

Hanchuk04042003A-B
Tremont Oral History Project

Interview with Vic Hanchuk
Interviewed by Kelly Pangburn
April 4, 2003
9:30 AM
Victorio's Restaurant, Parma Hghts. Oh.

Categories:
Neighborhood, Values, Experiences

Pangburn:
This is Friday April 4th. I am interviewing at Victorio's Restaurant on Pearl Road.
What is your name?

Hanchuk:
Vic Hanchuk.

Pangburn:
Could you spell that for me?

Hanchuk:
Certainly. (spelling) V-I-C H -A-N-C-H-U-K.

Pangburn:
Thank you. Could you tell me how long you lived in Tremont for?

Hanchuk:
I lived in Tremont a little over twenty years. From when I was born in 1933 until late in the fall of 1953, around Thanksgiving.

Pangburn:
When did your family move to Tremont?

Hanchuk:
Well, my parents were always living in Tremont--actually what happened was my mothers grandfather and grandmother came over from the old country and when the opportunity arose they were able to buy a house in Tremont, early in the twentieth century about 1904. Prior to that we had lived in other places in what they use to call the old Haymarket District along the side of Commercial Road Hill.

Pangburn:
Where did they come from?

Hanchuk

Hanchuk:

My grandmother and grandfather--my mother- came from what use to be called Galcia and they came from a village called Sviatkova, it is one of the old Russian provinces that had been taken over by Austria-Hungry in the Carpathian Mountain Region. Sviatkova probably is not there anymore because it went through two World Wars.

Pangburn:

Did your parents speak English very well?

Hanchuk:

Before I answer that question I should probably brought in the fact that my father was not from that area, he was from Belarus, he was from the town of Dmitrovichi and that was right outside of Brest Litovsk on the Bug River. My parents, yes they could speak English. My mother, I believe was born in this country she went to school up until the eighth grade, which was a common practice back then. My father came here when he was sixteen years old, I do not know how much education he had in the old country. He learned his English on the job, so he had an accent, but he could speak and write English. We spoke English at home, my parents felt that it was to my advantage that English was spoken at home so we would not revert to the native language and I would not speak English poorly. So we tried to speak English at home, but we did speak their dialects.

Pangburn:

Are you fluent in your language?

Hanchuk:

Not really, I have not used it for years and years, but I pick up on things and remember things like a lot of phrases, but to think and sit down and hold a conversation, it would be very, very difficult for me.

Pangburn:

Why did your family move to the Tremont area?

Hanchuk:

Well, as I said my mothers parents moved up there around 1904, they had lived on I believe it was Burg Street, it is no longer there off of Commercial Road. There were a lot of Tenement Houses there, of course we wanted to get a home as soon as possible for the kids--they had eight children. Four of the children died, not as infants, but as children, and they wanted to get where they had their own home and that is what they did. When my grandfather had enough money for a down payment, he was then able to buy this house in Tremont on Starkweather Avenue.

Pangburn:

Starkweather Avenue, is that correct?

Hanchuk

Hanchuk:

Yes, Starkweather Avenue that is correct. My father moved there because this was right where my grandparents lived. It was not right across the street, but caddy-corner to St.. Theodosius Cathedral, the Russian Orthodox Cathedral. My father moved into that area because there was a lot of various types of Russians, some were Russians, some were Carpathian Russians, some were Galcia like my mother and grandparents, and also there were a lot of Ukrainians living down in that area. Life begets life.

Pangburn:

How big was your immediate family?

Hanchuk:

My immediate family was small. There was my parents and myself. My mother had a still birth a year and a half or so before I was born. Back then the medical profession was not as savvy as they are today and she was warned not to have anymore children because it would have been very dangerous for her. But they wanted to have at least one, so they had me. The doctor then put the fear of God into them and told her not to have anymore children, so they did not. They always regretted it after a while when they found out it was not the best advice, but by that time it was to late.

Pangburn:

Did you have any other relatives living in any other parts of Cleveland?

Hanchuk:

No, most of my relatives lived right there. I did have one Uncle live in West Park after he had gotten married, but he had originally lived on the South Side. I had an Uncle and an Aunt live downstairs with their two daughters and I had an Uncle and an Aunt that lived across the hall from us that moved out shortly after us. Basically my relatives were all on the South Side.

Pangburn:

Where did your father work at?

Hanchuk:

My father worked at Swiften Company on West Sixty-fifth Street, between Store and Clarke. He worked there-- I do not know how many years-he worked there a good number of years. He had other jobs too, beside that, before then being an immigrant was not always easy to get jobs. Later on when I was in college he was able to get me jobs during the summertime for the years I was in college and then a few years after.

Pangburn:

What type of work did your mother do?

Hanchuk:

Hanchuk

Hanchuk:

My mother most of the time was a homemaker but later on when I got a little older she worked in a cleaning store on the corner of Professor Street and Jefferson Avenue.

[Recorder turned off and turned back on]

Pangburn:

Vic, what are your childhood memories of growing up in Tremont? Your favorite ones, if you will speak about that.

