

Frank Nordman

Transcript of the oral interview with Frank Nordman conducted by Emily Salvette with the assistance of Mr. Nordman's daughter, Gail Smalley. The interview took place on June 9, 2002 at a meeting of the Pittsfield Township Historical Society held at the Pittsfield Recreation Center, 701 W. Ellsworth Rd., Ann Arbor. Mr. Nordman and Mrs. Smalley reviewed the transcript in October 2002. Additional information from that review is italicized and inserted between brackets [like this]. Mrs. Smalley also provided a family genealogy and history that she wrote in May 2000, which is with the interview in the Pittsfield Township Archives.

Interview Summary

Frank Benjamin Nordman was born in Ann Arbor on May 19, 1905. His mother, Nellie Hubbard, was born in 1873 in Tecumseh, Michigan at the Tecumseh Inn where her parents worked. (The Inn has been moved to Greenfield Village) Mr. Nordman grew up in Ann Arbor on Packard Road. His father Edgar (1868-1952) was a farmer. In the 1940's he was still driving his horse and wagon down Packard Road so he could plow Mr. Nordman's garden. This "scared everyone," according to his daughter.

Mr. Nordman attended Stone School, where his best friend was George Campbell (Cobblestone Farm). He remembers his father taking him to a dance at Dan Ellsworth's where he fell asleep behind the stove. Mr. Nordman worked at the Kyer Laundry for 42 years. He married Mildred Gross in 1927. They had 3 children: Elane, Douglas and Gail. He remembers when he took the older two children to climb up the Bell Tower on campus and Doug, who was 2 1/2 at the time, "got loose." Fortunately, he did not fall!

His brother, Emil (1884-1940), was an aviator in World War I. Emil inhaled mustard gas and was affected by that for the rest of his life. In 1952, Mr. Nordman's brother John and sisters Clara and Lillian were killed when their small plane was lost over Lake Superior on a trip to Isle Royale.


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- Introduction and family history
- Losing brother and sister in Airplane accident
- Youth (Schooling, Campbells)
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- Father driving horse & wagon down Packard
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- The other Frank Nordman
- Looking at pictures
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- Kyer Laundry
- Bell Tower
- Entertainment
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- Conversation after interview

Frank Nordman Interview

R: Respondent, Frank Nordman
I: Interviewer, Emily Salvette
GS: Gail Smalley (Nordman's daughter)
MT: Marcia Ticknor
BL: Betty LeClair
D: David Reichenberger (Nordman's grandson)
F or M1,2 etc.: unidentified female or male speaker

Side One:

R: (Story before the interview) [When I was little my dad Edgar Nordman said if you pick the apples that have fallen] on the ground, they were snow apples and I'll let you go on a trip to the cider mill and give you some cider, so I did. So, I picked up the apples and put them in here and I rode to the ... and when I got there they gave me the glass of cider. Well, when I got it drank I expected another glass, but you know they didn't give it to me. My dad said that is all you can have. I wondered why, but after 50  60 years I discovered that fresh apple juice was dysentery, you know physically. So they wouldn't let me drink over one cup and I thought that was terrible.

I: Oh yeah, you thought that they were stingy, didn't you? (laughter) I am here with Frank Nordman and we are at the Pittsfield Township Recreation Center on June 9th, 2002 and we are doing an oral history interview for the Pittsfield Township Historical Society Oral History Project. I am going to stop the tape now and then we are going to wait to introduce these people.

R: My younger brother, Henry worked [at U of M Hopsital as a brace maker], ah, we was in front of the house that we lived in [on Packard Road]. Ah, one of the streetcars, you know them streetcars, got a fire from the trolley wire that carried the electricity which run the car. One of the holders at the pole gave loose and so the wire went down like that and back up on the second one. But, the motorman didn't see it quick enough for him to stop. And he hit it with his car and it caught a fire. Everything was all right if you jumped off the car onto the ground, but you didn't dare touch the ground from [the streetcar]. If you did you would have been electrocuted

I: Oh, my.

R: Yeah, anyway, he got that bell that the motorman had and then he put it on the Ford. Him and I owned the Ford together. When it was my turn I had it and I went into town. In front of the coney island restaurant where they sold ice cream and ... That is where Red Howard is. I accidentally stepped on that bell and he walked over to me and said, "What have you got there boy?" I said, "Oh, nothing". He said, "Oh come-on you have something on there". "Do it again",

he said. So, he forced me into doing it again. "Oh", he said, "That's pretty clever". There was a bell. The bell, the reason that bell was on the streetcar to begin with, in the city they are not allowed to blow the whistle.

I:

Oh, I see. Ok.

R:

It would wake everybody up. So they used the bell. But, also the bell was used for the ambulance at that time.

I:

Ok. And when was this? What year?

R:

They made me take it off anyway.

I:

You were a young man? How old were you then? [16-18 in 1922]

R:

Well, this happened in the 50's [20's]. I m guessing. Somewhere in the 50's.

I:

Ok. We are going to stop it and we are going to introduce you and start the meeting. Ok?

R:

Ah, it was in the 40's, probably or less.

I:

Oh, ok.

R:

At that time I wasn't married so

I:

Oh, ok, we'll work on that.

MT:

If I can have your attention please. I would like to welcome you to the Pittsfield Historical Society meeting and today we are going to have Frank Nordman talk to us about his life in Pittsfield Township for the past few years.

