and they had the anniversary of so many years the war was over, he got to talkin' to people... 'course he had more time, I suppose, to reminisce. And then he was... almost obsessed with remembering, trying to remember and tell the stories to his kids and other people. And I said, at evenings that was always what we did, we went out on the swing and he'd tell the stories. Of course you heard 'em over and over sometimes. "Yeah, I know that story!" [laughter] But now I'm glad I listened.

ST: *That's how you pass them on, over and over. Because I think if you just hear it once – unless someone's recording it – you can forget it easily. [Turning to Dixie] Do you remember them?*

DG: I do remember him talking a lot about them, too. Mostly, like we've talked about, they were human interest stories. He always was tellin' about the guys that he was with, and stories like that, so, he didn't really tell that much about what *happened*, you know, as far as the war part, he never was in on that. He was more...

ST: *Personal stories. Those are good too.*

DG: Yeah, they are.

ST: *I mean that's sort of the backstory of any war, is the personal relationships and the things that happened between the people involved.*

So have you noticed changes in this area... of any kind? Social, economic, political?

MG: Well, you know I've been gone for an awful long time, so I guess the loss of stores and business places that, you know, you used to go to as a kid, is probably the biggest change that I notice. Of course, losin' the school... when you went to school there for 12 years, you miss that atmosphere. But I always tried to go back to the alumni, so kept in touch a little bit that way.

ST: *That alumni is pretty amazing.*

MG: Yes, isn't it though!?

ST: *How do you account for that? What keeps people connected?*

MG: I don't know. I suppose maybe school was more of a important event in your life. Now it's more just education; but everything you did was sort of connected to the school; your social life, and... I think maybe was more important in those days, where now everybody has a car, where you had a family car, so you didn't go every place you wanted to go, you know. And you didn't have the money to do it either. I'll tell you how we used to take up a collection of nickels and dimes to get a gallon of gas to go to the show! [laughter]

ST: *We're starting that again.*

MG: [Laughter]

DG: [Laughter] We are, aren't we!

ST: *Only we're asking for nothing less than a five-dollar bill. [laughter]*

MG: That's right, it's a little bigger amount now.

ST: *If you're gonna contribute, make it count.*

MG: And a carload of us always went.

ST: *So you got lots of bang for the buck.*

MG: A lot of good out of that gallon of gas. And of course we could go get something to drink, maybe, or eat a lot cheaper than you can do it now... the young people.

ST: *So when you went out as a young person with a car – with wheels – where did you go?*

MG: Well, mostly North Judson and Francesville.

ST: *Because what was there?*

MG: Well, a skating rink, I think, in Medaryville, and there was the theater at Francesville and the theater at Judson, so that was the main attraction.

DG: You guys went to a lot of dances, too, didn't you?

MG: Oh yeah! I liked to dance. Wherever there was a wedding dance, everybody went!
[laughter] That besides San Pierre most always had a place to dance – square dances or...

ST: *Someone's home, or...?*

MG: No, in some building. Well you know, years ago they did do that in the home where you rolled up your rug and danced in your living room. I can remember doin' that when I was just a kid, but even after that age... what the heck is there, where Zimmerman's garage used to be, you know, that was a dance... place that we went to dance.

ST: *What was that called? Did it have a name?*

MG: Oh it probably did... I just remember it as dances. [laughter] And I was real lucky 'cuz my parents liked to dance, and we went quite often, where some kids weren't that lucky! [laughter]

ST: *Right! Their parents weren't into it! So your parents sound like... fun!*

MG: [Laughter] For old people, they did! [laughter]

ST: *They all seem a little boring when we're teenagers.*

MG: Yeah. And they all seem old!

DG: Like your teachers seemed old.