Hanchuk:

Wow--childhood memories of growing up in Tremont, that is a tough one because I would say I had million of them, there were good ones, bad ones, and sometimes it is hard to distinguish between the two. Maybe it is best if I just carry on this way and talk a little bit about the neighborhood, how we saw the neighborhood, and what we saw, and carry on that way. If I am off track on this, then I am sorry. First of all, Tremont itself which we called the South Side was a blue-collar neighborhood, a tough working neighborhood. One of the biggest things was this, basically family values were installed by mostly immigrant families. There were exceptions and there were problems too. The immigrant and first generation families tried to establish family values. Of course once we were in this country some of the families got spoiled and got into things they should not have, I will go into that later on. One of the things I remember vividly was the red skies at night from the steel mills down in the flats not too far away, not saying all of this was nice, remember all the dirt from the mills and the other factories. Sometimes we would get the reddish dirt, sometimes we would get silver spectings from some of the factories and we would hear the noises from the steel mills. We would hear the booming and you would also hear sounds from the B&O railroad yards which are right down from us. C&O railroad yards were up a little further away down at the bottom of University and Railway Avenue. We would hear this B&O yards, we could hear the trains very clearly, they had a roundhouse there and as I said you could not mistake the sounds of the steel mills. Some people might not think that is not to nice of a thing to remember, but you do remember it.

I remember the different churches the domes and spires of the churches that were down there, there was a great variety of churches, it would take me-- I could go on and on about that. There was another thing down there that some people might not say that is not very nice, the thing is, is that it was nice for us. At the bottom of St. Olga and St. Tikhon Hill, there was a swamp and I do not know how long it had been there but they were slowing filling it in, but there was a dump there too. Now this swamp was a playground for us, rather then go up to Lincoln Park a few blocks up it was just as easy to go down the steep hills and play down there, especially during World War II when everybody was playing army. We built forts, tunnels and things like that and it was just a great place for us. We were able to catch frogs, snakes, tramp around and explore the area. Now as I said in the one area they were starting to fill the swamp in, there was a dump and there were some hobos there, we use to call them hobos, now we call them homeless. They lived there but not too many because we use to run

Hanchuk

Hanchuk: (continued) out in big pathing crates and of course they could not lived there in the winter very well. There is one thing that I remember particularly down there that time in that one area. One time there was a fire in the circus, I think it was Barnum and Bailey Circus in Cleveland down on the lakefront and a lot of the animals got killed and it ended up they took the carcasses down there and burned them in our dump, you could smell that for days.

Another thing, this is a memory, a childhood memory but some people might say that is not very nice but the thing is this--rats, there were rats all over the place. Now we fortunally did not have any in our house, we did not even have any roaches either because we kept things pretty clean and pretty tight. We would get them in the yard because we did not have the type of garbage cans that you do today, it was an open drum, maybe an old oil drum and you threw the rubbish in there, you did not have the plastic bags or anything to put the rubbish in, you would just dump the rubbish in them. This would attract the rats of course and going along with that, there were packs of dogs never to the point of viciousness, but they would be running the streets particularity when they were in heat and there were a lot of stray cats around-that helped with the rat population. There were a lot of sheds in the neighborhood in backyards, sheds for storage and that. We had one in our backyard because when my grandfather bought the property he just had the one house on it, he was not going to build in the back because he felt that any kids that came along, they should have an area to play. It was not a great big area but it was something to keep us occupied when we were younger. There was a garage and a shed, it had four parts to it one of the things we use to do we use to get on top of these sheds, well we use to try and catch rats. Sometimes we did, what you did was put a piece of meat, old rotten meat on the end of the hook, stand down there and try to catch them like fish. Once we did catch them we would swing it up and slam it down and try to break the rats back, if not we would stomp it or if somebody had a BB gun then we would shoot it. Of course, the animal rights people might not think to much of that now a days.

There were some parts of the neighborhood that you could go down an alley and jump from shed to shed, these are some of the things. Let us get back to that part of the flats were the swamp was and the dump down there. This was right close to Lincoln High's practice field and so of course when we were young kids we would always go down there to see them and I remember particularly there was no goal posts. The Clark Avenue Bridge was right there and we use to use the gurters of Park Avenue Bridge as goal posts. Of course they were a lot higher then the normal goal posts by five or ten feet, if you kicked the ball over that you were sure to get an extra point. This was before the days of tees and everything, right down next to that practice field there was an asphalt factory and a government factory, that was our playground, and even more so then Lincoln Park, although we did go up to Lincoln Park a lot of times. Now there were a lot of buildings that are no longer there, they were not even there by the time I left the South Side, that I remember real well. Heights-Manorford was right at the corner were Jefferson runs into Starkweather, which was burned up in a fire and I remember as a kid in Tremont school watching that fire back in the forties sometime. There was another building on the corner of Professor and Starkweather on the northwest corner it had apartments above it and the bottom of the store area was Angelo's Wine House, that was

