

An Interview with
Herb and David Jones

In Kirkwood, Missouri

09 June 1998

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[Tape meter, 004. Begin Side One, Tape One of Three. Begin interview.]

RB: ...a little bit about your background. Where you born here in Kirkwood?

HJ: Both of us. Dave Jones, my brother, [and he is] older by three years. We were both born in Kirkwood. Actually, born in a hospital in St. Louis but the family lived in Kirkwood.

I was born in '33, and [*spoken to his brother*] you were born in...?

DJ: '31.

RB: Could I have your birth dates, just for the record?

HJ: I'm December 16th, 1933.

RB: That's Mr. Herb [Herbert S.] Jones.

DJ: And Dave Jones, January 2, 1931.

RB: Both of you born in the middle of the wintertime. (laughing) _____. So your folks were living, here, then, at that time. Could you tell me a little bit about your parents? What was your dad's name?

HJ: Our dad's name was David Lee Jones, Senior. Dave is David Lee Jones, *Junior*. He grew up in Boonville, Missouri, and my mother grew up in Muskogee, Oklahoma. They came to Kirkwood in 1927 and bought the local newspaper, the Kirkwood Messenger. Our dad had been a linotype operator in Fulton, Missouri. And where else, Dave, did he work?

DJ: Boonville. _____ they had met. Mother had gone to Christian College in Columbia, and then both of them went to the University of Missouri Journalism School, and that's where they met.

RB: Oh, really? Now, what was your mom's name?

HJ: Margaret Shouse Jones from Muskogee, Oklahoma.

RB: And Shouse was her maiden name?

HJ: Yes. And that's my middle name.

RB: So he was a newspaperman. Was he interested in newspapers before? Does the interest in newspaper[s] run further back? I wonder how he started. [Why did he] decide to go to journalism school, for example?

DJ: They had lived outside of Boonville, out in the Bunceton-Prairie Home area. Their parents had separated when our dad was about twelve years old, and he kind of was left to run the farm. And his mother, who had gone to William Woods College in Fulton, was concerned that he wasn't going to finish high school, so she sold the farm and moved into Boonville. Bought a boarding house there. His older sister got a job with the Boonville newspaper, and got him a job at like age fourteen with the newspaper. That was just working. Not as a reporter or anything, just working as an apprentice printer there.

HJ: Or printer's devil, probably.

DJ: So it was by absolute sheer chance that that's how the involvement started in the printing/newspaper business.

RB: And so your dad had started out as a printer's devil in Boonville. The paper at that time was...?

DJ: What was that? I think it's probably still around.

HJ: I think it's the same paper that's there right now, I believe. And he worked as a linotype operator, as Dave said, in Fulton. He also went to Central [Methodist] College -- or maybe you mentioned that.

DJ: Mm-hmm, yeah, that's true. In Fayette.

HJ: They came here and bought the paper. Of course, we were not even born at that point, but [I] remember clearly the stories of... You know, they made their first payment on the business. Were in a boarding house, weren't they, here in Kirkwood?

DJ: Mm-hmm.

HJ: And they, I think, ended up with that first week seventy-five cents. They gave that to the church! (laughter)

RB: So what was the year they moved, then?

DJ: I think it was '28.

HJ: Was it '28? 1928.

RB: And then the paper they bought at that time was...? What was that?

DJ: Was the Kirkwood Messenger. A Mr. [F.R.] Goodwin had started it in [circa] 1920. Apparently he had started several newspapers around the St. Louis area, [which was] something that I didn't know until [Francis M.] "Bud" Barnes [III] gave me some information on that just recently. But they bought the paper out from him [Goodwin] with financial help from our mother's father in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

RB: Okay. And that was the Messenger in '28. Did he continue printing the paper then?

HJ: He ran the paper. There were at least one, two, and at some times there had been three weekly newspapers in Kirkwood back during those years. (chuckling) So it was highly competitive, I believe. Isn't that correct, Dave?

DJ: Yeah. There were three papers.

HJ: There was the [Kirkwood Messenger, the] County [St. Louis Countian], and the [Kirkwood] Advertiser...¹

DJ: Monitor.

HJ: ...and the [Kirkwood] Monitor. And of course, our dad grew up on a farm where the expectation was that the kids would work on the farm. We grew up in the printing business where the expectation was that the kids always worked.