ST: *Right, and they probably weren't that old. Outside of San Pierre, just your own experiences here in this area of northern Indiana, have there been any changes over the years that you've noticed – just in society in general, or how people live... that you either like or don't care for, or...?*

MG: Well one thing I remember that I experienced... there was a lot of bus transportation, where you could get on the bus and go to Gary or go to Lafayette, and there was a lot more of that going on, so, of course, you used it. 'Cuz like I say, everybody didn't have a car, and everybody didn't have the money for gas, and it was cheap... just as cheap to go on the bus. And I even caught the bus like that to go to work in Medaryville. They picked me up. For awhile they had to take me to town to catch it where they stopped, and then they got so they'd stop out at my house! So that was nice.

ST: *Wow! Who...?*

MG: Trailways. And I used to go to the dentist in Wanatah, and take the bus to Wanatah, you know. My brother lived there, and if I had time in between buses to come back home, why, I'd go to their house. I could walk there, you know. You used the buses a lot more than you did later.

ST: *It's a nice service; it's too bad...*

MG: Yes, but then they started cutting out the services, so you didn't have access to it.

DG: And did the bus stop there at the gas station there on 421?

ST: *The Texaco station?*

MG: Yeah, where Danford's used to... well, what do they call that now, that restaurant right by the railroad track... or the tavern?

ST: *Are you talking about the one north or south of San Pierre?*

MG: South.

ST: *Oh, the Oasis?*

MG: Oasis, is that what they call it?

ST: *The hill?*

MG: Yeah [laughter], that was Danford's had it at that time when the bus stopped there.

ST: *Okay. I didn't know the bus stopped there; how interesting. That would make it convenient. It's really a shame that's not there now.*

MG: And of course you had trains then, too. Like I've ridden the train from San Pierre to North Judson... what'd they call that, the Doodlebug?

ST: *I kept hearing about the Doodlebug, yeah! Do you have any idea when that stopped?*

MG: No, I don't have.

ST: *Must have been... was it in the '40s, you think, or maybe the '50s? Was it still going when you moved?*

MG: I doubt it, but I don't know. I doubt it went that long.

ST: *And it was just a small passenger train?*

MG: Yeah. It was just a couple of cars usually. I know they called it the Doodlebug. And my mom's dad lived in North Judson, so it was a couple times I rode it to North Judson, he'd meet the train, and then I'd go to the fair, and usually had somebody coming from San Pierre there that I'd run around with.

ST: *Where would you catch it?*

MG: Up there at the Oasis... no, no, no... I take that back. I caught it at the Depot. There was a depot there.

ST: *Which was almost across from the Oasis; just across the tracks.*

MG: Mm-hm. Is that gone now, the depot?

ST: *Yeah, it's been gone for a long time. I remember it though, from when I was a kid, so I think it may have still been there when I moved, which was early '60s... probably 1960 when I moved. But you know, you come back, and things are gone! Really too bad.*

MG: Yes [laughter]. We always talked about how you used to – instead of following a map how to get someplace – you said, “You go to that filling station on the corner and turn right.” [laughter] “Where the big tree is,” and it never changed! But now you don't dare do that!

ST: *No, your landmarks have disappeared! How would you describe how you fit into the community. I don't mean just San Pierre, but, you know, your kind of area that you live in. Do you have a role?*

MG: No, I never was a very pushy person as far as joining things, but when my kids were growing up – four kids – I surprised myself that I took part in everything that they should be in... you know, band and PTO, and that type of thing.

DG: Scouts.

MG: Yeah, Scouts and things like that. And now I wonder why I did it. [laughter] I have trouble gettin' to the birthday club!

ST: *That's why you're not a Girl Scout leader now! [laughter]*

DG: The first 83-year-old Girl Scout leader! [laughter]

ST: *Well I think you'd actually be a pretty good one if you were into it, but boy, that seems like a huge commitment.*

MG: 4-H... I was always involved in 4-H, too.

ST: *So you really stepped up to the plate when you had kids!*

MG: Well, I was in 4-H all my life, and then, of course, the kids were in it, so...