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Hanchuk: (continued)

quite a place. Actually there were considerable bars in the area, there was a high degree of alcoholism. There was a diversity of immigrant groups, when I was at Lincoln High, some said thirty-three, some said thirty-eight different nationalities. Some of those split inheritance too, we might have just been part of another group, just like saying I am a Texan, you are an Ohioan, so we are two different nationalities but there was a considerable diversity of immigrants. There were virtually no blacks, maybe one or two families down the hill somewhere but other than that there was many Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, Slovak, Greeks, Italians, Lebanese or Syrians, and a great variety I could go on and on--you name it, it was there. Serbian and Croatian they were there too. I remember a great many halls that were down there the Lamko Club was on the corner of Literary and West Eleventh and that was the hall they used for the movie the "Deer Hunter". Somebody bought it and now it is fancy condominiums. There was Polonia Hall on the corner of Thurman and College and it is no longer there, the Ukrainian National Hall on West Fourteenth, I do not think it is there anymore, I am not sure. The Ukrainian Labor Temple on the corner of West Eleventh and Auburn, it is now owned by a Puerto Rican group. On Twenty-Fifth Street, you had the stars of Lebanon Club and that still is there.

You had a bunch of movie shows back then, of course we did not have television. The biggest one for us was on West Fourteenth and Fairfield, the Jennings theatre and on West Twenty-Fifth you had the Marvel and also the Garden. The Realto was on West Twenty-Fifth and Bridge. Now when I said there was no TV, we did have radio that is another story. Another thing I remember there were a lot of mom and pop stores all over the place. Groceries, meat markets, quote unquote candy stores, hardware stores, and as I said before, multitudes of bars and alcoholism was at a high rate amongst the people that lived there, and as I said you got use to it, and it did cause a lot of problems. There were the old drug stores, not these chains, like Doc Produce and the Professor Drug on Professor just north of Starkweather.

I mentioned alcoholism and this did bring some problems. One of the problems was that there were bootleggers, of course the bootleggers were strong during Prohibition because there was nobody that was going to stop the people from drinking. They did not care what the Federal Government said. Once Prohibition was over bootleggers did not go completely out of business, they had after hour joints where they would sell alcohol on Sundays. There was a big saying in the neighborhood if you saw a big fancy car that it either belongs to a funeral director or to one of the bootleggers or gangsters. There were a lot of bookies and a lot of gambling houses in the area, these again were undercover, so if you wanted to do that, you knew where they were. There would be a bookie storefront, a lot of times they would have a gypsy family move in and they would stay in there for two or three weeks or so and they would be on their way, then a little while later another gypsy family would move in and of course they had their fortune telling and that is how they got their business done.

[Inaudible]

I went to school with this kid in high school who was a gypsy, he never admitted it, his parents and him lived across the street from us in the downstairs back of a house. The old man and his mother would come out dressed to kill and the father always had a cane with him

Hanchuk

Hanchuk: (continued)

and when they would get up as far as West Fourteenth, because I lived down more towards West Seventh, they would get up to West Fourteenth and Branch, out would come the black glasses and the tin cup and he would be begging. After World War II, a lot of abandoned storefronts were rented out to DP families, and they would divided them up. Since I lived on the second floor across the street from some of these-- not that you would look for purpose or anything, but you could see everything. It would be like the cubicles they have now in offices, they would be divided up like that with these families living there maybe six or eight in a store. It was not much space, but it was all they could afford so it was available to them. One of the things I remember was the buildings of the Valley View Projects and how they were tearing down a lot of the houses in the area from St.Olga south all the way down the hill, not down St. Olga hill but all the way down the hill to West Fifth, Huston Avenue and along West Seventh Street all the way down to West Fifth and Markwood Avenue. I remember them tearing them down and building the Projects. Another thing that stands out in my mind at that time too, it is no big deal but to us kids it was. I remember one time they moved this brick house this two-story brick house, they moved it from one spot to another and it was very interesting to us the way they moved it along so slowly. Of course they did not have the ways of doing it now but it stands out in my memory.

I remember too Lincoln Park, Lincoln Park was quite a place there. It did not have a swimming pool, there was a little wadding pool in the middle of the park. The sidewalks went from the corner of West Fourteenth Street to the corner of West Eleventh and Kennelworth. The other one went from Starkweather and West Eleventh and went to the corner of West Fourteenth and Kennelworth, it was sort of a big X. In the middle of that they had this wadding pond we had a special name for it, it was not to nice so I will not mention it. Lincoln Park though it had bushes all around it, but during the night, the old ladies that worked in the places downtown cleaning the buildings and that were safe to come through there. The girls from the neighborhood were always safe to come through there, unless they ran into a truck. The women were never ever bothered, I suppose there were a few incidences where something like this would happen but nothing really that much. There's a different story with guys, that of course there is always a different story with guys. Lincoln Park there we use to play there, I mean down by the swamp in that area. Then in the Valley View Project area there were baseball diamonds on the bottom-

[Interruption]

At the bottom of Seventh Street Hill off of Huston Avenue, we would of course play baseball there, we would play football in the park, because it had a little bit of grass, but it was pretty much worn out. There was no big swimming pool, there was a big man shell that was never used anymore-but in that area we would play football.

I am a little disrupted right now-not disrupted but disjointed right now, I am looking at some things I wrote down that I should have organized better.