R:

Whew, it's getting warm in here now.

MT:

Emily Salvette is going to do the interview and I imagine at some point that we will ask for questions. One little thing that I want to say was that we are hoping to do some clean up around the Southerland-Wilson farm somewhere around the 29th. of June and if you are interested in helping on this talk to Don LeClair. So I will turn it over to you Emily.

I:

I would like to welcome Frank Nordman and this is his daughter, Gail Smalley. She is going to help. Mr. Nordman is hard of hearing and so we're going to kind of tag team this and it will Mr. Nordman was born on May 19th in 1905 [in Ann Arbor], so he is our eldest oral history interviewee. We are very delighted ... He has been telling me a few stories just before we got started. It will be a very interesting interview and we will be taking some questions, um as we go along. If you have a question please speak up so we get it on the tape if you would. Ok, Mr. Nordman welcome.

R:

Mary Cruse might know this guy and you can have her look at it.

I:

Oh, really. Ok. And what he was showing me was a picture this is from a 1999 Ann Arbor Observer. And it is an article about Red Howard. Red Howard, right?

R:

Red Howard, yeah.

I:

He was a police ...

R:

In the 50's. [Actually, in the 1920's]

I:

In the 1950's.

R:

Mary might remember him.

I:

Mary do you remember him?

MC:

Yes.

R:

Do you?

I:

The incident with the bell, yes. What is your first memory of Pittsfield Township, Mr. Nordman?

R:

Well, I was born there (laughter). When I woke up, I don't know. (laughter) I don't know what instant it was. I was one out of the seven boys and two girls. Nine of us.

I:

Your mother was a Gross? Mildred Florence Gross?

R:

No. Not my mother.

I:

Oh, that was your spouse. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. What was your mother's maiden name?

R:

Hubbard. [Nellie Hubbard. Grandfather: Aesel 1841-1909; Grand mother: Mary A. Jones 1851-1891]

I:

She was a Hubbard?

R:

Yeah. Her building was in Tecumseh, MI and she immigrated there from the South with her husband. They eventually stopped and she was born in that building the ah, that building where the ah ... Oh what's the ah [She was born in the Tecumseh Inn where her parents worked]

GS:

The Tecumseh Inn .

R:

Yeah. Tecumseh Inn. Yeah.

I:

Really. Wow!

R:

And there was a halfway house on Ellsworth Road right where the dump, where the pit is right now.

I: Uh-huh.

R: Halfway between that and Platt Road and Carpenter Place, there was another halfway house. I assume out of my own figures that my Dad met my Mother and they got married and of course we had (laughter) one after another.

GS: Tell them where the house is now that your mother was born in.

R: Yeah, the Tecumseh Inn. They move that. Henry Ford moved that to ah, well ... historical ...

GS: Greenfield Village.

R: What?

GS: Greenfield Village.

I: Oh!

R: And it is still in there.

I: Oh, my!

R: Just recently, the last, I guess it has been about the last 5 years my wife and I visit and ate the dinner in the same room or same halfway house as she [my mother] was born in.

I: Oh, my goodness, can you imagine? Do you know what year she was born?

R: What church?

I: What year?

R: You have got me there. I never paid much attention.

GS: How old was she when she passed away? [71 years]

R: She was in her fifties I believe. I am not sure about that. I assume that she was in her fifties.

I: Ok. We'll do the math on another occasion. (laughter)

I: Well, Mr. Nordman you talk here about how you paid taxes. You went with your Dad to pay taxes to Mr. Ellsworth?

R: I went with my Dad more trips than any of the other family, brothers or sisters. Three of my brothers and sisters are, went to Isle Royale and never made it.

I: Oh.

R:

Back in the year that my Dad died.

GS:
1952.

R:
Yeah, I got a incident in the paper, in my package about that airplane getting lost over Lake Superior.

I:
Oh.

R:
Back in the 50's [1952] shortly after my mother [father] died.

I:
Your father and your sisters?

R:
No, not my fathers. I had one brother, John, John Nordman and two sisters, Clara [Powell] and Lillian [Seitz]. They was going Jehovies at that time and I assume my sister tried to get me to become a J ... and I wouldn't do it.

I:
A Jehovah's Witness?

R:
The religion, yeah.

I:
I see.

R:
And ah, they said before they settle the estate, they would take that trip. Out West there was a meeting that lands out in the wide open spaces an amphi theatre out of stone in the middle out West and they call it About the middle of the union, the United States. On their way out there they stopped in Huton, Houghton, Michigan and they was taking trips. Airplane with a CB airplane to Isle Royale. So, they wanted to take that trip in overnight. They had their suitcases in the plane and ah, the three of them and the pilot. They took a trip and evidentially, when they got half way there something happened. And ah, they never made it.

I:
Oh.

R:
They hunted for them several days and finally give it up.

I:
That is unfortunate.

GS:
Dad, tell them about when you went over with your Dad to pay the taxes and you fell asleep. Back, back when you fell asleep behind the stove. When you fell asleep.

R:
Oh, oh, oh, yeah. That was Ellsworth's house. Doing something good ah, for my Dad. He says I can go to the dance with him the square dances. And he played the fiddle and so did Dan Ellsworth.

I:
Oh.

R:
Ellsworth is the road with the name that ... the cross there.