ST: *In terms of the town of San Pierre, what do you think has been the most damaging development?*

MG: Well, I don't know. The loss of businesses, I suppose.

ST: *Did that come before the loss of the school?*

MG: That I don't know. Of course you had a change of hands in that big store, but I don't know.

ST: Sometimes when people talk about how so much of their growing up and adult years – young adult years, at least – revolved around the school, I feel as though that “going away” was just like a heart removal – heart and lung.

MG: Oh yes, I think you’re right! The loss of a school sort of kills every town, small town like that.

ST: Even when I was here as a child it was really a focal point for everything... a lot of things happened in the school gym. You know, just small town things... that would be the place it happened... What do you think would be a positive change for the area, and especially San Pierre?

MG: Well, I don’t know. I suppose part of the reason when they get out of school nowadays, they leave and go somewhere else for employment, so they don’t have quite the ties that they used to have, to continue a town. So I don’t know, because I know Monterey, too, has changed so there’s just not so many anymore that originally came from Monterey. So things don’t get done with the enthusiasm that it used to... except for the few people that stay loyal to the town to try to improve it.

And I like the idea of preserving some of the old things in a town... like your depots and schools and things like that, and use them to a... It’s just like the bank there on the corner, ‘cuz for us, that was our memory, that bank on the corner. It had those window ledges out that we always set on, and everybody came to town on Saturday night, you know, and you brought your kids with you, and the kids gathered there. So I don’t know what you’d say that should be done or could be done, except enthusiasm – everybody get enthused about doing it, and work together as a town... where everybody goes their separate way now.

ST: Do you think that part of the reason young people leave the area is because fewer people go into farming now, or...?

*MG: That could have something to do with it! I know around our place there’s some *big* farms now, instead of a lot of little farms, so you don’t have as many people from home town*

involved. And of course, money is always the problem. To do anything nowadays costs so much, so it takes cooperation.

ST: And I imagine with farming, if that's what you want to go into, it takes a long time before you get the yield on your investment to do anything... to kind of feel like you have a stake.

If you were asked to name someone in San Pierre, let's say, who had a major influence on you, who would that be? Anyone that stands out? They don't have to have done anything grand, but who just kind of...

MG: Well, of course, I really respected all my teachers for what they done for ya.

[END OF SIDE ONE]

MG: Reverend Carl Rest was about the first one that I remembered that was a minister there, and of course there were several after that. He started a youth group in our church, and we'd always get together, and he'd always have as much fun as the youth! [laughter] Kingmans. I always remember the Kingmans, they were good friends of the family.

ST: Clyde?

MG: Clyde and his dad... the whole family was a friend, and we'd visit back and forth; and of course the store there. Mr. Clausen, for a teacher, I remember.

ST: What made him special as a teacher?

MG: I guess because I knew his daughter. [laughter]

ST: That helps. [laughter] What was her name?

MG: Marilyn.

ST: Marilyn... did that get you any points?

MG: I don't think so! [laughter] He wasn't that kind of a teacher. And of course, Mr. McCauley, the principal. I grew up when he was principal.

ST: *So you were in high school pre-Ralph Richardson?*

MG: Mm-hm.

ST: *'Cuz everybody has nice things to say about Ralph Richardson.*

MG: Oh, yeah! I wasn't in sports too much, so I suppose the ones that remember... that thought about sports and stuff in connection with Ralph, but... well, he was a good teacher, too. And his wife, Jan... actually I suppose she was my first teacher. And then Frances Smith came after her. But she was down... I think it was maybe she quit because she was having a family or something, and then Frances Smith took over. But she would have been my first teacher... would have been Jan Richardson.

ST: *She was my first, too!*

MG: Was it?

ST: *Yeah! This woman had a long career! First and second grade.*

MG: I can remember that my first memory of school... I wasn't going to school yet, but my cousin came to live with us for a year, and he was probably in the first or second grade I suppose, and she was his teacher that time. They had a day when you could bring your little sister or little brother, and I got to go! [laughter] She took us to her house to give us a treat.