The Lincoln Bath House, behind the bathhouse we would play basketball and later on my father built a basket in our back yard where I had asked him before I had started going up there, he--I will never forget, we did not have a car, so he went across the--walked all the way

Hanchuk

from where we lived across the Abbey Avenue Bridge and could not get the lumber on the [Inaudible] he carried it from West Nineteenth and Abbey down to our house. I will never forget that.

I remember the old Merrick House on the corner of West Eleventh and Starkweather, not where it is the fancy brick place they have now. It was two old wooden houses, there are some little streets in the area that are long gone, Clearance Court, that was taken out by I-490, St. Tickon is just a little sliver now so is St. Olga, down the hill Cathedral, Lynn, Clyde, Severen, Mary Avenue, and West Fourth Street a lot of these places just do not exist anymore. I remember running around those places. A lot of people talk about Tremont School, about replacing or demolishing it, and at this point they mentioned Tremont School was built in 1910, well yes that was what we called the new building what was built in 1910. This is where they actually had the elementary school, there were two old buildings that ran along West Tenth Street towards College Avenue, and these were used for the seventh and eighth grade, the junior high--this is where Tremont Junior High was at. This was closed I would guess around January 1948 and the kids were shipped over to Lincoln. So when they talk about Tremont Schools being built in 1910 they were wrong, it was built in the 1890's or the 1880's. There is another building down there, I do not know what they are going to do with it, but what they have planned with it is the person who owns it is trying to sell it, I can understand why. This building is the Union Gospels Workers building on the corner of West Seventh and Jefferson, it is like a castle--it is hard to describe, there was a big article in the Plain Dealer about it sometime ago in the Sunday Magazine. We use to go around there and hang around there, and the Union Gospel Workers Ladies--we called them the Sally's, the Salvation Army, but they were not Salvation Army. We used to see them go around with their madalins and guitars--and this and that-- they use to work on the street corners.

[Interruption]

We would always hang around, and go around back through there, up on the loading docks at night just to see what was going--never really got in trouble. In fact on job I had I worked in a printing place there--I was not a printer or anything, but I did the menial work and the bull work for a short time, and it is a very fascinating building, and the story of it is very fascinating--but it is a place I will never forget--it was just like a castle to us.

Let us go back to when I was talking about playing baseball down at the diamonds there at the Valley View Projects. Before the Valley View Projects were built, the field on West Seventh Street just off of Starkweather Avenue--I remember as a little kid I must have been--four or five years old--being taken down there and they had ball games--and of course being that old the crowd seems huge, but there was wall to wall people all around watching these baseball games. I do not think they were organized, it may have been one group against another group--I do not know. I know they had a Russian Club baseball team that had quite a few good athletes on it. There were several others that may have been--but when I was that old, I really did not realize it. Another thing about that area, Starkweather Avenue and West Seventh Street, when the Valley View Projects were built they would a lot of times show outside movies for the people that lived in the Projects, and other people in the

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Hanchuk: (continued)

neighborhood--all you had to do was come and sit on something and you got to see an outside movie. I remember one in particular it looked like it was real good--it was some kind of Bob Hope movie, and he was supposed to be someplace down in the swamps down south and it looked like what we use to call in those days, a scary movie--I guess they call them horror movies now. He was boating and he reached into the water for something and an alligator snaps at him and the rains and the thunders and the lightening came, and we never did see that movie. I remember one thing about the projects--cause we use to go down there a lot because we had a lot of friends there. There were steps, you go down to West Seventh and Starkweather and there was what we called the community center this is where the office was for the Projects. Well you go a little further beyond and there were steps you could take all the way down to West Fifth Street and Houston. That was always fun to mess around on those.

In the winter time, we had hills galore to sled ride down. Down St. Olga hill, down St. Tickhon hill, and there was one father in at the end, but it was kind of dangerous though. The hill was at the end of West Tenth Street, we just called it Humpty Dumpty Hill, I do not know how it got it's name though. There was another hill called Dutch Hill, which was Houston Avenue--not Houston Avenue--I am sorry, it was Holmdon Avenue, east of Fourteenth Street. This hill led right down to the Open Heart Furnace--at that time it was Jones and Laughlin Open Heart Furnace, and you could go down there. That was a little safety concern, because the curves--you had to make the curves other wise you would end up in the telephone polls.

Another thing I remember there were horse drawn merchants all over the place. You had the pepareks they would get the old paper and rags. They would come down the streets, yelling Pepareks! Papareks! They had the guys that were selling vegetables, and watermelons. There was one guy in particular, he would come down there and you could not miss him. He would say Humppa Deda Dedeemelon! Humppa Deeda Dedeemelon! He was selling watermelons. There would be the guys that would sell fish--and one of the guys would sell fish right in my neighborhood- he would have this horn. He would blow the horn and you would go out and get your fish. Not only did you have the neighborhood stores, you had that convince too. As to how sanitary they were--I do not know. As far as I know, nobody died from it. The great thing about the horse and wagons though, there was the honey dumpers and they would come clattering down the street, and they would say "Here comes the honey dumpers" "Here comes

the honey dumpers", and it would have a wagon, a pretty big wagon maybe with two pairs of horses, four horses--what they were, were the guys that cleaned the outdoor toilets, so they were the honey dumpers. At any rate they would come, every so often--I was a really young kid so I really did not pay to much attention as to how often they came. At any rate, they would come--as far as--as late as the 1960's people still used outdoor toilets in a lot of these streets, on West Fourth for example. There was an article in the Plain Dealer about it, on West Fourth, Fifth, down on Clyde, Severn Avenue, and several other places where they had outdoor toilets, because they did not have indoor plumbing. This was as late as the early sixties.