I:

R: Right, right.

R: And I fell asl ... and I went there. It was cold in the wintertime.

I: And you were paying your winter taxes.

R: Yeah. Well, anyway my Dad was paying taxes, but they had that dance. And so ... my Dad was the fiddler. My mother danced I guess or whatever [played piano], but they took me along for some doings. They talked me into I could go. So, they took me along. And behind the kitchen stove, the old antique stove I sat and Mrs. Ellsworth said "Why don't you sit behind the stove there and have an apple." And have an apple. I'll give you an apple. You can eat an apple. So, I set there and I ate the apple. After that, I woke up and I was home.

F: (Laughs).

R: Like any other kid. Well. Good old Dan. I paid my taxes once \$42.30 to Dan Ellsworth, but if you went by there now on the corner of Ellsworth and Carpenter Place.

I: Yeah.

R: You would never recognize his homestead ... Because, ah, a valley, they got water, they got a spring in there somewhere.

I: Oh.

R: Ellsworth and Platt Road [Carpenter Road], yeah.

I: Ellsworth and Platt Road now. And Carpenter?

GS: Tell them about being treasurer of the Pit ... Town [Hall] School. Pittsfieldfield School.

R: ... what?

GS: Tell them about being the treasurer over at the Town Hall School.

R: Oh. Yeah. Ah, when I was building I became the treasurer to the Town Hall School for a couple of years until they closed up. Then they closed it up and come into the city and that was the end of my ... I was treasurer [and Chuck Geddes was the Administrator].

I: Where was the Town Hall school?

R: On Morgan Road and [Thomas Road] there is a little swamp near by. They moved that building that one room school to Ypsilanti as a souvenir for one school. [historical one-room schoolhouse]

I: Is that the one that at Perry?

F: ...

I: That is at Eastern? And there is Oh, my. Ok. All right.

R: Um-hum.

I: Did your children go to Town Hall School?

R: Say what?

I: Did your children go to Town Hall School?

R: My kids, yeah and my children. (laughs) Gail went to that school walking all the way. You could cut across the farmers' and cut it short. That was quite a treat. Yeah.

GS: What school did you go to?

R: I went to the Ypsilanti High school for a year and a half. And ah, I was supporting my own self. And between my own self and supporting I didn't have time to study and one thing and another. So, I gave up the school and started on my own.

I: Um-hum. Um-hum. What about earlier, ah, primary school. I think ... Did you go to Stone School?

R: Stone School. No, no connection.

I: No?

R: There's a Town Hall School.

GS: No. Well, didn't you go to Stone School when you were young?

R: Yeah, I went to Stone School when I was young, yes, all eighth grade.

I: You don't remember who your teacher was do you?

R: Yeah, one was Miss Alden, Alden and ah, one was Aaron Summers, that was my first one.

I: Oh.

R: I don't know if you've ever heard that name before.

I: I havn't. I havn't heard that ... I What was the school like? What was going to school like? Was it cold in the winter and hot ... ?

R: No. They had a pretty good furnace in it. I got some pictures of the Stone School or did have. I don't know where they are now without looking.

I:

We'll look after. Yeah. Did they, did you have to take wood? Did the families provide wood for the stove or ... ?

R: The farmers around got wood and coal. Along toward the last they had coal because they didn't have to fire it up as often as they would with wood. But then they didn't ... after a bit.

I: Did you walk to school?

R: Yeah, one mile, one way.

I: (Laughs).

R: One way from Platt and Ellsworth's there. Not Ellsworth, ah ... Yeah, from Platt ward on Packard to the Stone School.

I: Ok, so Platt.

R: And back.

I: Packard to Stone School. Ok. Um-hum.

GS: Who did you go with? Who did you go with? Who did you walk with?

I: At school? George Campbell.

GS: And who else?

R: Cobblestone Farm.

R: Mostly him, yeah, because I went right by his house where the Cobblestone Farm is now. ... to the Stone School and back. And one morning I was going to school. George come out and met me and ah, he said I am blessed with a little girl yesterday. (Laughter) You know Mary Campbell. I don't know if that word Do you remember Mary Campbell?

F: Yeah.

R: Yeah. I remember when she was born. In fact, I was going with George and the two of us walked together. He told me that he had a little sister. She is ... I haven't heard from Mary Campbell for a long, long time. I don't know where she ah, I think she's in Saline, Saline Home. I don't know. She's ah What would you call it if they don't know nothing?

GS: Did you go hunting in the wood in the apple orchard over there by Campbell's?

R: Other than the apple orchard? I was over to Campbell's many, many, many times. Yeah. It was almost like home. You could walk in the house and you didn't have to knock or nothing.

I: We interviewed Mary Campbell

R:

Ah.

I: And she told us about a barn fire. Do you remember when their barn burned down?

R: There what?

I: At the Campbell farm when the barns burned down. Do you remember that?

R: Coblestone Farm.

I: Right, Right.

R: I remember Clare Campbell. Clare ... [George's father]

I: Really.

R: By the way, they put a road through, Milan and made a railroad track and all the way to the Campbell farm on Platt Road and Ellsworth. The corner of Platt Road and Ellsworth. That is how they founded the sanitary fill. They had a gravel pit there and they used what gravel there was. After that they put a dump in there. So, now they have the dump filled up. My house is right next door. The only difference is that the railroad track runs between my property and the dump.

