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Interview no. 310

Mr. Al Ratner

Mrs. Al Ratner

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Mr. and Mrs. Al Ratner (Mrs. Ratner born in 1917)
INTERVIEWER: Jean Hocking and Sarah John
PROJECT: Sunset Heights Project
DATE OF INTERVIEW: March 16, 1977
TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted

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BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Mrs. Ratner is a native El Pasoan, descendant of a pioneer family; her father was of Jewish and Christian background; has lived in El Paso most of her life. Mr. Ratner is a businessman in El Paso.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Biography; early businesses in El Paso; families who lived on Hawthorne Street in Sunset Heights; Mrs. Ratner's background; early El Paso families; school experiences; General Escobar; refugee families who moved into the Sunset Heights area during the Mexican Revolution; Anglo/Mexican relations; the word "Chicano"; Golden Years and decline of Sunset Heights; El Paso during World War II and going to Juárez to purchase rationed items; gambling and prostitution; development of El Paso's Jewish community; Italian POW camp in El Paso at Washington Park; other comments on the history of El Paso.

2 hours; 55 pages

This is an interview for the Institute of Oral History with Mr. and Mrs. Al Ratner, 4005 Flamingo, El Paso, Texas, March 16, 1977.

SJ: To begin with, Mrs. Ratner, could you please tell me when and where you were born?

MR: El Paso, Texas, 1917, December 22.

SJ: Could you tell me something about your parents and grandparents; where they were from, and what they did for a living; and so forth.

MR: Well, my paternal grandparents were born in San Antonio, and came to El Paso in the 1880's.

MrR: The late 1880's.

MR: No, during the 1880's. He was Ed Moye, and he was very influential in banking circles. He was one of the first President-- I think he was the third President of....

MrR: Well, let me go back a little further. The Moyes were Von Moyes. Alsations. They came to Texas during the migration to the San Antonio area. You know, the Germanic area around San Antonio? New Braunfels, Fredricksburg? And it was a Von Moye who dropped the Von when they got to this country, you see. And he married a Zork. Were they married in San Antonio? That's where the Zorks were, too, before they came to El Paso. And they were entrepreneurs at that time, because at that time this was where the Pass of the North and the trading posts were. It was nothing more, or less. Franklin, Texas; El Paso Del Norte before it became El Paso, Texas. It was just a

branch of Juarez, which wasn't called Juarez then. And when we say he was a banker, it means that these are the things-- he was an entrepreneur. He developed these things in El Paso. He was the President of Border City National Bank, and was one of the founders of the old firm of Krakauer, Zork and Moye. In those days, you've got to consider what a hardware concern was. They were the ones that dealt with the ranchers and the farmers. This was basically a ranching country at that time. They became factors, also. In other words, they factored the crops much as a cotton factor does today, or a wool factor, or as a bank does. And that led him quite naturally into banking. He did become one of the founders of the El Paso Chamber of Commerce, and was, I think, the third President of the El Paso Chamber of Commerce.

SJ: What was his first name?

MrR: Edward. Edward Moye. M-O-Y-E. Pronounced Moy, Moy-a, any way you want to.

MR: At one time it was pronounced Moy-ay.

MrR: But, as I say, it started off as Von Moye. Okay, pick it up from there. I'll correct you as you go along.

MR: He married one of the Zork girls, and they moved here when my father was about three years old from San Antonio. Then, they went back to San Antonio after several years. They went back to help out in the business there, then came back here, and founded the things that were here. In fact, he founded the Krakauer, Zork, and Moye....

MrR: This is all family, incidentally. Krakauer, Zork, and Moye. Moye was married to a Zork, and the Zorks were related to the

Krakauers.

MR: And it was, you know, just a big family. My maternal grandparents were the Calishers. My grandfather had the first department store in El Paso.

MrR: Who was Jacob Calisher.

MR: And that was Everybody's Department Store.

MrR: It became Everybody's later. After the fire.

MR: That's right.

MrR: That is when the Mayor of El Paso was killed. You know about that? Okay.

SJ: Go ahead and tell us about it.

MrR: Well, that was her father's department store on the corner where Grants used to be. I don't know what's in there now. A McCrory's, or something.

SJ: Right. McCrory's Pharmacy is there now.

MrR: And Mayor Davis was killed at the fire.

SJ: He was trying to warn somebody, or what?

MrR: I don't know. Mr. Calisher was in Atlantic City at the time on a buying trip to New York, and he went to Atlantic City for a vacation with his family.

MR: They weren't here. My grandmother came from Philadelphia, and she was....

MrR: What? She was from Richmond, Virginia.

MR: Well, but she was living in Philadelphia.

MrR: Okay.

MR: She was living in Philadelphia when she came here. She was born in Richmond, Virginia. She very, very often said that

when she arrived and got off the train in El Paso, that if she had known she was going to live here the rest of her life, she would have shot herself on the spot.

SJ: When did she get here? Do you know?

MrR: Okay. Your daddy was born here in '88....your mother was born in '92....so nine months before....

MR: No, no, no, no. There was a baby before that. So she must have come here about 1885 or '86.

MrR: Know what kind of trains they had then?

SJ: No, I sure don't.

MrR: You can guess.

MR: An aunt of mine was the first white woman to arrive in El Paso.

MrR: You're going to get an argument on that. Some people think it was Mrs. Shutes. You've heard that story, too.

SJ: No.

MrR: The Shutes family? Shutes piano?

SJ: No.

MrR: Oh really? Okay. Then you've got to check that out.

MR: Mrs. Krakauer--Ada Krakauer--was supposed to, as my family has said, have been the first white woman in El Paso.

MrR: She was born here.

MR: No, she wasn't.

MrR: No? Then maybe Mrs. Shutes was the first white--white, anglo--call it what you will today. Born here, perhaps. There's an interesting story about Robert Krakauer you've got to tell, too.

MR: No, I'm not going to tell that. Because I'm not sure of the facts. But when her daughter was born, she was very, very

sick. And they needed ice. And there was no ice, but the first train was coming through El Paso, and they got ice from the train for the baby.

MrR: Wasn't the Sunshine Day Nursery named the Robert Krakauer Memorial, down on South Oregon Street?

MR: No.

MrR: Is it still called Sunshine Day Nursery? He was elected Mayor of El Paso at one time, until they found out just before.... He was elected Mayor, but before he took office they found out he was not an American citizen. He was born over in Mexico. Nobody realized it. You know, there were no such things as birth certificates at that time. That's the story I was talking about. Not the one you're thinking about. And he could not take office as Mayor of El Paso, because he was not an American citizen. Somebody was able to.... In those days, politics. Maybe you know the old stories about the Magoffins and all of that. But he was not allowed to take office. This was after he was elected. Overwhelmingly. 85 to 42, or something like that.

MR: But my grandparents raised their family here. They were very influential in all social events. My grandmother used to take up for us and say, "When I was young, we went to Juarez and they'd lock the doors of the Custom House at 10:00, and we couldn't get out...."

MrR: The Custom House is still there on the corner of 16th of September and Juarez Avenues. That was the center of all social activities in those days. It must have been a lovely place.

MR: And they had fantastic affairs, but they locked the doors, and you couldn't get out until 6:00 in the morning. So when we came in late, she used to take up for us and say, "Whe I was young, we didn't come in early."

MrR: There's another story you're missing, honey. After Calisher's department store burned down, things became difficult for the Calishers. And their grandmother, Ada Calisher the wife of Jacob, took in boarders. And guess who her cook was?

MR: Oh, Al, I don't think....

MrR: You don't want to tell that story? Well, anyway, it was a Mrs. Amsteder, who became Mrs. A. Schwartz. And they met in the Calisher Home. Mr. A. Schwartz, who became the founder of the Popular, married Granny Calisher's cook.

MR: Well, he had worked at my grandfather's store.

MrR: The Amsteder-Schwartz family. I don't think that.... Well, I think anybody ought to claim their great-grandmother was a cook. That's the American dream.

MR: She lived....the house is still standing on North Oregon Street. I can't remember the name....

MrR: I don't think it's still standing.

MR: Yes, it is. It's across the street from Kahn's Bakery.

MrR: I thought they tore it down to make that medical building.

MR: No.

SJ: It's up about a block from there, if I'm not mistaken.

MR: My grandparents owned the home on the corner of Rio Grande and Oregon, which was torn down for the medical building. And we owned the home at 1103 North Oregon, which was next door, which is now the parking lot.

MrR: Go back a little further, though, when Granny built the first home north of the tracks, where the freeway is now. On Mesa Avenue. Mesa and Wyoming. You know where the old Oasis.... where you here then? Okay. The old Oasis.

SJ: This is which family, now?

MrR: This is the Calishers. We'll try to keep the families straight for you.