Hanchuk: (continued)

It was something interesting, you do not see things like that now.

I remember too there was tracks running down Professor and Starkweather--when they had street cars. The street cars were long gone before I was born. I remember during World War II that they took and they took those tracks out for the World War effort

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Hanchuk:

When I talked earlier about family values, just spite that because the conditions during the depression, because of some of the Americanization were tough to weigh the family values. The South Side developed into a very, very tough neighborhood. In fact there is a study by Northwestern University called "Between Spires and Stacks", and at that time as the middle thirties 1935, 1936, that area had the highest delinquency and crime rate per capita for the United States, now remember I said per capita. There were gangs just about on every corner and as I said before, they would not pick on any of the girls. Now if girls had a reputation, there might be something's that were said to them, and those girls who had the reputation would usually answer back in a very colorful way. They would pick on loners--what I mean by loners is if somebody is walking down the street--a friend of mine is a real good football player at Lincoln High School, he was maybe in the tenth grade at the time, he had already established a reputation. He was coming home late one night and he was nailed--stopped by this one gang that use to hang around the corner of Starkweather and St. Tickhon right across the street from St. Theodosius Cathedral. He was stopped, he thought he was in for it. He was stopped on a block right in front of a couple of stores on the first floor were stores and the second floor were apartments, a voice came out of that hallway because it was in the summertime. The voice said "you leave him alone, he is a good football player for me from Lincoln High, he is going to be a star--which he did become an all-star- I do not want you picking on him because I bet every money on Lincoln--and I do not want to see nothing happen to him. That is about the way he said it, and the guys laid off. We do not know for sure who said it, but I have my ideas as to who the guy was, but we do not know for sure who it was. That is just the type of thing that happened.

My father worked in the slaughter house, and of course things were tough, so to save money--although he did work through the depression people were always eating meat--there was always work to be done. He use to walk from our house on Starkweather near Professor all the way up to Scranton Road--take the Scranton Road bus--on Scranton and Starkweather. The bus would go all the way to Store and West Sixty-fifth and then he would walk from West Sixty-fifth to the slaughter house. One morning, of course he had to go very, very early in the morning a lot of times it was dark-- between West Eleventh and West Fourteenth somebody come out of the doorway and said "hey buddy you got a match?", someone else interrupted and said "no, no leave him alone, he is one of ours." and after that he never had anymore trouble after that. Somebody had mistook him for someone else, and they probably were

going to mug him because they did not know--there were about four or five guys that showed up. Occasionally loners were people that were alone-walking alone-guys that were walking alone-they would get stopped and just for the hell of it somebody would beat them up or they might be mugged. Basically, the residence were safe, particularly the women-but it is the outsiders who came into the neighborhood whether it was for trouble or not--were not safe. Particularly guys from outside the neighborhood that tried to date girls in the neighborhood--I know of a good friend of mine from high school who had really liked this girl who lived on--West Sixth I think--West Fifth and West Sixth--between Literary and Railway Avenue. He

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Hanchuk: (continued)

Went down there and tried to date a girl one time--well her boyfriend had a gang and he got

worked over pretty good. He was not a small guy either--it was that way.

There were not just the gangs, there were some organized crime as far as the bootlegging and gambling was concerned. A guy by the nickname of Balloon Head, he would go door to door with stolen merchandise--stolen goods. There was another guy named Joe Calkoski who was Public Enemy number one with the F.B.I for a long time, and that was just out and out thievery. I remember one time the porch in our house--my Aunt and Uncle--that was part of their deal. They had a glider, it was an old fashioned glider it had the cushions on it, well one night--I do not know who spotted them, but there was these people we knew, we went to the same church and everything, they were walking off with the cushions from the glider. They said they were going to give them back--*sure they were*. You learned to lock your car up, I remember the back yard had not had a second house on it, because there was a lot of double houses, even triple houses on the lots. The house next door to me had three houses--but at any rate, after we got older I parked my car there and two of the neighbors next door--the block next to us--that is the building next to us-- parked their cars there. I had this old 1936 Dodge, and one night I forgot to lock it. I had to have this seat with a cushion on the front seat because it had sunk down so much because it was so old. The one night I left it open, the cushion was gone--you learned to lock your doors there.

Pangburn:

Vic, what year did that happen?

Hanchuk:

The car?

Pangburn:

Yes.

Hanchuk:

1936.

Pangburn:

What year was it taken?

Hanchuk:

The cushion was taken-I would probably guess about 1951.

Pangburn:

1951, so you had to lock your doors.