DJ: (Laughs)

[Tape meter, 050]

HJ: In fact, I think [it is] interesting for that time, which would have been in the early '40s, Dave worked as a linotype operator at age twelve and our dad re-arr... You tell the story how a he arranged the school schedule.

DJ Well, we had study halls. We had eight periods and you had two study halls during the day. He was friends with the principal up there and [he] arranged to have my two study halls [during] the first two periods of the day so that I could work (chuckling) 'til about 9:30 in the morning! (laughs) Before I went to school.

RB: That's when most of the work takes place, right? Early in the morning?

DJ: Right! Right, that was when I was available, and he could get two or three hours out of me then!

RB: Now, which school was that?

¹ The Kirkwood Advertiser wasn't begun until 1946. Source: William H. Taft, Missouri Newspapers (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1964), 342. The Kirkwood Monitor would have been the third paper in the 1920s.

DJ: That was when I went to the junior high school. Well, and then on into the high school, still working.

RB: So you first began to work at the linotype at about what age?

DJ: At about twelve. Like in sixth, and really by time I was in seventh grade [I] was fairly accomplished at it.

RB: How did you learn it? Who taught you the actual [process]? Because it's a complex machine, isn't it?

DJ: I don't know, you just... (laughing) I don't remember a whole lot of instructions on it!

RB: But was there a master of it there _____?

DJ: Our dad certainly was quite competent. So I'm sure he gave me the instructions.

RB: He showed you how to do it.

DJ: Yeah.

HJ: One thing I learned from observing that, as [I am] three years younger, is I never wanted to learn how to run the linotype, (chuckling) because I saw what came along with it! So I ended up as a printer's devil [doing] cleanup [of] their operating [area]. We operated presses at that early age, certainly in our early teens if not younger. The big lumbering Miehle presses, hand-fed presses. I'm sure there were other kids in town that worked, but we did not have -- either [of us] -- school activities, sports [in] particular. We were expected to show up for work. And we did.

RB: Printer's sons. (laughs)

HJ: We were printer's sons. Dave became an outstanding athlete I think because of that, because the choice was to go to work or become an athlete. He ended up as captain of

the football team and a star player on the football team. I went out for all the sports that I could (chuckling) but _____.

[Several speaking at once, portions of dialog unintelligible.]

DJ: You did very well for a starter.

HJ: But anyway, that was interesting how back in those days, there was not a choice of...
You know, the dad was the...

RB: You follow in line, there.

HJ: That is right.

RB: Was he doing other work besides the newspaper? Was he printing other jobs?

HJ: Yeah, they had a job shop along with that, and that's where we came in.

RB: Those hand-presses _____...

HJ: That's right. Hand-presses, hand-operated folders, hand-operated stitching machines.

RB: Was your dad writing, now? Who was doing the writing for that?

HJ: No, that really never was his strength, would you say?

DJ: His sister came down here. She graduated from William Woods [in] like probably 1932. Something like that. And came straight down here and moved in the house with us, and lived with us for like six or seven years. She was the editor. Our mother had worked as the editor along with several other women in the first couple of years, and then our aunt as soon as she graduated from college... My dad's sister.

RB: And what was her name?

DJ: Beth Young. Or Beth Jones. Beth Young was her married name.

RB: So the women would do a lot of the editing.

DJ: My dad really was not (chuckling) a journalist in the true sense. He did some column writing, but it was not his passion to... But where most people that get in the newspaper business get into it so that they can write and influence things, and that really wasn't a... (chuckling) It was a job to him!

RB: Right. Now, the actual gathering of the news, did you all ever participate in that part of it?

HJ: *[Spoken to his brother]* Well, you wrote a sports column, didn't you?

DJ: Well, later on. But no, not growing up, we didn't. And the paper didn't last too long after we came back. We came back in '55, and by '59, I think it was, that we had sold it _____.

RB: You say come back from school?

DJ: School and the Army, yeah.

HJ: One of my early memories... Part of the work as we got a little bit older -- well, I was still in bicycle riding age as a kid -- and I remember very clearly going out knocking on doors selling subscriptions to the paper.

[Tape meter, 100]

And one clear memory was: One day I... And as kids do, I rode my bike up the driveway, dropped the bike down in the driveway, and went up to the door. Was ringing the doorbell just as the husband backed out the driveway over my bicycle! (laughs)

DJ: And the lady did buy a subscription, I assume?

[All laughing, portions unintelligible]

HJ: (laughing) She did buy a _____

DJ: (laughing) But they did not pay for the bicycle!