MR: And they built the first home north of the tracks.

MrR: Everybody said, "Why in the hell do you want to move out in the middle of the desert?". Because at that time, everybody was living around Magoffin and Myrtle.

SJ: Where were the tracks at that time? Where were they running?

MrR: You know where Main Street is today? Those were the tracks. I remember that well. The El Paso National Bank Building today is built over the tracks. I remember that well.

SJ: Well, you can see them. They're the ones you can see from the street, right?

MrR: Yes, but there were two sets of tracks. There was a set of tracks on what is now Main Street. The St. Regis Hotel -- catch it quick before they tear it down! -- that was one set of tracks. And then half a block further north was another set of tracks; the ones that are still there that were submerged. There were two sets of tracks in those days, and they divided, oh, out where the yards are now. I'd say about St. Vrain, Ochoa, and they met again at the Union Depot. Which was the center of attraction in those days, too, because of the Harvey House. When I came here in '35, the Harvey House was the only place to eat.

MR: We used to go there every Sunday night for dinner. Very, very excellent food. What was I saying?

MrR: Well, anyway, the Calisher Department Store burned down, and he built another building on the corner of Texas and Stanton that is now Newberry's. There was an article in last Sunday's paper about it. Maybe you saw it. He changed the name to Everybody's because the insurance did not cover the cost of the fire and, hell, everybody owned a piece of it, I guess. He built that building and used the lower floors and rented out the upper floors, and he never could get over the fire. And, of course, that gave the Popular their chance to go on. At that time, the White House was on the corner of San Antonio and Oregon where the Union Clothing is now. That was the first White House location when they came from the other side of the river. And that gave both the White House and the Popular their impetus. At that time, the White House wasn't called the White House. It was called Felix Brunschweig & Company. The reason I know is that I worked for them in 1935. Felix Brunschweig & Company. That's quite a story, too. There's no one left. No one left. The Brunschweigs, the Coblentzes, and then it came to the Millers. And Judson Williams worked at the White House when it was under the Millers. I worked at the White House under the Brunschweigs and the Coblentzes, who were nephews. That's another story!! Oh, I love the history of El Paso! It's exciting.

MR: You know, Hawthorne Street really is a fantastic street. You could go down, house by house, and name fabulous people.

MrR: You want to do that? Or do you know it all already?

JH: No, I don't know it all already. I'm really interested in the Trosts. Did you know the Trosts?

MR: Yes.

MrR: Pick it up from there. You know who trained the Trosts?

JH: Frank Lloyd Wright, and Sullivan.

MrR: Of Chicago. Okay. You're up to date on that.

MR: They were very peculiar people in that you didn't see them, and you seldom talked to them, and they never talked to you. Now the younger generation, yes. But the older people....

MrR: The two brothers who were architects. Did you know of any kids?

MR: Well, there was a....yes. There was one, because I had one child, the grandchild, in school when I taught out at Radford. They were living up on Baltimore at the time.

JH: Who was Matilda Trost?

MR: I don't know.

HJ: She was not the daughter of the architect who lived in the Trost House?

MR: This I don't know.

MrR: Never heard the name until this moment. Where did you get the name?

JH: From another interview. There is a diary, supposedly, that Matilda Trost kept of a trip to Europe. And, there are some pictures of the old Trost family, but the members are not identifiable to the person who has them.

MR: I think I did. I have a peculiar feeling I've heard the name, but I don't remember.

MrR: Hedwig Schwartz might know that. Have you talked to her yet?

SJ: I'm planning on it.

MR: Matilda? I don't know. I'm trying to think of the name of the girl.... This must have been a son who married, because I had his daughter in school out at Radford School.

JH: Now the lady that lives, or did live on Baltimore--I don't know if she is still alive....

MR: I don't think so.

JH: She apparently was a sister-in-law. And the information that I have been able to gather so far is that there was quite a sharp break in the family.

MR: There was.

JH: And this lady was not willing to discuss any of the other members of the Trost family at all, I have been told. Do you know anything about what might have happened?

MR: No, I don't. I was seventeen or eighteen when I had this child in school, and I really don't know.

JH: What do you know about George Trost?

MR: Nothing very good.

JH: Okay, let me tell you what has been told to me. That he was, at the time the house was sold, senile; in a wheelchair; he had a severe drinking problem, and was subsequently put into a nursing home because the family was afraid for his safe-being.

MR: Yes.

JH: Another lady I have talked to has a picture of a man she thinks may be George Trost. He is a young man, and at that time was in a wheelchair.

MR: Was he missing legs?

- JH: He didn't appear to be. But this is my question. Was George an invalid in any way? Was he handicapped? Had he always been in a wheelchair?
- MR: Not that I know of. I'm sure he wasn't. I remember as a girl --I don't know how old, maybe ten or twelve--finding him; I mean, a whole group of us found him literally in the gutter. And I'm sure if he had been in a wheelchair or without legs, that would have made an impression on me. I just remember going home and saying, "He's lying there."
- MrR: Judge Howe's son was the one that was without legs in a wheelchair, and drunk all the time. That's another great story.
- MR: She was a fabulous woman. Judge Howe's wife. She was fantastic. And he, Judge Howe, was a fantastic person. But they had....well, Marian Broadus was the daughter. But the son was no good. He was trying to hop a freight train and fell, and both his legs were severed.
- MrR: That was my confusion with George Trost.
- MR: But he spent many, many, many years in jail. Not necessarily because he should have been in jail, but that was his security. Not that his family wouldn't take care of him--that wasn't it at all. But he wasn't happy, he wasn't secure with anyone. And in jail, he was by himself.
- MrR: Back to George Trost.
- MR: George Trost. I really don't know too much about him. The two brothers.... We, as children, sort of went, "Mmmmm." It was almost the haunted house type deal.
- MrR: They kept a low profile.

MR: We were always very anxious to get in to see the house. We didn't.

MrR: Not until Malcolm McGregor bought it.

MR: No, no, it was before that. When the Groesbeecks lived there. But Halloween we would go there, and no one would answer the door and, at that time when we lived there, there was a Hawthorne Gang, which was mild in comparison to today, but it was horrible in our eyes.

MrR: They used to take slingshots and put out the street lights.

MR: There was Jack Neel, and Dorr, and the Dunn boy....Morrow.... what was the name? The stationers?

MrR: Norton.

MR: Fred Norton, Tommy Dorr.... But this was the group. And they did horrible things like stringing kids up by their feet in a tree, and taking the garbage cans and kicking them down the street. I remember we were never bothered by the Hawthorne Gange, because my father made stilts for the whole group, so they all just left us alone. But I remember the Krupps--Leon Krupp--they lived at 1435; were having a birthday party....

MrR: And they were related to the Bellmans, who lived across the street.

MR: But they were having this birthday party, and all of a sudden they went back to get the ice cream, and the Hawthorne Gang had taken the ice cream. Which, of course, was home made. So these were the kinds of things the boys did. Just horrible, horrible things. But at this point, they are so nice, and mild, and good!

MrR: And some of them dead.

MR: Yes. Yes. Quite a few. Gordon Dunn is dead, and Jack Neel is, and....

MrR: The Trost Home is a typical....

MR: English.

MrR: Well, it's more of the Wright type home.

MR: Yes, well, very English. Very high ceilings....

MrR: Have you been inside?

JH: No, I have not.

MrR: Dark beams. Dark. Small rooms, considering the size of the home. But he had the idea of the overhangs to protect from the setting sun and, frankly, I think he wasted his time in El Paso. Both the Trosts. They were such outstanding architects, they were world famous. From the Frank Lloyd Wright school, much more so than the Sullivan school, and when they did the Mills building, this was a phenomenon, you know.

SJ: Well the school, El Paso High.

MrR: Oh yes. Yes. And at that time, that was out in the middle of nowhere, you know. They were geniuses of a type. Iconoclasts. That's as good a word for them as any. Iconoclasts.

MR: But we really didn't know them. Even our parents didn't know them. These were not people you could get to know.

MrR: Considering what a small community El Paso was at that time-- maybe 45,000, 50,000 people; about the size of Las Cruces today--peculiar people. What else do you want to know about Hawthorne Street? What's the next question? We ramble, but that's all right. You'll put it together.

JH: That's fine. I think those were the most important questions I had.

MR: You know, the Nagles lived on Hawthorne Street. Judge Nagle. And they were fabulous people. Just fabulous. They built the home that the Williamses lived in.

SJ: I'd like to pick up where we left off before, about your family. I want you, if you would please, tell me more about your parents, and then I'll ask you more about your childhood and things like that.

MR: Well my parents knew each other all their lives. My mother went away to school--to finishing school. She went to Pittsburgh.

MrR: In those days they called them finishing schools.

MR: She was a very popular young person, and he [father] was several years older than she.