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Hanchuk: (continued)

Yes. You had to put locks on your sheds, there were a lot of sheds in the neighborhood, people would break into that. One story about the sheds we use to knock--and there was

other incidences that would happen there that you would not run into normally. One time I had a friend who delivered newspapers next door to me--God rest his soul-- he was a little on the thin side. I forget how old I was--but at any rate, I would ride shot gun because if you went just a little to far away from your area, you were liable to run into problems. I would ride shot gun and I would be with him and I knew some of these guys and they would not bother him. One time we were cutting down this alley around West Sixth and West Seventh, north of Jefferson--between Jefferson and Literary, as kids you say look at this, look at that and we look and this one shed was open. We took a look in the shed and there was a guy hanging there, a guy had hung himself. Another situation where a guy slashed his wrists just around the corner from us, near Professor and Grayton. There was also a murder one time that we almost walked into on Literary Avenue, a guy got shot--he apparently irritated the wrong people.

Pangburn:

Was that in the fifties also?

Hanchuk:

That would have been in the middle to late forties. There was always different fights of different kinds. For instance around Halloween, we use to have two days for Halloween then, they did not have this business where you have trick-or-treat from six to eight o'clock or any of that crap--excuse the expression. The night before was beggars night, you would go out and say "please help the poor", "please help the poor", and you got what you could get. We would then take note of the people who would not give us anything, and then you would be sure to come back on Halloween and do something of mischief. Some of the mischief really got carried out of hand, we knew better no to do anything bad like ripping down a picket fence or anything like that. Not even to much of the soap in the windows--but there were some stores where we would soap the windows, but not to many. We would do other things like--a particular nasty trick I think we did it once or twice to a guy who was really rotten to us

What you did was get a bag and fill it with horse dung--of course there was plenty of it in that time, light it on fire, ring the door bell and run away. The guy would come out and see the fire and stomp on it, that was not to nice. More of our stuff was simple, it was not as nasty as that. Some of the real nasty things were destroying property--I was not taught that way, a persons property is his property and it was not to be destroyed. One year, down at the bottom of the hill, we were really feeling our oats, and we were pushing over outhouses. We pushed out one outhouse and there was a guy in it, we ran like hell, we were scared. That is what we basically did on Halloween, it is not like it is today.

I mentioned earlier about Tremont School and Junior High, one of the things we had to do in Junior High, was run out of the building and then around the whole building. This was from the corner of Tremont and Jefferson to Jefferson and Starkweather, then up West Tenth

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Hanchuk: (continued)

All the way College, and back down Tremont and Jefferson where we started. I will never forget that, that was really something. We did not care to much about the weather, only if it

was snowy or rainy we did not have to run. There was a little section called Duck Island, which was not really part of our neighborhood, but I do remember this pretty well. This was a section off of the Lorain- Carnegie Bridge. The reason they would call it Duck Island, is because guys would have to run over roofs there, and they would have to yell duck, especially when they were going on the gurglers of Lorain-Carnegie Bridge--otherwise they would get their head knocked off.

Earlier I talked about the gangs, there was a big old sign on the corner of Starkweather and St. Tickhon. There was also a brick house there with three families, these guys had the sign painted there for years it said "Beware 208 Character Street". Two Zero Eight was the squad car that went in that area--it patrolled that area. Character Street was a street notorious in a western movie at that time, and so they left that up there, well one day this guy decide that it was enough of the sign, and during the day he painted it over. Needless to say they worked him over and the sign went back up, then it stayed there. The guy learned his lesson to leave it alone. I talked about the organized gambling, but there was always crap games in the alleys and on the corners, there was penny pinching of course, and card games but because of arguments that did occur, as a result of them or anytime there is gambling you will have that. To put it mildly, there was violence. Another time we were hanging around Starkweather and Professor, we were younger then, it was a Sunday evening. Kids have an imagination, and we said we saw a blood trail here and a blood trail there, and we said holy cow, look at the blood trail, we should follow the blood trail. We followed the blood trail All the way down to Doc's Drug Store, because he was not only a pharmacist and some kind of therapist--but anyway he would take care of minor stuff, and sure enough there was a lady in there who had been all cut up by her husband, she was full of blood. This ended up being a real trail of blood.

There was a guy who lived next door to us, he was a long distance truck driver and he was one of the guys who parked in our yard. He was a light finger, he would steal stuff that he was hauling and he would get away with it. He use to drink a lot and one day he had stolen quite a bit of stuff and it was stashed in his car, and he was to drunk to pull in there. So he parked under the street lights on the corner of St. Tickhon and Starkweather, I do not know how he had this car parked there, but someone stole from the thief, busted into his car and cleaned out all the stuff he had stolen. There was another guy who worked for the railroads, maybe it was B&O or New York Central, maybe it was Pennsylvania but anyway he stole a lot of stuff too. He would laugh and tell us that those railroad guys would come over my house and they did not even know that they were sitting on the stuff that I stole. There was also a boxer that some people said he was connected with the mafia, whether his family was or not, we do not know. He lived in the Projects, so I do not know how you could live in there and be connected to the mafia, maybe some other members of his family were. One night we heard this women screaming and running down the street, he was coming after her ready to beat the hell out of her. Did anyone call the cops? No.