DG: Did you ride the bus, or how'd you get to school?

MG: Oh I rode the bus. I don't remember who the bus driver was, 'cuz I lived out there... do you know where [inaudible] Fitzgerald's used to live, or Ernie Miller... see, I don't know who lives there now. But we lived there 'til I was nine, and then we moved where... just north of town where Ben Dolezal bought... of course, that wasn't our house! It definitely

was not our house! [laughter] But that was from... I was probably nine when we moved there. And then they... the folks moved to town after I was grown.

ST: *And where did they live in town?*

MG: You know where Kerns... did you know where Blaha's with the store... Dolezals store, you know, the big store. And then there was Blaha's used to live there. And then across the street was Weningers when my folks were there, and then the next house was where they lived. And then Zacek's built that house next to them, and Frances... Ella Dolezal, John Dolezals lived on the corner. And of course, later that was Maciejak, wasn't it, that lived on that corner?

ST: *That I don't know. I think when we left Ella Dolezal was still there. Because we lived in the place where Weninger's lived before they lived there.*

MG: Oh, did you!

ST: *Yeah, when it was a white house. A lot has been added to that.*

MG: Yes [laughter], it's changed quite often!

ST: *Yeah, quite often... regularly! [laughter] Can you identify this house? No! I think that was my mom and dad's first house, and then they sold it to a couple who I think were from Chicago, and then after them the Weningers lived there for a long time. I have no idea who's there now, but I know that block well! I prowled it as a toddler! [laughter] Very close to the ground!*

Well, do you have any other stories that you'd like to relate, or people that you want to remember? Because sometimes we look at these oral histories as just a way of naming people who are gone.

MG: Right! And each person remembers somebody different than the other person.

ST: *And who might not be remembered otherwise, you know, their names aren't going to appear in history books, but they were here! So, if there's anybody you'd like to mention...*

MG: [Pause.] This goes way, way, way back. There used to be Bells lived out where we moved from, out there in the country, and I think her name was Anna. And my mother's name was Anna, and I can remember my cousin used to call, and she always called "Anna Bell." My mother got to be Annabelle, just because of that. And they had... I think it was sheep or something, and I always wanted a little lamb or something, and he told me if I'd come and stay with them overnight sometime they'd give me one. But I never had nerve enough to go and stay! [laughter] But I remember that name. And Spenners, I remember Spenners lived out there in that direction. And Hankes, Ralph Hanke's parents... that was all names that I remember. And Millers. Ed Miller and Hartel's.

ST: *Oh and didn't they live on that block we were talking about in town at one time, too?*

MG: That was Hartls. That house my parents bought was from a Hartl. And then there was Hartel. H-A-R-T-E-L, that lived out in the country where we lived. So you had a different group of people that... Bill Eckert, that was that Eckert family. And like I say, the Clausens were always close friends when I was growing up. And I remember Dr. Solt [laughter].

ST: *I've heard his name a few times.*

MG: [Laughter] Yes. And the hairdresser... Marian, what was her name?

ST: *Dalka?*

MG: Went and got my hair done there all the time! [laughter]

DG: Who was in the post office?

MG: Oh, Ledvina? Is that who you're talking about, Jackson? I guess Del worked there, too, didn't she?

ST: *She did! She worked there when my grandmother was there, Polly?*

MG: Oh, Polly! Well, there's one name I forgot! Yes! Rennewanz's.

ST: *You knew the Rennewanz's?*

MG: Yeah, yeah.

ST: *Because they figure in some of the Starke County history... their name comes up a lot; it seems like their family goes way back, and I know there's a street with the family name, too, in San Pierre... west, as you go west on Eliza you come to Rennewanz before you get out of town.*

MG: And Hineses were on the corner where the bank built. Of course Eckerts.

DG: Who was the woman that when we used to have like the reunions they'd always make a plate of food and take over to her... her property was like on that curve that's the Lions Club now, and then... do you know...?