I: Um.

R: I used to go down to the dump and rummage. My kids always said, "How do you go down there ... rat thing. Don't you make enough money to eat? (Laughter.)

R: And I said yes, but I like to go. One instance, after that was said and I didn't go any more ... We had a big box of wire tops, glass top, with the rubber on it. Fruit jars, they had pints and quarts and half gallons. They had three different sizes and they had a big box of quarts mixed, smaller box of half gallons and then pints. Then I come along and I take them. Cause my kids talked me out of going to the dump.

I: (Laughter) I bet they didn't like that. (Laughter).

R: They are On a trip ... and I tell where I went into an antique store that had different things and here three dollars and a half, four dollars and fifty cents for one. (Laughter). Here I come along ... the boot.

I: (Laughter)

R: That was one treasure that I never got. But I didn't do too bad. I was salvaging old motors and I sat and burned off the insulation. Now the city or the county is doing the same recycling that I did when I made a few dollars doing that. Of course I had a job too.

I: Do you remember if um, were there others in the neighborhood who were on this trek with you. Who do you remember? Do you remember your neighbors from

R: No. I don't think that I was a downcast of any kind. If you know ...

I: I just wondered if all the neighbors, if this was the kind of activity that a lot of people did?

R: Not to my knowledge. Jones. I don't know if there are any Jones' in the audience or not. Next door to me we were quite friendly when we was building. Then the Stillians. I don't know if you know Stillians.

I: Stellians. Do you know how to spell that?

R: Ah.

GS: S T I L L I A N S.

R: Stella Adams, does anyone know Stella Adams? She ah ...

GS: He's just giving some of the neighbors that were ... lived [nearby]....

R: Stella Adams lived in the McCalla farm on Platt Road a block or two from where my house is, towards the south. All that land there belonged to the McCalla Farm. And I presume there is a fella in there that is using it for developing is the word I am trying to say. The developing people. He might know I don't know.

M: Charlie McCalla. ...

I: Yeah.

GS: And Morgans, the Morgan family.

M: Essra? Ralph? Cecilia? William?

R: No. The McCalla farm.

GS: Yeah.

R: There is George McCalla and the two, three McCalla's in around in that circle. Where the dump is. Where the ... John Fiegle owned the property, of course they are both gone now. Enoch had a little bit of a problem, some man from down South, they call them hillbillies (Laughter). Well, anyway came there with his wife and there was an empty house and he rented the house. He got permission from ah, Fiegle ,to, ah, cut up the dead wood in the field there where any tree that was dead he could have. So, they had a lane going back to the woods from his house. Then there was in that lane there was a hickory tree and it had big hickory nuts on it about as big around as you've ever seen. Beautiful. Every year Enoch Fiegle harvests them. This I'll say hillbilly, ah, for some reason he cut that tree down, and Enoch Fiegle went nuts. It put him in the hospital it really did. He was so mad that he couldn't shoot that guy, it didn't do any good. Then, I don't know ... he died shortly afterwards, after the incident, Enoch did, died.

I:

R: Oh.

R: For him cutting that tree down for no reason.

I: Oh.

R: After he died she went to Saline I think and lived in a home there, whatever they call it.

M: Frank. Who owned the tree? Whose tree was it?

R: Whose tree was it? It was Enoch Fiegle's it was on his property. Now, that is the one that they are making that park [Lillie Park] out of, that is the Senior Citizen of Pittsfield that turned into a park. They cut all the trees down. There used to be some big walnut, black walnut trees along the road. They are all down now. No more walnut trees. I used to gather every year. I used to gather walnuts from there and eat them (laughter) and eat them free of charge, Yeah ...

GS: Dad, how did your Dad come to visit you? How did he get there?

R: My Dad?


GS: How did he get over there to help you out ?

R: I've lost you.

GS: How. He used to come over and how did he get there when he would come over to see you?

R: My Dad? He never came very often.

GS: He came to plow your garden. How did he do that?

R: He could lift that single plow, a one-man plow. It's heavy, I don't know it weigh 150  250 lbs., somewhere in that neighborhood. He could lift that up and put it on the wagon (laughter) ... some it was a bushel of tomatoes or something.

GS: Didn't he used to come down with the horse and wagon? Down Packard Road?

R: Yeah, and plow my garden for me [every spring], yeah. That's while he was still living. Ah. I had something in here (rattle of a bag). I had in my mind. I don't know what it was. Do you want, or should I ...

GS: No, she just wants to talk to you.

I: I don't know, I like the pictures too. Um. What was your father's name?

R: Edgar Walter Nordman.

I: Do you know where he was born?

R:

Pardon.

I: Do you know where he was born?

R: I'm sorry, I don't remember. I don't remember his age 90.

GS: He was 84 when he died

R: He wasn't in the 90's.

M: Do you have a copy of his birth certificate?

GS: No. I have some of that information at home.

I: Yeah.

GS: I should have brought it.

I: That's all right. I just thought it would help. But he must have been. So if you are 97 and he came over to plow your garden with a horse and wagon down Packard Road. What was that in the 30's?

R: Yeah.

GS: 40's.

I: In the 40's they were still taking horses and wagons down Packard Rd.

GS: It was scaring everyone.