MrR: Ten. Wasn't it? Ten or eleven.

MR: And she had many things she liked to do. She was sort of a.... well, everybody always liked her from the time she was little until the day she died.

MrR: She was Lily Calisher.

MR: Of course, I probably wouldn't ever hear ugly things about her, but I don't think anybody else has ever heard anything about my mother that was. She was married when she was eighteen. When she came back from school. She was married here. They lived in the Alexandria Apartments, which were across the street from where the medical building is now. That was where his parents lived, and this was one of The apartment houses in El Paso.

MrR: It was just about The only one!

SJ: When were they married?

MR: They were married in 1911, and they were rather the center of society--the young society group. Both my mother and father were very vivacious and very well-liked, and very in the middle of everything. They never held back doing anything.

MrR: Her father covered two religious groups. Adelaide's father was born of a Christian father and a Jewish mother. Which, in those days, was a very unusual thing to begin with. The Moyes were Christian; the Zorks were Jewish.

MR: The Moyes were Lutherans.

MrR: Which made them acceptable both ways, or on the fringe both ways--whichever way you wanted to go. And I've got to remind Adelaide, one thing you've got to include is what Granny Calisher did in forming the Women's Club in El Paso, and the Sisterhood in the Temple, and all that. They started all those things.

MR: The Calishers were....well, my grandmother was the first President of the Women's Society, or something like that....

MrR: The Benevolent Society.

MR: My grandfather was elected to, I think the second President of the Congregation, and he would not serve. Grandfather Calisher. But my grandmother started what is now the Sisterhood, and started all the Jewish affairs in El Paso. She came from a very social family. They were very social in Philadelphia, and she continued that in El Paso. It was one of these things that everyone congregated at certain homes, and my grandmother's home was a congregating place. Then after the fire, when she was taking in boarders, one of her boarders was

Reuben Weinstein.

MrR: Very quickly, a history of Reuben Weinstein. He came from New York to be the advertising manager for Calisher's Department Store.

MR: And he was living at the home, and my mother was married, but the sister-in-law, who was Adelaide Moye--my mother called and said, "You just have to come over to the house, because we have a new man, and he is just beautiful. Just wonderful."

MrR: Guess what happened, girls?!

MR: And so, they were married.

MrR: And that's the lady who died last year at the age of 89.

MR: That could be on the tape, too.

MrR: Reuben Weinstein is the gentleman, Adelaide's uncle, who the B'nai B'rith Lodge in El Paso is named for.

MR: And he did many, many things for the Jewish community.

MrR: The old Travelers' Aid Society. He kept that living for many, many years.

MR: He was in many civic type things. Low key. I mean, the Travelers' Aid he was helping; the Red Cross....both Aunt Della and Uncle Reuben did a great deal for the beginnings of the Red Cross. The starting of the feeding of the boys during World War II on the trains. And they started the USO. They were in on the beginnings of those things. Those were things they were very interested in.

MrR: Okay, you got your mother and father married yet? What year?

MR: 1911. And there were four of us. The first child died. Before the age of one. That was when all these babies were

getting the Summer Sickness, and most of the children were taken up to Cloudercroft. That was when the Cloudercroft Sanitorium was up there, especially for this. Well, my older brother, who was Edward, died from whatever this was. It was a diarrhea-type sickness. I don't know what it was exactly. And then I have an older brother, Max, and a younger brother, Edwin. Edwin is with Zork Hardware here.

MrR: Which was the family business. Krakauer, Zork & Moye. It became Zork.

MR: My older brother is in San Mateo, California. The early history of my father and mother....my father was the Vice-President of the Border City National Bank.

MrR: Which is the building that is on San Antonio Street that is now occupied by.... It's next to the Wigwam. Not the Wigwam, the....

MR: The State. Between the Del Norte and the State Theater on that side of the street.

MrR: The Austin Apartments are upstairs.

MR: And they had that bank, and he was Vice President. That folded during the Depression. Then he started in insurance, and he died at the age of fifty of a very unusual disease. Well, he's on the books in Philadelphia. A Doctor Shanberg was a fantastic dermatologist. World-renowned. My father was seen by a whole convention that met in Philadelphia for the express purpose of seeing him. And, to this day, there are very few cases. Well, none that they have diagnosed and cured with this disease.

MrR: Sidebar remark on this. Our boy is a dermatologist, and he

just passed his Diplomat Examination with the American Academy of Dermotologists, and he showed Adelaide, just last year, an article written God knows how long ago....

MR: 1932.

MrR: The case history of her father that he came across in his studies.

MR: Well, of course, it was "M. M."

MrR: Of El Paso, Texas, and he knew the history.

MR: I knew he had been examined by all of these doctors. I remember his writing and saying that he never had so many people poking, and looking, and....

MrR: And Mrs. Moye passed away about four years ago, at the age of 82.

SJ: What can you tell me about your childhood? Where did you grow up? What area of town did you grow up in?

MR: At first, we lived in Kern Place. I was born in Kern Place. You know the big rock house that....

MrR: They call the castle?

MR: Well, that belonged to us. That's where I was born, and where my younger brother was born. We lived there, and were going to build a new house. All the plans were made, but it would be in the future. The Lucketts wanted to buy our house, so we traded houses. They took the house in Kern Place--the rock house which, incidentally, was a setting for a movie. It was the house, but this was on a lake. On water. My mother said they saw the picture and they were just thrilled to death. I don't remember anything.

MrR: That's how they got to Hawthorne. The Lucketts lived in that home on Hawthorne Street, and they traded with the Moyes.

MR: We were just going to live there temporarily. For 47 years!

MrR: Wasn't that home built by Georgie and Irvin Schwartz?

MR: No, no. The Lucketts lived there, and then we moved there. Then we moved down the valley. We had land in San Elizario. A chicken ranch with leghorns. 10,000 white leghorns, and then Irvin Schwartzes lived in our house.

MrR: That's the parents of the boys. Family connections. She was a Krakauer. Now remember Krakauer, Zork, and Moye? She was a Krakauer who married a Schwartz, and that's the relationship to the Schwartzes.

MR: So they lived there, and we moved to 1103 North Oregon, and that was a huge home. Just lovely. And we moved there from the ranch. Our Grandmother Calisher lived there with us. She had lived, after my grandfather died, at the Del Norte Hotel for several years while we were at the ranch, and then when we moved into town, she came to live with us. And she lived with us from then on.

MrR: Did you go to Vilas School?

MR: Well, I started at Neill School.

SJ: Where was that?

MR: The old part of what was Tech, and now is Community College.

MrR: The back there, on El Paso Street. I never heard that. Okay.

MR: They had just the first three grades.

SJ: From there where did you go?

MR: Went to Vilas School. We moved up to Hawthorne, and we went to Vilas School.

SJ: Do you have any experiences from grade school that stand out in your mind?

MR: One thing that stands out very, very vividly. When I was at Neill School, there was a boy in my class by the name of George Allen, and he seemed a bit different. He wasn't very smart. And then one day, one of the boys pushed him down the stairs, and I remember that we all went to the hospital to see him in small groups. He was retarded, and he was badly hurt at that time. I don't know that he was any worse than he had been before, but nevertheless.... And for years, George Allen delivered newspapers to us in Sunset Heights. For years. He couldn't count....

MrR: We used to go with him. Judson Williams and I used to go out with him when he made his collections so nobody would cheat him.

MR: And they did cheat him! They cheated him all the time. He would take rocks and count them so he could figure out what people owed him. He would deliver both the morning and the evening papers in the door. Behind the screen door. Now I knew him when he was...., couldn't have been more than third grade, because Neill School didn't go above the third grade.

MrR: He died about fifteen or twenty years ago.

MR: He had an older brother who also was retarded.

MrR: But his sister was an excellent school teacher. And his father was Nat Campbell, who was more or less the Poet Laureate of El Paso. Used to write--you've heard of Nat Campbell? Okay. Used to write columns for the El Paso Times. I hadn't thought about that in years.

MR: That was the one thing that stood out in my mind as far as grammar school was concerned. There was another one. My brother was younger than I, but he wanted to go to school, and he wasn't old enough to go. But the teacher--well, things were a little bit different than they are now--and she said, "Well, if he's good, he can come one day a week." So I would take him to school one day a week. I don't remember what day it was. But one day, he came home scratching his head, and scratching his head, and they looked and found lice. So, "What happened?" "Well, a dog barked at me!" That was his explanation. That isn't really a very nice story to tell, is it.

MrR: It happens. Even today in school.

MR: That was funny. It really was. The "dog barked at him." But then, when we lived on Hawthorne, I went to Vilas School. I remember a teacher there. Miss Boone.

SJ: Is there anybody in this town that didn't have Miss Boone as a teacher?!