Hanchuk

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Hanchuk:

After World War II there was a lot of DP's, displaced persons that came into the area, one of them was a guy, we never knew his name, we called him Ivan the Terrible. He would always

get drunk and start fights, it would take six or seven cops to subdue him, they would beat him in the head with billy clubs and he still would not go down. We never knew what really happened to him but he was something else. The one day he lived in a building that had a store with apartments above them, and there was a lean-two type building that had been next to it for many years, it was one of those places that was rented out to DP's that came into the country. It was a rainy day, and all of a sudden he came crash through the window after here comes Ivan the Terrible after him. They must have had a fight or something and he punched him out--well more then punched him out, he had taken care of that situation.

To get back to something more pleasant, one thing that you remember in the area is that there were a lot of Orthodox churches in the area. The processions that were held on Good Friday and at midnight on Easter. Annunciation, because it was close to St. Georges Syrian Orthodox also St. Valademeers Ukrainian Orthodox would have the parades. They would start out down Fourteenth Street and come to St. Georges, stop there and continue on down Starkweather Avenue to West Eleventh, then go up to St. Valademers and back to Annunciation and back to Fourteenth and Fairfield. The church I went to was St. Theodosius, we were not that close to other Orthodox church so our processions were just around the church and that. I remember those completely .

Pangburn:

Do you remember the Pastor of your church?

Hanchuk:

My pastor, was Father Jason Kappanaez. He was there for a long time from about 1908 until about 1958 or 1959.

Pangburn:

Do you still go to the same church?

Hanchuk:

No, we have transferred to St. Michaels in Broadview Heights. My parents sang in the church choir at our old church for years and years. I was an alter boy for a while and then you get older and you are not an alter boy anymore. I think I mentioned some of the games we use to play as kids.

Pangburn:

Yes.

Hanchuk:

We use to play kick the can, and then in the park and at recess we would play buck, buck,

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Hanchuk: (continued)

two thumbs up. Have you ever heard about that?

Pangburn:

No, I have not.

Hanchuk:

You ride on somebody's back and you put your two thumbs up and then you buck each other and try to knock the other guy off the other ones back.

Pangburn:

Kind of like chicken.

Hanchuk:

It was not too bad at Lincoln Park, but at the schoolyard at Tremont was all gravel. So we would get cut up and scratched up, and tore up your clothes. Then we would get beat up because you tore your clothes. We would play a game called Spud, which is seemingly harmless. You have a letter and you throw a tennis ball up in the air, as high as you can, call

a

letter and if the guy did not get it then you got a letter until someone spelled out SPUD. Then that guy would pay the consequences and that was standing against the wall and you would throw the ball as hard as you can at him, at his back. In the alley which was back in my house, in the back of my yard we would sometimes play two man football. Two against two. We have a man in the middle keeping after them and finally one guy would break down and the other one would be a deep defender, and you would try to hit him on a long pass. That was just sort of a diversion, that was not the standard way. You could play regular football and stickball, that is when we could not play regular baseball. Baseball we played at the Parks, and football was played at Lincoln Park.

[Pause]

Hanchuk:

Another place I forgot to say is where we would go play basketball, in the winter we would go to Tremont Recreation Center. I remember to we would have camping trips at Brookside Park. Well actually it was not in Brookside Park. There was a road that was leading there and go up the south hill and get into the Woods there and we had [inaudible] stoves, and things like that. We would take the speed cars there and then walk over from there usually and down through Twenty-Fifth and up Jennings Road. I have a bit of different things running through my mind.

Hanchuk:

I am remembering some of the guys coming out of World War, they were just not quite right. There was a guy who had a steel plate in his skull, and he use to just sit on the alley, he lived on Thurman Alley and he use to just sit there by the gate and stare off and stare off. Then t

Hanchuk

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Hanchuk:

there was another one, that just sort of aimlessly wondered around, he use to bum drinks, and drink, you just sort of got use to him. He was just not his normal self after the war. Now do you have any questions for me?

Pangburn:

Yes. You were talking about the bathhouses earlier, was this a public service or did they charge for this if you needed to use it?

[Interruption]

Hanchuk:

We were fortunate enough to have facilities so we never had to use it. We had a bath tub for upstairs and a bath tub for downstairs. It was a public service, and they were not charged. Although one time when we moved out of the neighborhood and our whole water tank busted where we were living and it was on a weekend, I had to go up to the Clarke Avenue bathhouse facility, just one time though.

Pangburn:

When you talked about your dad working in the meat packing industry, was he ever unionized ever?

Hanchuk:

The union at the time he was working, was very weak. They were just getting stronger before he retired, they had a union but it was not connected with the AFL or the CIO. As a result there were problems, he had two injuries there and he had no union to back him, he had to have surgery because he ripped muscles in both of his arms, we could not afford for him to have the surgery. We had no hospitalization at the time and we could not afford.

Pangburn:

You were telling a story earlier about that one gentlemen who was drinking and driving, who had stole some items and then had gotten some items stolen from him. Did the police ever do anything to people who were drinking and driving? Did they just tell them to go home? How did they usually handle this?