I: Oh. (Laughter)

GS: There were pictures in the paper about this old man [Edgar Nordman] driving down the Packard Road. That was scary.

R: I have got a picture of him doing that.

F: Ellsworth?

GS: His house was on Platt Road. Platt Road next to the city landfill.

R: This is ... my son wrote up there

I: So Packard is near Ellsworth?

GS: But he grew up on Packard. He bought Dan Campbell's piece of property [1.25 acres], that Dan Campbell sold him when I was two [actually, in 1939].

I:

R: We're getting a picture of this.

R: Yeah, that's what I wanted here.

GS: Father

R: Here are some pictures of my family.

I: Don't go anywhere you are hooked. (Laughter all)

R: This is the East Side Story.

GS: They have that one. Tell them a little bit about your family.

R: That little ... this picture here is my, this was me . My oldest sister [Lillian Seitz] was a dressmaker and she made all these clothes here, these pants, shirts, all except the long stockings. She didn't make the long stockings.

I: Oh, my

R: And this is my family before, one more was yet to be born [Eugene]. And this is my entire family and this is the old railroad track that runs in front our house.

I: May I pass this around so others can see it?

R: Yeah.

I: And then there is another picture here. Is this the picture of your father coming with the horses?

R: Yeah, yeah, that's him. Holding up traffic on ball games. (Laughter)

I: There was a ballgame that day. Oh, no. (Laughter)

R: He didn't know a ball game was going on and he come down there on a

GS: Where on Packard? Where that new church has just been built [across from the Cobblestone farm of the Campbells]. That was the homestead. From there to the crick. At one time they owned all of that whole corner section but they lost it during the Depression.

R: Yeah, this is just another, this is just another one of it.

I: Another copy?

R: Two pictures alike. Them are both alike.

I: Ok.

R: You all remember Ted Heusel.

I: Ted Heusel

R: The radio announcer? Do you want me to go down deeper?

I: I guess we have to hear the story. Yeah.

R: This may not have any connection with my property but that was the ice cream parlor there on Madison Street.

I: Washtenaw Dairy.

R: Washtenaw Dairy, yeah, that's it. That is where the old timers used to meet.

I: And you used to go there?

R: And I have been there a few times, yeah. I never patronized them too much. I was glad to work. Oh, this is just recently, Mary Campbell and myself when I was having a display in the display counter like them like them. I had one or two of them a week. I had four at one time on different ones. Buffalo Bill Cody there, was a story on him. Then I discovered down on off of State Street Buffalo Bill visit his relatives that lived on a farm off of State Street. Then I had a picture [actually, a replica] of a [Buffalo Bill's] gun. I don't know, I might ...

I: Yeah.

R: Is that a gun?

I: Did you collect ...

R: That is a replica, that gun is a replica of the pistol that Buffalo Bill carried.

I: Oh.

R: And he was in Ann Arbor. And I still remember him when he came in with his Indian. What was his name, ah, the Indian that went with Buffalo Bill?

I: I don't know.

R: Well, anyway, they was in Ann Arbor, back in there, where Stadium Road was put through ... belonged to an ancestor of mine Bill Ochis. Ochis, I don't know if you ever know anybody by the name of Ochis or not. But he owned quite a bit of property even in Waterloo, Michigan. The road named Ochis if you ever get to Waterloo. It is Ochis Road. On Ochis Road he had a house and when he died of course my Dad, of course, was inherited some of his property. I was ... I had the opportunity to take the house over and pay off the land thing. But I didn't have any money. I had to work. I didn't have a dollar only what I had to earn, so that went down the drain.

GS: Wasn't Bill Ochis your mother's, or your father's sister's [Marie] ...

R:

My father's.

GS:
... sister's husband

R:
That was my great-uncle. Let me trace that back. Bill Ochis was my great-uncle and Ochis today nobody knows it.

I:
And he was ... Now did he ... I'm confused. Did he collect the Bill Cody, the Buffalo stuff or did you? Or was Buffalo Bill here in Ann Arbor?

R:
Buffalo Bill Cody was the ... came. Buffalo Bill Cody.

I:
Came to Ann Arbor?

R:
Yeah. Um-hum.

I:
And you remember that?

R:
I remember that. That was that Circus that I couldn't go to on account of falling and hitting my head on something....

I:
Oh, really. (Laughter). Oh, dear.

M:
The Cody farm is on Ellsworth Road ... Cody and Wild Bill Hickock

I:
Ok.

M:
They were related somehow.

R:
These are the three people that got lost. Oh, excuse me.

I:
Ok.

M:
They were related in some way or another. They used to ride through there.

R:
Those are the three people that got lost up in Lake Superior from that airplane that never ... It landed ... it landed in the water.

GS:
That goes with this.

R:
That's the search. Here is another Frank Nordman delivery, ah, dairy, ah ... [he delivered dairy products (milkman)]

GS:
There are two Frank Nordman's in Ann Arbor.

I:
I see.

GS:
He used to get his mail all the time.

R: That was just a storm. This is Stone School House, ah I think that was the Stone School House and Aaron Summers was the teacher at that time. He lives next door ...

I: Oh.

R: ... to the Stone School.

I: Um-hum.

R: This is, this one is my father and mother.

I: Oh.

R: You can pass that around and show them.

I: Yeah, I will.

GS: That was on their 50th wedding anniversary.

R: Pardon.