MrR: I remember Miss Foreman of El Paso High. Did Miss Foreman come in to your stories?

SJ: No.

MR: What about Miss Foster?

SJ: I haven't heard about Miss Foster.

MR: Fanny Foster?

SJ: No. No one said anything about Miss Foster, but I've heard about Miss Boone.

MR: Oh, Fanny Foster's a fabulous--a fabulous, fabulous woman.

MrR: You were talking about Miss Boone.

SJ: Yes, tell me about that first.

MR: Miss Boone was a wonderful person. She really was. She was so understanding. The class was always very calm. There never were any disturbances in class. She loved everybody, and everybody loved her, and I think we learned something from her. She was really a very fantastic person. Vilas School. I think either the fourth or fifth grade.

MrR: Did you have her?

MR: Oh yes. She was wonderful.

MrR: Who was principal at Vilas?

MR: I don't know who the principal was. There was a Mrs. Harold who taught over at Vilas who was very well known. I never had her as a teacher. She was a redhead, and to my recollection, she wasn't a natural redhead. And this, in those days....

MrR: In those days, there was just heana. There wasn't anything else.

MR: It was just....that's what I remember about her. There was a PE teacher--I can't remember her name. I think it began with a B.... Young, who made all of the classes, because of noise on the steps or something or other, go up and down the steps and around the building, and up and down the steps and around the building, and I went home sick. And, as it happened, my mother had her Thursday Club there that day, and I went home and was very sick. Whether it was going up and down the steps, or the heat, or just because I was going to be sick anyway, I don't know what it was. But it raised quite

a lot of to-do, and I think the Club, those in the Club who are still alive, still remember that day, because everything happened. But there were many things, many fun things that happened. On the block, everybody liked each other. I mean it was a good block. The people that lived on the block were important people. For instance, where the Casas family live now on the corner, at that time--well, the Dorrs lived there first, and then the Millers.

JH: Oh, that was not built by Mr. Miller?

MrR: Oh no. No, no. They came much later. They came after 1940, I think.

MR: The Dorrs built that. Phil Dorr.

MrR: Yes, Phil Dorr. Didn't he marry a Krakauer, too? Yes. Well, the town wasn't that big then. He married a Krakauer down in Chihuahua, and there happened to be a Krakauer, Zork, and Moya store in Chihuahua, too! The town was very small, honey. You took what you could find.

MR: Well, Phil Dorr was a good-looking fellow, and he married a gorgeous girl.

MrR: One of the Krakauers of Chihuahua. A cousin. The Millers moved up to Kern Place. They moved to the corner of Cincinnati and Kansas.

MR: And then in your house [1415 Hawthorne], the Sanders. And then the Nagles, then the Turners. Now the Turners owned Hixson's Jewelry.

MrR: That was 1421 Hawthorne? 1423?

MR: And the Nagles, he was Judge Nagle, and a fabulous person. And the Turners.... Francis Lewis is still living. She was

a Turner--the Turner girl.

MrR: Did the Zlabovsky's buy....

MR: The Zlabovsky's bought the Wisbrun house. And then the Smiths lived next door to us.

MrR: Wait. Wasn't that the Harrises?

MR: Well, but the Harrises came way later. And then the Davises lived next door to us. On the other side. They sold to the Urreahs.

MrR: Robert Urreah, who was Consul General. Mexican Consul General. And he was here for dinner the other night. Now the Lizarragas --no, they were on the other side. They owned Cruz Blanca. Cruz Blanca? No, Water Phillip Frazier, they owned. Water Phillip Frazier Distillery. It was Tommy Fernandez who moved in after the Urreahs owned Cruz Blanca. Okay.

MR: It was really a fun place. Across the street were the Dunns.

MrR: Where Doctor Lozano is now. Is he still there?

MR: No. He's not there any more. And then Arnolds--Charlie Arnold with the Post Office. And then the Jaffes lived where the Bellmans finally moved in.

MrR: Where were the Squires?

MR: The Squires lived in the Watkins house. Sam Watkins.

MrR: Watkins Motor Company. Buick, Chevrolet. In the old days.

MR: And that was Charlene Green. Charlene and I grew up together. Then the Strausses. He had a curio store in Juarez.

MrR: Very fine curio store.

MR: And then, the Trosts.

SJ: Did you know any of the families, the refugee families, who came in during the Revolution? They had established them-

selves up in Sunset Heights, and I wondered if you knew any of them.

MrR: Yes. Yes you do. General Escobar's common-law wife lived next door to you.

MR: Yes, she did.

MrR: Yes. Well, she was the legal wife. Liz was the common-law.

MR: The legal wife lived next door, and they had a son. And there were people guarding the house....

MrR: That was 1435 Hawthorne. Let me go back. Do you know who General Escobar was? Okay. You know that he emptied the bank in Chihuahua and came up with all the money out of it into the States. God knows how many millions of dollars, and established his home at 1435 Hawthorne.

MR: And his son was maybe six to eight months....

MrR: Was that the bastard? No. Phillip was the bastard son.

MR: And they had guards, constantly.

MrR: She was beautiful. A beautiful woman. Mrs. Escobar. She worked for me later at the White House.

MR: She works at the Popular.

MrR: She's still there. Gorgeous woman.

MR: Just beautiful. Concha.

JH: And she's still here in El Paso?

MR: I haven't seen her in a couple of years, but she was.

MrR: But that was the refugee family who came out of Chihuahua. General Escobar ran up to Canada. Concha still lived at 1435, and General Escobar was up in Canada.

MR: And we always knew when he was here. Always.

JH: How?

MR: Every shade in the house was drawn. Every shade.

MrR: And bodyguards all around the house. The son went to McGill University.

MR: He was a nice-looking boy. Really nice looking.

MrR: And General Escobar had a liaison with a woman by the name of who had a son named Phillip by General Escobar, and the two boys looked so much alike you would have thought they were twins.

MR: They really did.

MrR: Who else was a refugee at the time?

SJ: There were several families who lived up in Sunset Heights.

MrR: Well, what names do you know that maybe will recall something to us? Now remember that the Pancho Villa days were 1916-1917. She was born in '17.

SJ: I just thought maybe the families were still in that area and hadn't moved out.

MR: Well, it could be, but....

SJ: Terrazases would be,...

MrR: Yes, Terrazases. I knew the Terrazas family. I worked with the girls. There was Irene....there were about four or five daughters.

MR: Lovely girls.

MrR: The Terrazas family--who owned the whole damned State of Chihuahua. There was one son, one boy, who went out to California. Gay as a goose. One son. The rest were all girls. Do you want to cut that out?

JH: No, not really. It's delightful to have somebody be so honest.

MrR: Name some more names. Maybe it'll come back.

SJ: I can't think of any at this moment. Here I am asking you, and I can't think!

MrR: Well I worked with Irene. There were four or five of those girls, all at the old White House.

MR: No, they weren't all at the White House. Some of them were at the Popular.

SJ: Do you remember the Cuens?

MrR: The name is familiar. That's all I can tell you. 3:00 in the morning I'll remember. There was Jules Cuen....

SJ: I think he was a judge, or an attorney, or something like that. But they also were a family that had it's origins in Chihuahua.

MR: It seems to me I went to school with some of them.

SJ: How about Daguerre, or Armendariz?

MrR: Velarde. What was her maiden name? I remember the day she got married. They came up from Chihuahua.

MR: Began with a C.

MrR: They opened a Mexican restaurant in what used to be the old Elk's Club, now called the Toltec Building. Marie Casars. Casars. Maria Casars. They came up, too, during those days.

MR: She runs Castillas De Niños, now.

MrR: She married Alfonso Velarde. Guess who he worked for? Zork Hardware. Well, everything tied together in those days. You know. And she worked at the White House in those days when I worked there. We used to eat there. It was a 35¢ special, and it was a Mexican restaurant. Her mother used to make it. Good food. And the father waited table. One of those things. Married Alfonso Velarde in 1936. I came in 1935, and they were married in '36. And, of course, they have children all

over El Paso. Alfonso died many years ago.

SJ: The reason I wanted to ask you that is that I wondered if any of these kids had gone to school with you, and how the ethnic groups related to each other. Friendly; not friendly--cold; not cold....

MR: We didn't know anything but being friends with everybody. The classes weren't that large, and we didn't know any different.

MrR: Well, those that lived there were on your own social strata. You see? So, they were socially acceptable.

MR: The Hernandezes, and the Fernandezes. I mean, they were all....

MrR: You didn't know the peons.

MR: Well, I don't know. We went to Vilas School, Al. We did.

MrR: Which was in the very finest neighborhood at that time.

MR: Yes, but they also came up from Smelter. So I don't ever remember even knowing....

MrR: Jones School in Smelter. Remember Jones School?