RB: That was a capital loss!

HJ: Well, it was. That was during the war years, World War Two years, and bicycles were at a premium by that time. There were no new bicycles being sold, I don't think, at that time. And of course, being the second in the line, a second child, I didn't what "new" meant, whether it was bicycles or clothes or whatever.

RB: You were used to Dave's...

HJ and DJ: Hand-me-downs.

RB: Right. Let's see, what came first, the college or the war? World War Two was already over.

DJ: Yeah.

HJ: That was over in '45.

DJ: Yeah, I graduated high school in '49. Went up to [the University of] Missouri and got out in '53, and then [in] the Army two years, and back here in '55.

RB: Now, [the] Korean Conflict...was going on.

DJ: It ended just as I went in.

RB: Okay, so you didn't participate in that.

DJ: Was not in Korea, mm-hmm. I was commissioned like in June and the war ended in August, I think.

RB: And you were in the Army, were you?

DJ: Mm-hmm.

HJ: We were at Missouri for two years at the same time, at Columbia. Dave went on to the service. I finished school in '55, and he got out of the service at that time. So I came back to Kirkwood to the family business in January of '55, and *[speaking to his brother]* you came in and got out about June of '55. So we started our careers back in this business in the other building...as you walked in the front door.

RB: That's what I going to ask: That building there, it's getting to be an older building now. Was that the original Messenger newspaper building?

HJ: No, the original building was over across a block from here. And interestingly, [Robert G.] Bob Reim [Sr.] bought the building from our dad and went into the printing business.² The business moved to *this* location in... *[To his brother]* What year was that? Forty...?

DJ: About '45, I think. That building was the post office building. It was built as the post office. This building was built as Kirkwood's first fire department.

HJ: Where we are sitting right now was the upstairs where the firemen lived, in this room and the one right behind us. So the two historic buildings in fact have been named as historic buildings by the local history society.

RB: And they're probably built around _____.

DJ: No, no. They're built probably in the '20s. There was a volunteer fire department, and then when they finally went to the full-time, this building was built. The post office was built about that same time.

RB: Now, Herb, did I see you mainly studied business? Is that your...?

² Reim was a former city councilman and mayor of Kirkwood. His printing business was known as Color-Art, Inc. Reim's obituary may be found in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, December 7, 1995, page 4B.

HJ: I was in business school with some journalism classes. And Dave graduated with a journalism degree.

RB: [*Speaking to Dave*] Oh, so you went into *journalism* school? Who were your instructors in those days? Your main instructor at that point?

DJ: (chuckling) I can picture him and should know...

RB: Walter Williams, I gather, he was long gone by that time.

DJ: Yeah, he was long gone then. He was probably our parents' time at Missouri.

RB: Your dad may have actually taken classes [under Williams.]

DJ: They both graduated in the mid-'20s.

RB: So they had strong influence from him, I'm sure.

DJ: Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely.

HJ: One little sidelight just from Columbia. You remember "The Shack" in Columbia?³

RB: Right.

HJ: Well, that Shack went through the span of our parents, Dave and I, and our kids. [They] both went to Missouri. I think all of us had our initials carved in some of the tables at The Shack. (laughs)

RB: You did?

HJ: Do you have first-hand memory of The Shack?

RB: When I first came to Missouri in 1988, it was closed. But the building was still there, and I have seen some of the tables and the carvings and such that were in there.

[Tape meter, 150]

³ The Shack was a popular college student hangout - restaurant. It was located where the University of Missouri Reynolds Alumni Center is today (2003).

But how do you feel about that place going down?

DJ: (laughing) It was sad to see!

RB: It was sad.

DJ: Now, where are you from originally?

RB: Oh, I came from St. Martinville, Louisiana. Then we moved up here.

DJ: Okay. In '88?

RB: In '88.

HJ: So we have a long tradition of [attending college in] Columbia. In fact, our uncle lived in Columbia and ran the rock quarry. That was our dad's brother.

RB: Now, what was his name?

HJ: His name was J. T. Jones. And that was the Garrett Quarry, which is now out by... Is it Cosmo Park, or...?

[All speaking, portions unintelligible.]

DJ: Out by the old _____.

HJ: It's still out there; it's still an operating quarry.

RB: It is?

HJ: Yeah, and it was his father-in-law that owned the quarry and he ran it for many years prior to being a state trooper in what was one of the first driving... *[To his brother]* What was the story on his...?