GS: Wasn't that their 50th. Anniversary?

R: Yeah, um-hum.

I: Well, let's, how about if we take some questions from the audience? Because the audience can't really see. So, maybe we can look at this in a minute.

GS: Stop.

I: But, I wondered if anyone had any questions? Yes.

DL: Pittsfield Junction you mentioned something about that railroad. There is an Ann Arbor and New York Central that is east of the middle of our Township and it is called Pittsfield Junction.

GS: Do you know anything about the Pittsfield Junction? The railroad that ...

R: Yeah, where two railroads cross, yeah. It is not far from here.

DL: You used to get supplies there it was a railroad station.

GS: There was a railroad station there and you used to get supplies? At the junction.

R: The shift, they did transferring with a train. Two tracks. The Ann Arbor Railroad and the one that goes ...

DL: New York.

R: Used to go.

GS: New York.

R: Yeah.

GS: New York.

DL: New York Central.

GS: New York Central?

R: No, that's over by the river.

GS: That's not the one.

R: That's not the river, that's not the railroad, no.

DL: The railroad there

R: Ann Arbor and

GS: Do you know where there would be a picture of it?

R: I don't recall. Most of the people are all bye-bye

GS: Do you remember it well?

R:

GS: What do you remember about it?

R: Very little because it was kind of a ways, quite a ways from our house and I didn't get much news on it. If I did, I didn't think anything of it, in those days.

GS: What was the railroad track and where did it go in front of your house?

R: Ah, Saline and it went on a little further than Saline and that was the end and it come back. I don't know where it stopped at all. It is a city at the entrance and you go across that track.

F: What did you do for a living?

GS: What did you do for a living Dad?

R: What did I do for a living? Well, I worked at a laundry [Kyer] and got to be straw boss. I worked there for 42 years straight through.

GS:

R: Where? What was the name of it?

R: The name was the Kyer Laundry. But you wouldn't know that Kyer Laundry was ever there because the building is tore down. Everything is different now.

GS: Where was it?

R: It was down on South Main Street and Madison close to it. Then I worked two years after that in a laundry in Ypsilanti, ah

GS: Trojan.

R: Yeah, Trojan Laundry. And I was the plant man [after they closed, I] tore the machines apart, loosened them up for things for sale and rubbish and throw it out in the junk pile. One thing and another and I worked there two years.

GS: Didn't you work at a theatre one time? Running a projector? [Orphum Theatre]

R: Yeah, yeah, before I was married. I also operated two machines that had to transfer over to the other machine. And fix this one and fix it up and transfer it to the next reel. And then you switch back to that machine again. It run ten minutes or fifteen ... ten for fifteen minutes each one. You had to, they had an arc light and there was a magnifying glass and it made it brighter. And I didn't like that. It was seven days a week. No time to play. I worked there for a year or so and I said "That ain't for me."

GS: When was that?

R: Oh, that was around before I was married.

GS: Which was?

R: Then I worked at the spring, ah, spring company, Arbor Springs, now ... some spring company. They are right there where the bridge goes over the railroad track on Main Street.

I: Do you have other questions? ... I'd like to see your articles. And so why don't, if you would like to come up and look at the articles too. How about that people ... I'm sure that we have a lot to learn about this too, so we'll see how that works. What was this one?

R: This is the bell ... tower in Ann Arbor.

I: Putting the bell on the bell tower.

R: This is a better picture of it here.

GS: Tell them about having your son up there at the bell tower.

R: What?

GS:

Tell them about when you took Doug up to the bell tower.

R: Oh, yeah. Well, one [Sunday] morning when I was working, they was building that when I was working at the laundry of course. And I had a son and daughter (laugh) that was a little before my daughter. Well, anyway my son was about 2 1/2 years. We went for early morning, early, 5:30 in the morning, ah, Ford and went for a little ride. We ended up in this place and we had ladders for each floor going up to the bell tower, where the bells are up here in the tower. Well, we come up there and I had my young son up ahead of me, climb 17 or 18 steps to the floor and then another 18 steps till we got to the place where they put the bells. We got up there. And we hadn't anymore than got up there when my son got loose on me.

I: Oh.

R: Oh my gosh. I didn't know what to do. And we said to come here. And he said "No", and he run in the other direction. And I thought, oh my God, my wife would kill me if he would fall out of there. (Laughs)

R: And I said to my older daughter [Elane], ah, "Don't pay no attention to him but if you ... get close enough, floor him to the floor." (Laughs)

R: Well, he finally got caught (laugh) caught and I caught him. He didn't go down over the top. Well, I thought he was a pretty good sport at the time. So, I thought next Sunday I will go over to the thing So, the next Sunday we got ready and we went up there about the same time. Here stood a man in a uniform, "Can I help you". "No", I said, "We're just looking". We went down the other side of it. (Laughs)

R: Never got to climb the bell. But that tower bell weighed around 2 tons and that's the thing. There's a picture ... here the bell is.

I: This one right here.

R: Oh, yeah.

I: That one?

R: There is a picture here where the bell was being raised up. I don't know if you ever remember.

I: 1936 it says.

R: Well, here is the final of the airplane loss. Them three people was the one that they never see again.

I: Uh-huh.

R: Then here is the old Stone School and the new one.

GS: Did you go to the old one or the new one?

R:

The new one. I wasn't old enough to go there.