MR: Well, but that was way far. I mean, those that lived down where old Ft. Bliss was came up over the viaduct there to Vilas. But I never remember anything. I remember Luz Hernandez came to our birthday parties, and Georgina Fernandez did. I mean, I never knew anything about discriminating against anybody.

MrR: We didn't know in those days what a Chicano was, or a Hispanic-American.

MR: Chicano, as far as I can remember, was a dirty word.

SJ: When did you first hear that word?

MR: The first time I ever really hear it, when I understood what was going on, was just in the last ten of fifteen years.

SJ: But before that. When you were younger.

MR: Well I was a very square person. Positively. I never knew anything. I've learned a lot; I still don't know very much. These were things I just wasn't....

SJ: Well, we'll say like in the '30's. It was a derogatory word?

MR: As far as I was concerned. Maybe I heard it. But it was not anything you would call anybody.

MrR: Well I was not square. I recall, when asking who you were going out with, you said "Chicana," or "Gabacha." Now, do you know what a Gabacha is? In other words, is she a Mexican broad or a Gringa? And that's the way it was used. It was a very slang expression. If you will go back to the days of the Pachuco--the zoot-suited group--it was about the same time, which would be the early '40's. Call them Chicano then, you better be ready to run. Like calling them "nigger," you know.

MR: We had a lot of friends. If I see them on the street right now, we stop and we talk, and we have a good time. We don't get together, but I don't get together with anybody else, either.

MrR: To show you how friendships do continue, the Urrea's, who moved away from Hawthorne Street in '40-something, were here dining last week. We keep our union cards up. You know. They're lovely people; they're old friends, and every once in a while--not too often--we get together for dinner. And it was a lovely evening.

MR: But we just never knew anything different.

MrR: There are some other names on Hawthorne that we didn't bring up. Such as the Howard Maxon....

MR: Well, those are new.

MrR: Still, thirty years ago.

MR: Yes.

MrR: The Howard Maxons, the Loyas, the Lizarragas, the Tommy Fernandezes--who owns a Coca Cola and Carta Blanca. The Zlabovskys, Mike Martinez across the street, Bellmans, the Squires, the advertising agency Dick Mithoff, and, of course, Malcolm McGregor who took over the Trost House. Is he married again?

JH: No.

MrR: What happened to that chick he was dating all the time?

JH: Which chick?

MrR: I once asked him, "Oh, is that your daughter?"

MR: The Groesbeecks lived there.

MrR: The Groesbeecks lived there, for years. One of their daughters is now Mrs. Al Kahn. The other now is Hatfield. You see, even the Jake Millers came to Hawthorne later. And they only lived there about eight or nine years, I think. But your home [I415 Hawthorne] was easily the loveliest home on the block, except for the one at 1600, which was Dolly Heisig's. Before that it was Neel's. Then it became Dolly Heisig's. That's the one that Ruth Kern--is she in there now, still?

JH: Yes she is.

MrR: But your home, and that home, were the loveliest. And the largest ones.

MR: You know that many of the homes on Hawthorne were built by Tom Mayfield.

MrR: Who still is alive.

JH: I'm glad to have that information. The plans for our home were drawn up by the Trosts.

MrR: You can tell.

JH: The home supposedly was built for a Goldstein family. Did you know them?

MR: Yes. Abe Goldstein.

JH: What can you tell me about them?

MrR: Wooo. What do you want to know?

JH: Anything.

MrR: Abe Goldstein was a lawyer in the office that is now Potash & Bernat.

MR: He was.... Maybe I shouldn't say this, but this is the way I feel.

MrR: There is nobody left. Nobody can sue you. He was a shyster who....

MR: No he was not! He was an honest lawyer.

MrR: He was killed by one of his clients.

MR: No, he wasn't.

MrR: He wasn't shot?

MR: No.

MrR: Oh, that is the other. Oppenheimer. Okay. Wrong guy. Back up. It was not Goldstein who was the shyster who was shot.

MR: Abe Goldstein was an honest lawyer. I don't know if you can say that very often, but he....

MrR: But his wife was a character, if there ever was one. Oh, God!

MR: She used to sing....

MrR: She thought.

- MR: And she had hennaed hair, to the 'nth degree. And they built the house, after they left Hawthorne, they built the house on the corner of Blacker and.... Where the Goodells live. Kansas? Kansas and Blacker, where the Joe Goodells live.
- MrR: What was her name? Mrs. Goldstein.
- MR: Emma.
- MrR: She was one of three sisters, and they were all characters.
- MR: Five sisters. They were all pretty bad. Anyway, she was very particular about everything. Everything. And she had a man laying the tile in her entry way. The entrance hall in the other home. And, he died. He just up and died on her.
- JH: How dare he!
- MR: And she was furious.
- MrR: That's what she said. That's what she said. "How dare he? What am I going to do now?!"
- MR: He hadn't finished her entrance hall. And he died on her!
- JH: Why did they leave the Hawthorne home?
- MR: Because Blacker Street was the newest....
- MrR: And she was that type of person. Status. Social.
- MR: And he had made money. He had made a great deal of money.
- MrR: Well, he was the lawyer for most of the railroads coming through El Paso.
- MR: Grambling. Howard Grambling and Abe Goldstein were there.
- MrR: Oh, I'm wrong. It was not the Potash & Burnat office. It is the office that is now Hardie, Jones, Grambling & Galatzan [Grambling, Mounce, Deffebach, Sims, Hardie & Galatzan]. That's the office. It started out as Goldstein and Jones.
- JH: So then who took that house on Hawthorne when they moved?

MR: The Sanders. Ed Sanders. Ed Sanders had his business in Juarez.

MrR: The Juarez Mercantile Company. Part of the old Wisbrun, Sanders, Luckett group. Has that name come up before? Now remember, they traded homes with the Lucketts. You remember? See? See how it all ties in?

MR: The Sanders and Wisbruns and Lucketts all lived on Hawthorne.

MrR: They came up from Torreon in the early 1880's and established the Juarez Mercantile Company, and then had cotton gins, and everything else.

MR: Paul Luckett just died. What, last week?

MrR: Last week. Clint Luckett--these are the sons--is with the El Paso National Bank. Rudy Wisbrun is an invalid, and the only Sanders left is Sandy Sanders.

MR: David.

MrR: Oh, David's still alive. That's right. Sanders Advertising Agency here. And Reggie's son, Sandy, who has a boot factory over there. But they gave up Juarez Mercantile and everything else.

MR: Ralph Sanders had two daughters. One doesn't live here, and the other is Mrs. Ira Budwig. Doctor Budwig.

MrR: Now we are in the third generation, see.

JH: Did the Goldsteins have any children?

MR: No.

MrR: No. She tried it once and didn't like it. One nephew was killed in World War II. Leroy Levy.

MR: There was Emma Goldstein, Clottie Fatman, Polly Blumenthal, Irma Levy, and Alice Solomon.

MrR: Didn't know her.

MR: Oh, you should have!

MrR: We never would have thought of Abe Goldstein if you hadn't asked us. It triggers our memory. This is like Roots. One thing triggers another. Next?

JH: When do you consider Sunset Heights was in it's Golden Years? What were the Golden Years?

MrR: The year I got married there. We were married at 1431 Hawthorne. Our daughter was married there too, incidentally. Same spot in front of the fireplace. She wanted to. I'd say the '20's and '30's. I came here in '35, and that was when I was invited to Adelaide's Hawthorne place. I was invited to her home as a blind date for her 21st birthday. She had just come back from Cleveland from school, and I was working at the White House at the time, and was the new young man in town with a steady job at \$12.50 a week, and a clean collar. Living at the Hilton Hotel, which is now the Plaza. And, I was very much socially acceptable, because my roommate was the conductor of the El Paso Symphony Orchestra. So, I was very socially acceptable. And we met at her 21st birthday. Didn't like each other a bit. I'd say when I came in '35, it was The neighborhood. Kern Place was coming up, but Kern Place at that time was much smaller homes.

MR: Well, Kern Place had been big, and then all these smaller homes came up, and we really didn't know anybody in Kern Place after a while.

JH: So the Depression really didn't affect the standards of Sunset Heights.

MR: No, it really didn't. Most of the homes.... I guess in those days you bought a home. Period. I mean, you didn't lose the home because you couldn't pay for it. It was your home.

MrR: The Depression Years did not affect El Paso as they did the rest of the country. El Paso, in those days, was very dependant on the Mexican economy. At that time, the Peso was worth three to one. Thirty-three and a third cents. And the Pancho Villa days brought so much money up to El Paso. We were doing business in those days more in Mexican money than we were in American money. The Depression hit El Paso several years later. The banks closed in '32, and it did not affect El Paso. I said I was making \$12.50 a week. That was kind of big money. Remember, I was living in a hotel. By the time the Depression finally hit El Paso, there was a recovery around the rest of the world. It was already '38, '39. And then, of course, the War Years started in '39 and '40.