DJ: Just that he was among... I think the Highway Patrol started in like '32. I think about two years later they had run an ad around the state in the papers, and they were looking for three more state troopers. He decided to go over. It only required being out of high

school. [That] is all they had to be. He was among 2,000 that showed up for the three positions over there in Jeff[erson] City! (laughs)

HJ: Well, I didn't even know that.

RB: And that was...?

DJ & HJ: J. T. Jones.

HJ: No name, just two initials. His father was John Thomas Jones.

DJ: Apparently it was not uncommon to use initials, like Harry S. Truman. The "S" didn't stand for anything.

RB: That's right. So they had to wait 'til they had highways, I guess, before they...

DJ: (laughing) Yeah, before they had a Highway Patrol!

RB: (laughing) He was one of the first highway patrol [officers.]

HJ: *[To his brother]* And what was the story of how if you weren't driving that car...? Do you remember that? That you were expected to be out standing at the side of the car at kind of an "at ease" position, were you?

DJ: Yeah.

HJ: You didn't sit in the car without moving.

RB: No sitting at the doughnut stand! (chuckles)

HJ: (laughing) That's right!

DJ: And of course, there were no speed limits in those days. Absolutely none. That was probably well into the '40s, because when I started driving there were still no speed limits in the state of Missouri.

RB: (chuckling) Of course, there were limits on what the car would do!

DJ: And what the road would hold! (laughs)

HJ: Well, I don't know about the limits...

DJ: The cars would go! I'll tell you, they would go!

RB: They would?

DJ: In excess of 100 miles an hour.

HJ: When we went to Columbia, [U.S.] Highway 40 -- [it] was not the interstate; it was Highway 40, which is still in place; it remains -- and very clearly the students coming back to St. Louis... *[To his brother]* And what was the record? It was like...

DJ: An hour and fifteen minutes, I believe it was.

HJ: An hour and fifteen minutes from Columbia to [St. Louis.]

DJ: Because the cars would go *well* over 100 miles an hour. *Oh, yeah!* I remember driving up to...

HJ: This is on a two-lane road.

DJ: ...visit a friend at Champaign [Illinois] one time, and I borrowed my dad's Buick. There in the middle of the night, nobody in the road, by myself. Had that thing at 120 miles an hour for half an hour. (chuckling) It was just flying through the night!

RB: That was like 1953 or...?

DJ: It wasn't even that late! It was the early '50s, yeah.

RB: Early '50s.

DJ: Yeah, the cars would go plenty fast! (laughs)

HJ: I don't think we were particularly fast drivers, although I've never heard this 120-mile [an] hour [story]! But the students coming back to St. Louis that had cars... And of

course, few of them had cars, and you'd double up or hitchhike. I hitchhiked frequently from Columbia back to Kirkwood. And you could make it usually in under two hours even hitchhiking! (laughs)

RB: Even hitchhiking. But people would pick you up in those days.

HJ: Oh, absolutely! Right. You could stand out on the old 40 which runs right through...

DJ: Doing ninety-miles an hour coming home on that two lane highway was just routine. Just absolutely routine!

RB: So the college days ended and you repatriated here back in Kirkwood in the mid-'50s.

HJ: That's right. Which was an interesting time in the printing industry. That is just when the printing industry was making the changeover from the old hot type letterpress printing to lithography.

[Tape meter, 200]

In this company, [it] was all letterpress at that time. Ancient, clunker equipment.

DJ: Hand-set type.

HJ: Hand-set type, hand-fed presses. We came in out of college thinking we knew something about something. And we had a lot to learn, because our dad and the people that worked here knew nothing about the new lithography offset presses.

RB: Right. And a decision had to be made whether to invest in all this new, different sorts of equipment.

HJ: Absolutely.

RB: What kind of decision did you all go with?

DJ: Well, we made some wrong ones first!

[All laughing]

HJ: We stayed with letterpress and bought -- I'll never forget it -- a Model A Duplex, which was a web press.⁴ An old clunker, slow operating...

DJ: Strictly for newspapers.

HJ: ... for newspapers. And at that time Dave was running the linotype. I was running the Model A Duplex, which we if had kept that press I would have been long ago dead and buried, because that press was just a...

DJ: (laughs) Worst thing you ever had to do!

RB: Was it a hazard?

HJ: Oh, we would run the paper on Tuesday, as I recall, and about Sunday I'd start getting butterflies in my stomach worrying about having to run that press. Although I had run hand-fed presses all my life.