ST: *Was it Mary? Remember Mary?*

MG: Mm-hm.

ST: *Do you have any memories of her to share? Because I remember her from childhood, and nobody seems to know a lot about her story.*

MG: No, I didn't know anything really about her.

ST: *But you know who we're talking about.*

MG: Yeah, yeah.

DG: That would be interesting, wouldn't it? Because I remember her from my childhood, too, that when we had reunions they'd always make plates of food and take over to her.

ST: *That was another figure that was like stepping back into the past. She was like an echo from something that had happened a long time ago.*

MG: Another place was Chris Hanke's, Chris and Anna Hanke, out there where Del used to live. They were like... they had the kerosene lamps, all that. My kids used to... Don'd take 'em kerosene, and they'd always want to ride along 'cuz it was so different to live like that.

ST: *Is there anything you'd like to say for the archives about Don?*

MG: No, just that we had 54 good years.

ST: *Wonderful, wonderful. That's saying a lot.*

MG: Yes. And he was a good person as far as being a part of the community, that knew lots of people.

DG: Well, and he started his business, you know, he talked about carrying buckets of oil to houses, is how he got started. When you think of how our natural gas and everything is, house-to-house he carried, what...?

MG: Hung 'em on fences! Sometimes they'd put their bucket on a fence and he'd fill 'em!

DG: When you think that that's how he got started, and my brothers, you know, they have... I don't have any idea how many stations... 15 or 20 stations, all over Indiana... and he started out with a truck and two buckets! [laughter]

ST: *Well that was a change!*

MG: [Laughter] And you know when he delivered 25 gallons at a time, that was the most anybody could afford at a time! Now they wouldn't even come probably for 25 gallons... you'd have to take your buckets!

ST: *Transport it yourself!*

DG: Your car holds more than that!

MG: And I met him at the Shore Room over here at Bass Lake.

DG: At a dance?

MG: Well, yeah, in a way, because Clyde Kingman always played at the Shore Room, and his wife, Nelda would go with him and have to wait 'til the hours were over. And sometimes I went with her to keep her company, too, and of course if anybody asked us to dance, it was all right. [laughter] And he was there one night with some people from Monterey, and he asked me to dance. That's how it got started!

ST: *About how old were you when you met?*

MG: Well, we went together about three years. I think '49 might have been about the first time I met him.

ST: *So was it immediate?*

MG: No, no. It grew. [laughter]

ST: *Oh, I'm glad we got that story! [laughter] Well, unless there's anything else that you want to add, we can finish up.*

MG: No, I just... a lot of my growing up had to do with Del's family, because we were not only relation, we were close! So we did lots of things together, so there was always a good memory there.

DG: I think the neat thing, too, is how you guys looked so much alike that people would get 'em mixed up.

ST: *I always did.*

MG: Did you think that?!

ST: *Yeah. Finally I think that when Bev and I were a little bit older – 'cuz we were friends from the time we were...*

MG: This big!

ST: *Yeah, but I always thought, okay, which one is Del, which one is Mary Margaret? So I'm glad you said that.*

DG: Yeah, it was interesting I always thought, too, 'cuz we'd go someplace and somebody would call her *Ardella!* And we'd look around and they'd be talkin' to mom! [laughter] But they really did!

ST: *I'd love to see some photographs from 40 years ago or something to see that again. Even now...*

MG: Well, you see different angles of pictures where you see... where the likeness comes in. Not everything about you... you can look at yourself and think, oh I don't look like that! [laughter] But there's angles where you do resemble both sides of the family! You know, one minute you might think you look like your dad's side, and then your mother's side.

ST: *Well thank you so much for giving us this time and your memories! I really appreciate it.*

MG: Well, it's good to talk to somebody and have those questions even asked!

ST: *It can be fun!*

MG: Yeah.

ST: Tell a friend! [laughter]

MG: Yeah! [laughter]