JH: When, then, did Sunset Heights begin to wane? And why?

MrR: Well I'll tell you. Sunset Heights began to wane when they started building Piedmont. Rim Road was already up at the time. That was The neighborhood. The Givenses lived up there, the Schwartzes lived up there. Sunset Heights began to wane.... Stanton Street stopped at Mesita. That's where it stopped. This was all desert. Then, when they built Stanton Street up, a couple of blocks at a time, this was all Krupp property. Does that name ring a bell with you? Lived in Sunset Heights on the corner of Fewel and Yandell. And Emilio Pinato made a deal with the family, and he developed Piedmont. Everything on the South Side of Stanton is called Piedmont, and on the

West Side it's called Mission Hills. So, as Emilio Pinato in the late '40's developed this.... Now, when did the Williamses move off of Hawthorne over here?

JH: 1958.

MrR: Because when they moved to where they are on O'Keefe, that was the end of O'Keefe, and O'Keefe was a brand new street. So I would say with the development of Piedmont and Mission Hills is when Sunset Heights....

MR: Well, I think Sunset Heights started going down, but I don't think Hawthorne Street did. I mean, the rest of Sunset Heights was going down.

MrR: South of Yandell it deteriorated first. Along Porfirio Diaz, and then it kept creeping up Los Angeles Street, Upson, and Prospect. They went down. But it held the line at Yandell for a long time. The park was sort of the dividing line. Mundy Park.

MR: But there were the Kohlbergs, the Mathiases, the Perrenouts, and the Murchisons; and the Nortons. Aronsteings, Zorks, Federal Judge Boynton....

MrR: They tore his home down and made the little apartment house there on the corner.

MR: Across the street from Florence Melby. Those homes were always kept up beautifully. See, those were all on Yandell and this way. Below that, it did....

MrR: It held at Yandell for a good many years. And then, of course, when we moved out the whole damned neighborhood went downhill.

SJ: Besides that, why do you think the neighborhood changed?

JH: It couldn't just be the development of other areas of town.

If Sunset Heights was The place in town to live, and The Families lived there, there would have to be other variables at work.

MR: The one big thing was the traffic. To the College. The other big thing was the size of the homes. Where the children had grown up--except in our case--the homes were too big for these people. We went in the home and lived. But in the other homes, they didn't. So, the children moved out, and the homes were really too large for a couple. We moved in because my brothers left, and my mother and grandmother were left alone, but so many of the children had left that the houses really were too large. And then with all the traffic on the street, and the College there, we had cars parked in front of our house for school. This, I really honestly think, was the reason.

MrR: Well, of course, where Hawthorne House is now there was nothing but a damned gully, and across the street was a gully until what's-his-name filled it in.

MR: 1700 Hawthorne.

MrR: Aaron Brenner. He filled it in.

MR: And he built Hawthorne House, which caused a fantastic fuss.

MrR: Sunset Heights' Garden Club wasn't happy about that. No.

JH: Were you a member of the Sunset Heights Garden Club?

MrR: Who wasn't?

MR: I wasn't.

MrR: No, but your mother was. Between Mrs. Perrenout and Mrs. Hedwig Schwartz, everybody belonged. That's why you don't have urban renewal in Sunset Heights now, because as long as

those two gals are alive, the zoning there....

MR: Mary Quinn, too.

MrR: When Judson Williams was Mayor, they gave him a pretty good hassle.

MR: The little house, the duplex on Yandell, right at the curve-- the foot of Hawthorne--the man that built that is just waiting for Mary Quinn to die. Because when she dies, he's going to build what he wants.

JH: You tell that man that the "new kids on the block" are marshalling their defenses.

MR: Mary has been fighting this man tooth and nail.

MrR: He built that duplex 25 years ago.

MR: She's fought them constantly since they built.

MrR: We used to go to City Hall every two weeks to fight some other form of zoning.

MR: And nothing got by. It really didn't. I don't know what it is now, but we did start something where the Arnolds lived-- where the Mithoffs lived. It's the third house....

MrR: Where they have the altar in the front yard.

MR: No, no. Next to it.

MrR: The third house south of the alley, next to the house with the altar. They must have had a machine repair, or car repair, or something in the back, because there were cars out in front all the time. All kinds of things. And they wanted to take the Wisbrun house and make a boarding house, or rooming house out of it. We had a chance to sell 1431 to a Fraternity.

JH: Oh, I'm so glad you didn't.

MR: We didn't put the house up for sale until after we had moved

in here. My mother had lived there for 47 years, and if she wasn't going to be happy here, we would have gone back. She never went back to Hawthorne Street.

MrR: Well, she had a hip operation. Those stairs were pretty bad for her. Our first Christmas here, our kids came to visit, and they slept over on Hawthorne Street.

MR: Well, we had some extra guests, too. We had three bedrooms taken over there, and three bedrooms here. It was sort of good that we had the two houses at the time.

MrR: Then we sold it to Provincio.

MR: One of the reasons we left was that the house needed painting, and we needed a new couch for the living room.

JH: I guess that's reasonable. I liked the hip reason a lot better.

MR: Actually, that was it. Mother would get up from the dinner table and say, "I'd go to bed, but I just can't get up the stairs."

MrR: We had five bedrooms, and we added a den, and added a back porch--a dormitory--where two of the boys were sleeping. We left two or three bedroom sets there when we left. One mahogany one. But we were married at 1431, and we left El Paso our wedding night. I was working for the Franklin Stores at the time. I took her to Amarillo as a bride, and stayed there a year. Came back to El Paso for six or seven months....

MR: No, a couple of months.

MrR: Then they transferred me to Laredo, Texas, and then we went to Louisiana, and then I quit and we came back to El Paso to stay.

MR: That was just before the War, and both of my brothers were

going into the service, and so we just....

MrR: And by that time, I was a pre-Pearl Harbor father. I was Civil Defense Warden for that 1400 block on Hawthorne Street. I've still got that helmet around somewhere. I was Civil Defense Warden for that block. Yes sir, I was.

MR: And I went on every drive there ever was. Red Cross, Community Chest--you name it, I did it.

MrR: We used to go down to the Union Station and give the kids coffee and doughnuts, and used to go down to the USO, which is now torn down for the Civic Center on San Francisco Street. We used to wrap packages at Christmas time, and all that. When we were dating, I used to take her to Juarez to the old Lobby Cafe. Seventy-five cents was a filet mignon dinner, and drinks were two for a quarter. And they had a three, four, or five act floor show besides.

MR: And no matter when we went, we had a table on the floor.

MrR: I was a big tipper. I used to leave 35¢. 35¢ would buy you a meal. This was a great town.

MR: El Paso was a fantastic place to grow up in. It really was. When I went away to school, I first started hearing about prejudice. Something I had never, ever heard about in my life before. We used to have fantastic dances. All the big name bands--all of them came through El Paso on their way to someplace or other. When I went away to school, I had 14 formals. Which were well used. They were dress-up dances.

MrR: You couldn't go to the Symphony Concert unless you were in formal dress.

MR: You really did dress. I went to Cleveland to school, and my

goodness, they thought I was from the, you know.... "Do you have a horse?", and "Where is your oil well?", and "Have you ever seen a shower?".

SJ: They still think that.

MR: But I used to let all the girls borrow my formals, because I was the only one who had them.

MrR: A fellow by the name of Rivers Bowden started a dance club. Now this was in the '30's. It was before we were married, honey, so it had to be in the '30's. And at that time, Liberty Hall did not have permanent seats in it. Wrestling matches were held there, dances, everything. And we paid so much for membership, and he would book these orchestras in about every six or seven weeks. And I don't know if these names mean anything to you, but names like Phil Harris, Wayne King, Guy Lombardo....

SJ: What's his name? Martin....

MrR: Martin was a local. The guy who played there.

MR: Oh, he was such a good-looking guy.

MrR: And really, it was a big thing. This went on for four or five years.

MR: Then they had them in the new part of the Del Norte. What was it? The 11th floor?

MrR: The Garden Room, yes. And this was the younger crowd. Before the days of marijuana and all that other stuff.

MR: There was no drinking.

MrR: The hell there wasn't!

MR: During Prohibition?

MrR: Juarez was there. Prohibition never meant anything in El

Paso. I mean, who had to smuggle anything over? You wanted a drink--there it was.

MR: I didn't go to Juarez until I was....

MrR: Well, you said you were square.

SJ: Were you here during Prohibition then?

MrR: No, I came after. I was in Chicago during Prohibition days. I remember them well. I still have a fabulous, fabulous recipe for bathtub gin. If you want. I can make you gin, today, for 85¢ a quart. It's passable. It's passable.