RB: It was just long hours, was it?

HJ: [It was] just a nightmare.

DJ: It was breaking down. Web breaks on it, and it was just a nightmare.

HJ: So we kept that press for what, two or three years.

DJ: Yeah.

HJ: And in fact sold the newspaper against our dad's... At that point he was more out of the business than in, and we were running [it]. [We] said the newspaper business was really not what we wanted to spend the rest of our life doing and felt that the future for us was

⁴ A rotary press that prints on a continuous roll of paper. Source: The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language: Fourth Edition, 2000.

in commercial printing. Which that was a *right* decision for us, I believe. *[To his brother]* I assume you would agree with that?

DJ: Mm-hmm.

HJ: So we sold the newspaper, gave the little money that came from it to our dad, and started over virtually with no employees. Because we had no customers and no employees, although [there was] good will that had been built up from the Messenger. And of course then the company name went from the Kirkwood Messenger newspaper to Messenger Printing and Publishing Company. We did that... Well, we've been doing that up until today. It was slow in the beginning of picking up customers. We decided that what we knew most about was printing newspapers and we specialize in the printing of publications. Started out printing... At that time we were printing the Kirkwood High School paper, and we ended up printing virtually every high school paper in St. Louis. Then over the years that went away from high school more into corporate publications, and that really is what we are known for in St. Louis.

RB: So it did grow out of that newspaper business.

HJ: Yes.

RB: And before, while you had the newspaper, you were doing other jobs as well anyway.

HJ: Sure. Anything we could get our hands on. But early on we decided we could not be printing business cards today and books tomorrow. We had to specialize in something, and our decision was... [We] felt there was an opening in St. Louis for short run publications -- short run meaning, oh, a 1,000 up to 10,000 copies of anything from a four up to now we print a 100 page, full-color magazines.

[Tape meter, 250]

RB: So you would say that your “bread and butter” was high school newspapers at one time?

HJ: For a number of years, no question about it. And that’s what we were known for, which was good and bad in that we were known in the high school circles -- and I say high school *and* college; we printed virtually of the papers that were printed in the metro area -- but we got a reputation as a high school printer and the corporate customers looked on us more as not quite up to the level or the quality that they want. So we grew out of that and moved on. Interestingly, the high school paper, the Kirkwood Call -- which this company has been printing for... *[To his brother]* What, fifty years, wouldn’t you say?

DJ: Right.

HJ: [It] is known as and has won awards as the best high school paper in the country. Consistently, year in and year out. Although we had no editorial input into that, we certainly feel that we had some...

RB: That comes off the press, there.

HJ: That’s right. And the high school papers for all those years, the students came to this building to work on the paper. So we kind of had the contact really with the cream of the crop of the high schools all over St. Louis coming to our business and working with us. Because the better students, the leaders in the school, often became the editors of the newspaper. *[To his brother]* Would you generally agree with all of that as far as our growth in the company and where we came from?

DJ: Mm-hmm.

RB: Back when you all first went into business...and had changed the name, what year was that?

DJ: '59, I would say.

HJ: Yeah. Maybe a little later than that.

DJ: '60, somewhere in the early '60s.

HJ: Yeah, because I don't think it was that soon after... And we really struggled for probably eight to ten years. I don't know if *you* remember this, but our granddad on our mother's side was a very successful businessman. He told our dad, and dad told us time and time again, "You take care of your business for ten years. Really work hard and do whatever you have to do, and it'll take care of you for the rest of your life." Well, I think we tell our kids that now, because that's been the experience.

DJ: I'm not sure that's true in the industry anymore! (laughs) We lived in the right time!

RB: Where it still worked?

DJ: (laughing) Yeah, it still worked! By the skin of our teeth.

HJ: When I say, "taking care of business"... During those first eight or ten years of business, once we started growing and getting more customers, a typical day for us would be to start at eight in the morning, work 'til six, go home, eat dinner, and come back to work until midnight or later.

[Tape meter, 300]

And that was five days a week plus we worked virtually every weekend.

RB: How about your kids? Did they get involved, too, as they grew up? Did they just like you all did when you were growing up?

HJ: Not quite to the degree that we did, but certainly all knew what the work...

DJ: The equipment wasn't as easy for a kid to slide into and use as it had been earlier. Like working on a Model T versus a BMW [automobile.] It's a little tough for somebody to just come in and...