GS:

So, the new one.

R:

Oh, I don't know if you remember Vernal Tindel? Anybody remember Vernal Tindel, gold mining in Ann Arbor and I joined him after I retired. I was driving a truck and doing physical work with him. And the gold is in the sand. It is still in there. (Laugh). But they can't find a way to get it out because the gold is so minute it is in small pieces. There is also mercury in the ground. Natural mercury. The state was going to sue Tindel because of polluting the streams with mercury. We increased the mercury ... we used mercury when we took it out we had more mercury than when we put in. So, it was out because the mercury was already in the ground and it collected but we didn't get any gold.

F:

What kind of things do you like to do for entertainment

GS:

Dad, what kind of things did you do for entertainment?

I:

When?

GS:

When you were a child?

R:

I don't know, we was carrying the water from the spring to keep that tank full. We had our chores to do

GS:

Didn't you play games?

R:

We played Duck on the Rock. We would put a rock on top of another rock and then stand 25 or 30 feet away and try to nock the rock off. That was before marbles was invented.. (Laughs)

Side Two:

GS:

What was in your stocking?

R:

Oh, do you mean a pony?

GS:

No. For Christmas.

R:

(Laughs) Oh, for Christmas.

GS:

That's a different story.

R:

I don't get you Gail.

GS:

When you were a little kid you had a stocking for Christmas.

R:

Yeah, well ..

GS:

What kind of things did you get in your stocking?

R:
Usually, popcorn balls, ah, anything that wasn't expensive.

GS:
Whistles.

R:
Yeah, but that didn't last long my Dad took those things away from us.

F:
All laugh.

R:
I don't recall, Gail. This is up to date as of now. I don't know if everybody knows where that park [Lillie] is going to be, but it is right in front of my old house I'm not living in.

GS:
On Platt Rd.

R:
On Platt Rd. right next door to the railroad tracks, the old railroad tracks.

I:
The bulldozer is taking down those trees....

F:
Is that the Fiegle property?

GS:
Dad was that the Fiegle property?

R:
Yeah, that was the Fiegle property. Where the cider mill used to be. If you ever go past the old farmhouse there was always an apple orchard somewhere. Everybody had an apple orchard. Way, way back and when they grewed up ... used to be a pasture for cows and horses and whatever you had. And cider, they put down 55 gallon wood barrels that worked until they stopped working and then ... put the bung in, you give it a hammer. They used that for drinks out in the hot sun. If it wasn't for drinking to get intoxicated. It was more or less a health drink, that's hard cider for energy. Anyway, that's my Dad had. We weren't allowed to fool with that 55 gallon drum.... We stayed away from it. Well, I guess that is the end of it. This is a disaster. Yeah. I would hate to see that coming after me. That's a double cyclone.

GS:
My recollection of going to my grandfather's house, which was on Packard Rd. at the time was don't get in the barn it is filled with lice [splinters], don't go behind the shed..... Don't go in the shed because but you can play in the cherry tree. My grandmother... Bread with butter [and sugar] on it and that was her treat for coming over to see her.

R:
where the Ypsilanti water tower is that's the one I was secretary to the school the property is still there and it belonged to John Geddes ... I don't know how but that is the same way with the Carpenter place.

F:
.... they didn't make doughnuts?

GS:
No, not that I know of. Dad. Did your mother ever make doughnuts?

R:
Yeah, yeah.

GS:

I was the youngest.

R:
Right.

GS:
What kind of doughnuts did she make?

R:
Well, I don't really know. They were doughnuts that's all that I know. Here is a recent picture of a barber ... 85th birthday.somebody in the audience maybe knows that barber, I don't know his name. I don't know if they can see that or not.

I:
Howard Richardson.

F:
He is a friend of ours.

GS:
Yeah, yeah. picture taken of he gave his father his first haircut.

I:
Mr. Nordman, do you remember your first car?

R:
Yeah, it was a Ford.

I:
Was it, when did you get it? [1920's]

R:
When did I get it. Oh, I don't know. I have had quite a few since then.

I:
Were you a young man when you ...

R:
Yeah, I would single, and drove a Ford. I took my mother to Tecumseh to see some of her relatives [one was a barber: Dan Hubbard]

I:
How were the roads going down there? Were the roads bad?

R:
Yeah, I had my problems. I don't know. Well, I've got so many of them.

GS:
Tell them about Uncle Emil in the World War and how he come to get gassed.

R:
My oldest brother his name was Emil. I think his middle name was Walter, the same as my Dad. He went to Texas and studied to be an aviator, which he did during the war, and he went to war and he was shot down. He managed to guide the planes back to the American side. He was in German territory when he crash landed. When he crash-landed a sliver from a split wing or whatever hit him behind the ear and raised up his scalp. Well, they sewed it back up again and made him supply sergeant. You have to be a lieutenant or sergeant or an officer to drive an airplane ... I returned the uniform he wore to the Society here. About a week ago. Not a week ago, two or three months ago. Is that somewhere in the building?

I:
Yeah, we had it on display didn't we.

R:
Is that somewhere in the building? Did you have it on display?

F:

I: Yes.

R: For the Township.