JH: We'll take it. We have a big, claw-footed bathtub. We could make quite a batch.

MrR: But, no. Prohibition went out in '33, and I got here in '35. There's one night club down the Valley. Where Goodwill is....

MR: La Posta. I had my coming-out party there. I was one of the very few who had a coming-out party in El Paso. My grandmother insisted upon that. It was very formal. Very fancy.

MrR: Born in Richmond; raised in Philadelphia; you know the kind of lady she was. She changed El Paso by her own personality. She changed it from a Cow Town to a community of culture. She really did.

MR: We had the first air-conditioned house in El Paso. On Hawthorne.

MrR: Of course it was called a swamp cooler in those days.

MR: She had an engineer who had been doing a building downtown, and she called him and asked what could be done. He said, "I don't think anything, really, but maybe we could do the upstairs." And she said, "That's what we want. Just so we can sleep at night." So the air conditioner was put in the roof, and we had a curtain that went over the staircase, and we found that

if we closed the doors upstairs and opened that curtain, we got air conditioning downstairs. So during the day, when there was company--both my mother and grandmother were very social, and we had lots and lots and lots of company--our air conditioning came right down the stairs.

MrR: Another thing I recall. When I first dated Adelaide, her phone number was 268. That's all, just 268. And everybody got their phone number, beginning with 1. 1 was Longwell's Garage. What made me remember that? Longwell's Garage had phone number 1. The Moyes' number was 268, and then after that when they got another exchange, it was Main 268, and it stayed Main 268 for years, and years, and years. Now what made me remember that? Used to pick up the phone and say, "268." "Oh, I'll see if Adelaide is home. Wait a minute!"

MR: During Second World War, sugar rationing, gas rationing, scrap iron, any of those were no problem. You just went over to Juarez.

MrR: You could not buy any of the small appliances--electrical appliances? You could get all you wanted in Juarez. We were sending them to them on Lend Lease. Toasters, wrist watches....

MR: Nylon hose. We were sending it all to them on Lend Lease. And they built all of their fancy fences when we were collecting scrap iron to help the War effort.

MrR: Don't knock it. It was there. Gasoline rationing didn't mean a thing. You would take your gasoline coupons during World War II, and use them up, and then you'd go over to Juarez. Get all the gas you'd want. Tires were a problem.

MR: But there was just about anything else. The fact that they

were so available.... You weren't hoarding anything. People didn't really hoard them. They were available. There.

MrR: Did anybody ever tell you girls about Ninth Street?

JH: I have a little note here that says I should ask about gambling and et cetera. Is that what you are talking about?

MrR: Gambling was in Juarez. Now El Paso did have slot machines in those days. They were illegal, but they were allowed. Leon Gillespie's place called the Officers Club, which is downtown where the Blumenthal Building was, and is now a parking lot on the corner of El Paso and San Francisco. But we're talking about Ninth Street, which is two blocks this side of the bridge, and there was an open crib district. A street of prostitutions. And all the girls had these Dutch doors-- half doors.

JH: That's the "et cetera."

MrR: Okay. I remember driving Adelaide down there one night. She wanted to see it.

MR: I died.

MrR: She really died when the girls said, "Hi, Al."

SJ: I heard that they moved these girls over to Juarez.

MrR: No, Juarez had them. What happened was, during World War II the Army placed it off limits. The Provost Marshall. And that killed it, of course. Then it became the Mansion House. Just one house on Overland, owned by a guy named Johnson. But in those days, Juarez was just a 25¢ thing, and this was high class on this side. This was a dollar, or two dollars. I'm not trying to embarrass you. This was all part of El Paso in those days. But during World War II, the only thing

open was the Mansion House on Overland Street. And the soldiers paid, and the MP's would be down there to keep the boys in line. "Take your place. Get to the end of the line!" They were working down at the Mansion House. I was in Ladies Wear, and we sold those gals an awful lot. What's your next question?

JH: Do you recall who the doctor was who was interned in the POW compound here in El Paso during World War II?

MrR: Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Now I can't remember his name. We'll get back to you. What was your question?

SJ: I have several questions for you about the Jewish community and the development in this town, and you seem to have a lot of the history of that. I wanted you to begin and tell me everything you knew about that.

MrR: The first Temple in El Paso was on the corner of Oregon--in Adelaide's home. That was where they first met.

MR: It was on El Paso Street, a little bit south of where Neill School was. Between Vandell and Rio Grande.

MrR: That was the first building that they built.

MR: The first Temple was in the middle of the block, across the street.

MrR: And the first Rabbi they brought was a Rabbi Cohen, and the originators, of course, were Mr. Calisher, Krakauer--who was the first President? Well, anyway. The Jewish community at that time was, at the most--this is just a guess--50 families. And they formed a Ladies Aid Society. That's it. Not the Ladies Benevolent Society--the Ladies Aid Society. That developed into the Sisterhood, and the Women's Club, and all

of that. Then they built their first Temple. The Synagog came later. Understand the difference between a Temple and a Synagog. There are two, well really there are three forms of Judaism. There is the Reform, Conservative, and the Orthodox. In El Paso, the first was the Reform faith. Which did not follow the tradition. I would compare it to an Episcopalian to a Catholic. Not high Episcopalian, but and Episcopalian to a Catholic.

MR: Or, a Methodist to a Catholic.

MrR: Well, anyway, that was Rabbi Cohen. And later came Rabbi Zielonka in--I forget what year. Well, the first Temple was formed in 1890, wasn't it? I'm not too far off. Now understand who the Jewish people were who came here. The Jews were the pioneers. The peddlars with the pack on their back who came down here trading with the Indians. Believe it or not, a fellow by the name of Seligman at one time owned the Grand Canyon. Seligman, Arizona, is named for him. These were the Jewish peddlars coming down to Santa Fe from St. Louis, with the pack on their backs, trading with the Indians and the ranchers. The peddler. The Calishers, the Schwartzes, all of them. Many of them, though, came up as refugees through Mexico. The Wisbruns came up through Mexico. Rabbi Zielonka lived many, many years, and finally built the Temple on the corner of Oregon and Montana, which is now the Tejas Building, and that remained there until 1960's, until the new one was built. In the meantime, there was a new influx of refugees into El Paso from East Germany, from Eastern Europe, who were more Orthodox, and the Reform faith did not

fill their needs.

SJ: What years were these, more or less?

MR: Oh, this was the late 1800's, and early 1900's.

MrR: They came to El Paso. There were many of them who followed. Eastern Europeans, mostly. Poles, Czechs, Russians. And at that time, Mr. Krupp--whose name you have come across several times--had done very well in El Paso, and he, of the Reform faith, gave them the money to build the Orthodox faith. Which is B'nai Zion. And Rabbi Roth--was he the first? Okay. There wasn't enough money to pay Rabbi Roth, so he was kind of moonlighting. He was moonlighting at the Synagog, and his real job was in charge of the Department of Philosophy up at Texas School of Mines. In fact, he was the Department of Philosophy, and he was a fine man. I remember well. That is a capsulization of the Jewish growth. There is much more to it, of course. As I say, it was the peddler--the Jewish merchant--who founded the Jewish community of El Paso. The lawyers, the doctors--they all came later. Who in the hell was the doctor who was imprisoned?!

MR: Seems to me it began with an H.

MrR: Gee, I haven't thought about that in years. Nothing came of it. They just kept him there. Tell me where you got your information. In what context? Maybe it will bring something back.

JH: Dr. Williams mentioned it.

MrR: There was one. There was one. Of German heritage. They kept him there a couple of years. Who in the hell was it?

MR: We had a fun type thing.

MrR: Oh yes. During World War II.

MR: My brother was out at Biggs--well, whatever the hospital was that was taking care of Biggs....

MrR: Did you hear about the POW camp down in Washington Park where all these Mexican girls were crawling over the fence to get to all these Italian boys? Their Italian and the girls' Spanish could be understood, see.

MR: Anyway. My brother was.... I don't know exactly what he was, but he was in the Medical Corps. Not a doctor, but in the Business Office, or something, and he made friends with everybody. He knew everyone in El Paso--always.

MrR: Gregarious.

MR: He found out that there were some Italian Prisoners of War who were able to cook all this Italian food. Just fabulous. My mother and grandmother were out of town, and he decided that he was going to have a party.

MrR: At 1431 Hawthorne.

MR: And--I don't know. I think there were three or four POW's with the guards who cooked this stuff in our....

MrR: Brought their own utensils.

MR: Cooked the stuff in our kitchen. And Max had all of these friends come in.

MrR: These were all service people.

MR: And when the kitchen help was finished, they marched out with the guards. But they cooked, and served--it was simply fantastic.