RB: So that's one of the challenges, isn't it, in any kind of printing business? The technology has changed so much.

HJ: Oh, gosh!

RB: Then you had to make a decision at one point to throw away the linotype, but then there have been probably some more major decisions along the way, too?

HJ: Oh, absolutely!

DJ: And they continue on a practically annual basis! (laughs)

RB: Right. What would you say is the biggest changeover in technology in printing? Because you guys have seen now a good bit of it.

DJ: Surely the computer coming in, I think. Just totally changed it.

HJ: We have bridged where we were both proficient hand-set, hand-type, picking the type out of a tray and setting type, to now where it is... You know, we have computers here that do...amazing things. Of course now, the next level is computers that you talk to and you don't type with a keyboard.

RB: Have you all gotten into digital photography yet?

DJ: No, we haven't, because don't provide the photography. In most cases the customer provides that.

RB: Say, if you were still in the newspaper business, where you had to generate stories and stuff, [would you use digital photography]?

DJ: Oh, yeah. There's no question about it. Sure.

RB: That seems to be a direction [many newspapers are headed.] Well, I sure appreciate this kind of an overview of your backgrounds because I think it's very important. The fact that your dad had been involved in the newspaper business and then you all saw how that worked and you saw the relationship between the newspaper and the town [is significant.] Did that have anything to do, do you think, with your...?

HJ: Oh, it absolutely did, because back in those days -- and still today, probably -- the newspaper publisher in a town was a *business* leader, and people looked to that person just as a business leader. So our dad was very active in the community, was the first president and one of the organizers of the Kirkwood Chamber of Commerce. And that was fifty years ago. Well, Dave ultimately became president of the Chamber of Commerce, and I have been the president of the Chamber of Commerce.

[Tape meter, 350]

So he was very involved in the community that way just as the publisher, and certainly that instilled in us something of a civic-mindedness. My road was more down the government side. I was on various city commissions as Dave was. Became a city councilman, [and] ultimately became mayor of Kirkwood for eight years. But during that time we both, both as businessmen and being involved... I have always looked as my hobby as being civically involved in government. That is where my interest was. Dave

was more down the Chamber of Commerce way, and I would say the history collection way. *[To his brother]* How would you describe yourself as far as your involvement?

DJ: Oh, that's it. Just the civic clubs: Rotary, and the Chamber, _____.

HJ: President of Rotary and Chamber.

RB: So it wasn't like all of a sudden you woke up one day and you decide that you want to be a civil servant or a...? It's something that just gradually...

DJ: Just grew up seeing all the way through.

RB: Grew up in, and it was just part...

[Tape meter, 374. End Side One, Tape One of Three.]

[Tape meter, 001. Begin Side Two, Tape One of Three.]

HJ: Dave, I [didn't] ever mention it to you, but I remember while sweeping the floor at the old Messenger -- which was right across from the city hall -- I made up my mind at that point that someday I wanted to be mayor of Kirkwood. I probably was in grade school at that time. I can't say that it became a burning thing every day that I was aware of it, but it's one of those things you plant in your mind and you kind of gear your whole life to positioning yourself to attain a goal like that. Some may say that's not reaching very high, but... (laughter) But when you're twelve years old, that was about as high as you can imagine!

RB: (chuckling) A lot of people with a broom never had that kind of push!

HJ: That's right! And our grandfather on our mother's side was [a role model for us.] He did things very quietly. This was in Oklahoma. But certainly was a great model, I think, for both Dave and I and our [other brother] -- there was a third brother, Tom Jones. I would

say that he had more influence or as much influence as our own dad just by the way he lived his life, and that was involved in the church, involved in the community. Which probably to some degree influenced our dad because he did not have that role model in his own home. And then that came to us through those...

RB: Who was this now?

HJ: This was our mother's father who was a very successful businessman with *his* brother, and they ran a department store.

RB: And what was his name?

HJ: His name was James Herbert Shouse. And I was named after him. *[To his brother]*
Would you agree that he had a great [influence on us]?

DJ: Mm-hmm. Absolutely!

HJ: Back in those days, grandfathers didn't spend a whole lot of attention to their grandchildren, nor did fathers.

DJ: (laughs) That's true!

HJ: Not like today's fathers. They were an authority figure and, you know, they said, "Do it" and you did it! Dave, would you agree with that basically?

DJ: Mm-hmm.