R: I had a picture of him when he came home for a two day or a ten day furlough. We took his picture and he was still in uniform. That is what he had to wear. He spent the rest of his days in Mishawaka, a little ways about 8 miles from Milwaukee or from some Waukee name. I don't know. He stayed there [in the hospital at West Ellis, just outside Milwaukee, Wisconsin] until he died which was about 2 ♦ years.

GS: Why did he have to stay there?. What happened that he had to stay there?

R: When you've got stripes you you stick with the striped side. You are staying with the striped side. If you are a private you stay with the private side. The high and low side don't mix.

GS: What did Uncle Emil do at the end of the war that caused him to be gassed.

R: He was on what they call "picking up dog tags." You know they call the tag... it's the number that your registered under. And uh, ... and there was carrying and there was 4 people and they had a canary in a cage, each one of them.

I: Really.

R: Well, anyway, the guy next to him fell down.

I: Really.

R: and ah, it was a sniper that didn't know that the war was over. They looked at his bird and it was sitting on the roost. The next thing they know the bird was down on the ground. He got a whiff of mustard gas. Just enough to burn the top of his lungs. And I guess the burning is caused by bleeding. He exerted himself doing his work. So he wasn't able to do anything. So, he got his old job back. He was a conductor on the DSR. DSR the railroad that runs from Detroit to Chicago. That is a track in some of the pictures that I got, you can see some of the rails where the pictures were taken.

I: So, he could work but he couldn't exert himself for the rest of his life because of that little whiff of gas.

GS: That was during First World War

I: Well, I think that our time is almost up. Mr. Nordman, I want to thank you. I want to thank you for talking with us today.

R: Ok.

I: I want to thank you for being here today.

R: Here is a picture of the dolls you had in the show case.

Closing remarks by Moderator

BL:

I want to thank you for being here today. I want to invite you to come up and look at these articles that Mr. Nordman has got. They are very interesting but they are fragile, and they are interesting. We don't want to distribute them around. But they are very interesting.

R:

Do you want this on or no?

I:

I think I'm going to unclip it for now but I am going to keep my tape recorder on and keep taping so we can go through and see these. I wanted to mention that David, Grandson, David is here also of Mrs. Smalley. David what is your last name?

D:

Reichenberger.

I:

Reichenberger R-I

D:

R-E-I-C-H-E-N-B-E-R-G-E-R

GS:

Quite a handle.

I:

That's a lot to spell but I hope my transcriptionist gets it. (Laughs)

F:

Laughs.

I:

Where are you from David?

D:

North Carolina.

I:

Oh, really. You're visiting from North Carolina. Well, welcome. We are very glad to have you.

R:

Are you leaving?

GS:

Oh, no, I'm just going to get up and move around.

R:

Would you like some desert, cookies or coffee?

R:

I'll take a little coffeecookies.

GS:

I'll get you a cup of coffee.

I:

Ok.

R:

This is a ceramic beer bottle that was in the dump of Dan Ellsworth on the corner of Carpenter and Ellsworth Rd. It was in their dump and it was in three, four, or five pieces. I glued it back together again and sold it for five bucks or something like that. I don't think I have now. But, I found that in Ellsworth's dump.

I:

R: There you go.

R: Now, Dan and his wife died of course, and of course the young chap like the son took over the place. When they took over the place they threw all the old junk stuff away. But this bottle was cold and it filled with water. In the wintertime in the dump it expanded and broke.

I: Um-hum.

R: But I kept all the pieces and I don't know I might have one yet down in the old house.

I: Interesting how they can, you can ... Is that a cork?

R: No.

I: In there.

R: That is a wire on a piece of

I: A stopper type thing.

R: With a piece of rubber on it to pull the cork down like that ...

I: Yeah.

R: it seals like the can, like the fruit jars.

I: I happen to know this person so this is another interesting thing.

GS: Ok.

I: An that is the Old Stone School or the new?

R: That's the new one.

I: New Stone School.

R: They are both alike. This bell up here has a big bell on it and it was on a wire and a rope goes down there and you pull that rope. Then ...like that it rings the bell.

I: Oh. Ah-ha.

R: Well, somebody pulled the rope too hard and the bell got up up ... to the top of the roof and stayed that way.

I: For how long?

R: Well, until I got up there and took a stick and I clear out that little window here.

M1:

I: You done real good Frank by-golly. I'm proud of you. ...the school isn't it

R: You came out of this window?

M2: come out of that little window there ...the little window, I took that out. Then, I took a stick and pried that off of the roof. So the answer to the problem was not to pull the bell rope too hard. Oh, boy.

R: You know these little, you were talking about the movie, the movie, how you switched them over. Well, I worked at the movie back in 1935. And what happens is you have two dots up here. One dot shows up to start this other machine whichever one ...and you start the other one. Now, when two dots are on you switch the light off on this one and this one and they will be in sync. You know what I mean? There is no one in the audience that will ever know that you traded from one machine to another. The two little dots up here, you know on the screen. You look for the two little dots on the right and when one dot hits then you start the other machine. Whichever machine it was and then when the second dot shows up then you turn, knock this one off and this one on. You know what I mean? That was in 1935.

R: 1935 I'll be darned. Huh. This was just recently, you probably know this guy.

M2: No. I wasn't around here. I was... I am from a long ways off.

R: He dug my basement that is why I got his picture.

M2: Oh.

R: He dug my basement ... pour ... it cost me twenty-five dollars which I saved during the year. A dime a week or a dime a something.

The End