MrR: And the POW's had a good time--everyone had a good time. It's not that we treated the War lightly. Don't misunderstand me,

but it was there. But the main thing is, that was the POW camp that was out there on Dyer Street. You can still see some of the sentry towers, and all. But the other one was down by the Coliseum, and I'll tell you, these Italian boys did not want to go back to Italy. They were having a ball here. These girls were right there at the gates.

MR: There were a lot of people sent here during the War, that all you heard was, "How horrible it is in El Paso. There's nothing to do. What can you do in this godforsaken place?" We had service people in our home all the time. All the time. And we'd say, "What do you do in New York? What do you want to do?" And they would answer, "Well, in New York we have the symphony, and we have the plays, and we have this, and we have that." And we said, "Well do you want to go to symphonies?" We'll get you tickets." And the answer would be, "Oh, no. I don't like the symphony."

MrR: They'd go to the bullfights and cheer for the bull. You know the type.

MR: But they didn't do anything at home, but El Paso was terrible. But when the War was over, they moved to El Paso.

MrR: You know that all the German rocket scientists came here first before they went down to Huntsville, Alabama. Didn't you know that? Oh my. Okay. When we overran Germany and captured wherever that German rocket center was, Von Braun and all of his German staff were brought here to William Beaumont Annex, and this is where the V-1 and V-2 were developed. And then, because of the Mexican border, security, and all of that, they moved them to Huntsville, Alabama. But all the German rocket

scientists that we captured--that we got before the Russians got them--were brought here to William Beaumont Annex, which is the old barracks. And we used to get them in the stores all the time. Those of us who could speak German. And Von Braun was here for some time.

MR: We had some very interesting things that did happen, and lots of people who were exposed to El Paso because of the service remained in El Paso. Many, many, many did.

MrR: In '35 when I came here, El Paso was a community of about 70,000. Today, we are close to 380,000, so that shows you the development right there. Five Points was, more or less, the edge of town.

MR: Well, the cemetery was way out.

MrR: Loretto Shopping Center was really the first shopping center in El Paso. In those days when we had a wind like we had the other day, your house would be inundated with sand. It's not bad now, because now you're fifteen miles away from the edge of the desert. You used to be three miles from the desert.

MR: Right here. This was desert. We came horseback riding here.

MrR: Shooting rabbits.

MR: The children used to take horseback riding lessons at UTEP.

MrR: Where the Special Events Center is, there was a stable. The city limits were, let's see, just about where Executive Park is. There were some gullies around that were swell make-out points. Well, she never knew where they were. Used to come down Upson near Prospect, and there was a gully back in there, and nobody could find you. It's all built over now. Tennis Courts.

SJ: When Mrs. Shapiro was interviewed, she said something to us about....

MrR: Annette Ravel Shapiro?

SJ: I don't know. Her husband was William, and that's all I know.

MrR: Yes, that's Annette.

MR: I don't think it is. I think it was his other wife.

MrR: There are two Mrs. Shapiros.

SJ: Well, they never gave her name. The said Mrs. William, and that's all I know. She said something about a Conference for Human Welfare that was--I think in the middle '50's--and that was a group to promote integration in this town. And I wondered....

MrR: That's the other one. If you're on tape, I'll make no comment. Knows absolutely nothing about the history of El Paso, and was standing there waving a different-colored flag than we have all those years--and it was red, with a sickle and a hammer on it! But the present Mrs. Shapiro, who was Annette Ravel Kluger, was also born here. You might get some information from her.

SJ: Would she know about the development of the Jewish community and things like that?

MrR: Yes. They were Orthodox. Mrs. William Shapiro. But don't mention the other one. Her name is Annette.

SJ: Where did they live? Do you know?

MrR: They lived over in Missouri Street somewhere. West Missouri, they lived. Because, as a single man, I remember....

MR: Annette? No, that was the Koortzes.

MrR: Yes, the Koortzes lived there, too.

- MR: No, Annette lived out on Gold, or Silver, or Copper Street.
- MrR: Well anyway. Be sure you get the present Mrs. William Shapiro.
- MR: They live on Shadow Mountain.
- SJ: This woman was interviewed back about '70 or '71.
- MR: I'm sorry no one interviewed my aunt. I suggested it to several people.
- SJ: Did you?
- MrR: No one was interested at the time.
- SJ: That's terrible.
- MrR: Your tapes are what? Cassettes?
- MR: Yes.
- SJ: You know, we're asking for people to let us know if they are interested in being interviewed. And I can't believe you said anything to the people who were in charge, and that they didn't come out to interview her.
- MrR: Well, you talked to the El Paso Historical Society several times.
- MR: And she had a very vivid picture of El Paso.
- MrR: She remembers El Paso when it was less than 10,000 people. I'll put it to you that way.
- MR: One tape is about the streetcar, Old Mandy, the mule, and how the.... I know she called him by name. The driver.
- SJ: Jesse.
- MrR: He used to go shopping for them.
- MR: My grandmother would go out and say, "I need two spools of white thread...."
- MrR: "....bring it back on your way."
- MR: And so he'd go around....

MrR: Yes. He'd do the shopping for her. When I came to El Paso, it was anyplace in town for 10¢ in a taxicab. Of course, the town wasn't that big at that time.

MR: There were no buses. There were streetcars.

SJ: How about some cars they used to have--some big Model A limousines, or Model T limousines.

MrR: Oh, you're talking about the jitneys. Why sure. You know there was an inter-urban that used to go down to Ysleta, too. The old jitney had a running board on the outside. Like the present cable car. They used to jump on and off and--I forget. Two cents was it?

SJ: Someone said a nickel.

MrR: Maybe it was a nickel. You just jumped on and off, and it was a stretched-out Model T. If you can, go down to the Public Library and take a look at the Aultman collection of photos.

MR: Is it still there?

SJ: They've got it in there somewhere. I don't know if it's out, but they've got it.

MrR: We went down not so long ago. We just sat there, and had the best time of our lives.

MR: It really was fun. What year did the car go off? Oh, it was before mother and daddy were married, so it was before 1911 that he drove the car off into the river. My father drove the car into the river. He went up a hill, and thought the road went on, but it didn't!

MrR: Que mas? Did we give you anything? Have we added to your lore?

JH: Substantially. Thank you. About the only other thing I have is about the Pancho Villa legends.

MR: I'll tell you a story that was interesting to us.

MrR: Did the name Mathias ever come up to you on this Pancho Villa thing?

JH: No. So far, no one has known very much.

MrR: I have the greatest unverified story of all.

MR: We had a maid that was with us for eighteen or twenty years, who was from a very fine family in Chihuahua. The family was driven out of Mexico by Pancho Villa. And she came to El Paso, and was doing very fine sewing. She did the sewing for my mother, for my younger brother before he was born. When he was born, mother had no help, so Maria came. And she lived with us. She was the lady of the house. We either spoke correct Spanish, or we didn't get what we asked for. And we either did it the right way, or you didn't do it at all. She was a fabulous, fabulous person. Just fantastic. After we were married, we went down to Chihuahua and visited her.

MrR: But she was senile.

MR: She was senile. She would remember things, and I think she remembered me. She was there when we were married. She was here for our wedding. But this was later that we went down, and it was very hazy. But she was a lady.

MrR: Of the old school. If you have seen the movies about Pancho Villa, or read about him, there came a name, continuously. Norman Walker. The American journalist that he trusted. Remember that name? This was in the movie. Had a very big part. And this is a true story, because Norman Walker's two

sons live in El Paso. I got to be very close with them.

MR: I went to school with them.

MrR: Norman Walker is the journalist who was the confidante of Pancho Villa, and traveled with him on all of his journeys, and died here as a drunk. Anyway, the story that I like the best--and it's unsubstantiated--is about the raid of Columbus, New Mexico. And I've got to be careful, and you can't quote me, because some of the family is still alive. And that is the Mathias family, who is Mrs. Hedwig Schwartz, among them; and the Albert Mathias business is still in business here. Anyway, it seems that Mr. Norman Walker arranged with Mr. Albert Mathias to sell "x" number of pairs of combat shoes to Pancho Villa. And there was so much to be paid of Pancho Villa money, and so much to be paid in gold. And the delivery was to be made to the port of Columbus, New Mexico. To be smuggled over to the Mexican side. When all of this was arranged, all of the money was delivered here to El Paso by Mr. Norman Walker, and the shoes were all crated up in wooden crates and shipped to Columbus, New Mexico. Across the river, Pancho Villa was to pick them up for his troops. And when he unpacked the crates, all the top layers were shoes, and underneath there was nothing but bricks, and papers, and what-have-you. And Mr. Pancho Villa got a little upset about it, and came across to Columbus, New Mexico to look for Mr. Albert Mathias.

(Tape ran out at this point.)