HJ: So there was not the close relationship, at least in our family. I don't think I saw it in any of our friends' families too much. But there was great influence that came just by that more [in the form] of role modeling, I think. So anyway, we came back into town. Spent eight to ten years of our life with our nose to the grindstone, active in the community. We were both charter members and Dave was the first vice-president of the Jaycees, the

Junior Chamber of Commerce. And then Dave was involved in Rotary Club early on, at age twenty-three or four, probably.

DJ: Mm-hmm.

HJ: And became a leader in that group. And I, for business decisions, got involved in the other service club, the Lions Club. So we kind covered both sides of the street there. But [that] really put us in touch with -- at an early age, in our early twenties -- where we were on first name basis and friends with the then-leaders of the community. And certainly I assume that effected our [professional lives.] So we've been doing that now for forty-three years. At some point you become... You know, the others move away, die off, or whatever, and all of a sudden you're sitting there (chuckling) kind of in the catbird seat!

RB: That right. I want to get to these questions, because these are very good...and some of them will take a little bit of explication, I'm sure. But one more question -- I don't want to [be]labor this, but with the involvement that your dad and other kin...you couldn't not steered completely away from politics. What has politics been like? Did you come up in a family that had a particular political [philosophy]?

HJ: No, I don't think as far as partisan politics that there was any strong involvement there. Our dad did run for the city council probably when he was, what, forty years old or something.

DJ: Mm-hmm.

HJ And was not successful, did not get elected and just kind of moved away from it and never pursued it again. Although he certainly was involved in the city kind of more behind the scenes. And as the publisher of the newspaper that happened.

RB: But no party leadership or that kind of thing?

HJ: No.

DJ: No, it was strictly local.

RB: Well, that's interesting because that's what I've gotten from other [civic] leaders I talked to here in Kirkwood, too. It's kind of an interesting...fact about Kirkwood.

[Tape meter, 050]

HJ: One thing that happened as our business was growing in Kirkwood back in the late '50s and '60s: [Kirkwood] was kind of out of the mainstream in St. Louis [County], as were downtown businesses all over the country, [which] were beginning to fade. It was the early stages of shopping centers coming in, and Kirkwood was really being passed by. There was a great business decline. [One would] see lot of empty buildings in town. Kirkwood was going down the road of downtown America, really.

RB: And you say that began in the late '50s or '60s?

HJ: Well, it was probably '60s. I would say maybe even mid-'60s. And this was at that time a hundred-year old community, hundred-year old buildings in many cases. And just was not competing. We were not unique at *all*. Whether it was suburban towns or out-state, the same thing was happening all over, and ultimately changed the whole face of America, of course. We remember downtown Columbia, but that is not where the action is today, I don't imagine. Is it?

DJ: Still fairly strong.

HJ: It's a viable [down]town?

RB: Lucky in Columbia, but you're right, though. There's so *many* other towns that...

DJ: Boonville would probably [be an example.] Well, when the Wal-Marts move in and ten different stores close.

HJ: You know, we were involved in business in a town that was slipping off the face of [the earth.] (chuckles) And we -- and particularly I did -- became politically active saying, "What can we do to do something about this?" Dave was very supportive because when you're two partners in a business to have one go out and start doing things other than taking care of business, it took someone to be back running the business. And also advising. Although I was the guy out front, in the public, it was a team effort, and we actively addressed what can Kirkwood do to [retain downtown businesses.] What happened is that there was a small group of people -- Bob Reim, some of his employees, a drug store operator, a bank president -- who really lobbied... At that time I was on the city council. And State Representative [Robert O.] Bob Snyder -- who became the Minority Leader at that time and eventually ran for Congress -- he presented the bill for downtown special taxing districts in the state legislature at our urging and really kind of guidance...⁵ We did a lot of the homework for him, this group did, and Bob Snyder ultimately got that where a downtown business could, through a vote, elect to tax themselves for extra money to spiff up the downtown district.

RB: That tax, who was it directed to? Who would be the payer of it?

HJ: The business owners and the building owners in the downtown district.

⁵ Snyder was the Missouri House Minority Leader during the 77th and 78th General Assemblies, 1973-1977. As a Republican, Snyder represented the 95th District of the Missouri House. He ran unsuccessfully for the 2nd District of Missouri, U.S. House of Representatives in 1976.

DJ: There was a clearly defined area, and once that was accepted then every business in that community had to be a part of it whether they liked it or not. So there was taxing and advertising programs, and community improvement projects, and so forth.