Hanchuk:

Well, I will be honest with you, I do not know. Well--yes they would stop them--you have to redeemer those streets down there where I lived were very narrow. They would patrol them for other things then drunk driving, but they would nail them. I remember one time, they were chasing this car down Starkweather Avenue towards West Seventh Street and the gut lost control and flipped at the bottom of the hill. I do not know what they were getting him for, I was younger then. Maybe he had stole something or held up a gas station or whatever,

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Hanchuk:

because we had that too. They did nail them that way. You did not hear about it as much as you do today. Of course by the same token, a lot of people did not have cars at that time. They got around by public transportation or by foot. For example-this is something that I maybe should have brought in earlier, when we went downtown when we were kids I mean

up until the time we were teenagers and we had a chance to get our first car which was late in the teens we walked downtown. We would walk down the hill, West Third to across the bridge to Commercial Road up there and that is the way we got downtown, unless we had the money to go on a bus. The one thing we used to do was on Saturday Night, we would wait at the end of the bus line and you would ask people for their passes and then you would sell them to other people that were going downtown and for the price that was cheaper for what they had to pay the fair for.

Pangburn:

I realize that you were quite young at Pearl Harbor, do you remember the sentiment in the Tremont area at all, do you remember people talking about it at that age?

Hanchuk:

Yes, I was young but I remember. I remember the day itself, it was a bright sunny day. What people were concerned about is that we were at war and they figured it was coming and we were one hundred percent--not like today-- we were one hundred percent for it, and for the guys that were going into the service and the big concern particularly among the women was the drafting of the men. A lot of guys volunteered, there were no problems as far as that. Yes, people were concerned of course.

Pangburn:

I do not mean to change the subject so abruptly, but where did your mom go shopping for groceries?

Hanchuk:

There were stores in the neighborhood that she went to regularly, different stores for different things. For example, she liked certain meats from the store on the corner. She liked certain things from another store on the corner of Thurman and Starkweather which became [Inaudible] later on. There were different stores that she went to. One of the big things was to go to the West Side Market. The Market was not actually part of the South Side, but we considered it part of the South Side, because so many people went there from the South Side. Basically you would get there by bus, taking the Fairfield bus or the Fourteenth Street bus, and going across Abbey Avenue and getting off there. Sometimes when money was a little short we would walk across the bridge. I can not see people doing that now, carrying stuff back like that. Basically it was the neighborhood stores and the West Side Market. There were a couple of chain stores like Kroger's and Fischer's that were in the neighborhood, but most people went to the mom and pop stores.

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Pangburn:

Earlier I remember you talking about the bus lines, and I you said you walked most of the places when you were younger. Along those lines, how old were you when you first got your car, and were you the first in your family to get a car?

Hanchuk:

I was seventeen going on eighteen when I graduated from high school, I bought a car from my cousin, Stan for twenty-five dollars. It was a 1940 Chevy Coupe. I paid him fifteen dollars to get the breaks fixed and ten dollars for the license transfer, and that was it twenty five dollars. That was my first car, and my second car was--- that fell apart because I was driving down Broadway one day and the rear right fender fell off. I had to pick it up and jam it into the trunk and of course it would not close. My second car I got, I really stepped up in the world I a 1936 Dodge from a guy down the street.

Pangburn:

You said you paid twenty five dollars for your first car, did you get that money from your first job?

Hanchuk:

I got that money from a job that I had that I worked after the football season and through the year and into the summertime as long as I could.

Pangburn:

What was your first job?

Hanchuk:

My first job was working at the Gollmar Cigar Stand at the old arcade downtown. It was at the north end of Superior Avenue, in the old arcade. I got that through a guy who was the manager/owner of this optimist club that would try to get kids from areas like mine to get jobs so they would keep on the straight and narrow. I was not going to go of the straight and narrow anyway, still I took advantage of the job.

Pangburn:

Do you remember any sort of minimum wage?

Hanchuk:

If there was I did not know anything about it. I made fifty cents. The second job I had at a printing place in the old--what we called Salvation Army building on Seventh and Jefferson and I made a whole dollar an hour there. At that point--minimum wage--if you had some money that was great.

Pangburn:

Hanchuk

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Hanchuk:

It obviously took a while for you to save for your car, an pay twenty five dollars for it.

Pangburn:

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Hanchuk:

At this point, I think I am pretty much talked out. I know I will get away from here and say I forgot to tell her this, I forgot to tell her that but that is about it.

Pangburn:

I do have one last question for you. Overall, earlier you were talking of values, do you really think that there has been a big shift in the values or do you think those values will come back.

The divorce rate will shift back and slow down, and things of that nature?

Hanchuk:

I would hop there would be a shift back, I really do not know if there is or not. There has been a big shift that I have seen and I would hope that there is a shift back. Every time things are getting better something else happens. Why does everything have to be sex? Why does everything have to be this way or that way. Some of these reality shows they are showing now, they are ridiculous, and if some people waste their time on some of the talk shows, My God. I would hope there will be or there is a shift back to values. But I am not sure if there is.

Pangburn:

Well, thank you very much, Vic. I had a very enjoyable conversation with you and thank you for your time and help. I appreciate it.

Hanchuk:

It was my pleasure, and I wish the best with this project and hope things go well for you. I will call you at midnight if I remember anything else.

[Laughter]

Hanchuk:

That is that goofy sense of humor that my wife always hollers at me about.

[Laughter]

END OF INTERVIEW