RB: How did they pay? According to street frontage or according to...?

HJ: According to volume of business. It was very controversial. In fact, there was a split-off group from the Chamber of Commerce. About half of the businesses very actively -- and probably more than half -- opposed [it], because people don't like to have more taxes! It was hard fought but did pass, and really, in my opinion, was the salvation of the downtown district. So Kirkwood was the first in the state of Missouri to enable this tax legislation.

RB: Now, what year are we talking about?

HJ: We're talking about in the 1960s, probably mid-'60s.⁶

RB: Would that have been while Bob Reim was still involved in...?

HJ: It was after he was mayor. He had in his administration done much to fight the problem, but it was after this where the legislation became available...

DJ: _____ was absolutely nothing.

RB: So he went out somewhere in 1964, I guess, is when he ended his term.

[Tape meter, 100]

HJ: I believe it was. *[Sounds of shuffling paper]* I was just looking... *[Over]* time, you forget when the major events in your history *[occurred.]* No, actually that was in the '70s. In 1972 to '76. I very clearly remember. I was on the city council and there was a

⁶ See previous footnote.

group of Chamber people, including myself and Dave and some others that were fighting this problem. And I was the one on the inside on the city council working then with the mayor and the [successor] of Bob Reim, [Philip] Phil Hallof [, Jr.]

RB: Was Phil Hallof the mayor at that point?

HJ: He was the mayor at that time.

DJ: He was the mayor between Bob Reim and you, wasn't he?

HJ: That's right.

RB: Was he in favor generally of this [tax]?

HJ: He was in favor. *[Referring to a list of questions Brassieur had sent to the Jones brothers prior to the interview]* I'll jump to another question of what the most controversial election was. And that is when Phil Hallof got elected. Bob Reim had supported another member on the council whose name was [C. Donald] Don Ainsworth, who was an insurance man, well educated, very successful in business. Phil Hallof owned a shoe repair shop in town. Had been active in the community. So those two were running against each other. *[To his brother]* I don't think there were any other candidates, were there?

DJ: I don't think so.

HJ: And it was Phil Hallof the shoe repairman running against a well-oiled machine, supported by the most influential man in town, Bob Reim. There was almost no question of who was going to win. It would be Don Ainsworth. Well, they made what history would say would be a tactical error in that they sent out a mailer very close to the election comparing the qualifications and credentials and the education of Don Ainsworth ...to

[those of] Phil Hallof, who had no education -- did not finish high school, I don't believe -- a shoe repairman. Of course, it [the difference between the candidates] was overwhelming, but people of the community were totally offended by the fact that Phil Hallof was being attacked in this way. And he got elected.

RB: Ah-hah. It backfired.

HJ: Is that the way you remember it, Dave?

DJ: Mm-hmm.

HJ: And Phil Hallof was a stubborn old German who was honest. That certainly helped him and [was] known as an honest, hardworking person, but he had just a little one-man shoe shop his whole career. Part of his promise was, "When I get elected I will sell my shoe shop and be full-time mayor." Which no one had ever been before. And a combination of that and this attack did it.

DJ: Interestingly, his son, for "an uneducated man" -- his son who was my age, I grew up with [him] -- was a geophysicist out of MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology] and was a millionaire by the time he was thirty-five! (laughs)

HJ: And MIT, as I recall, said to the Kirkwood School District, "If you have anymore Phil Hallofs, you send them to us!" And his two daughters who were in *my* class, one is now a judge over in Indiana and the other is a successful businessperson.

RB: That story is kind of ironic to the extent that if I recall Bob Reim himself didn't have that much of an education.

HJ: That is correct, he did not.

DJ: That's right. I don't know that Bob even finished high school. I think he finished in a printing trade school.

HJ: You're exactly right. You have a good memory, 'cause that is true. He went to a trade school.

RB: So then at the end of his very successful career as mayor that backfired trying to promote the highly educated [candidate.]

HJ: Yeah. That is right. So I was elected when Phil Hallof was elected in this upset victory. I, running as a council member, was elected, and there were only four other council members.

RB: Were you all still running as a [ticket]? As I recall this press group ran as sort of a ticket.

HJ: That is correct. Well, no, that's how they got elected going *in*.

[Tape meter, 150]

They were trying to kind of handpick their candidates but they did not run against Hallof as a ticket. Anyway, because I grew up and Dave grew up knowing the kids of Phil Hallof -- and our dads were acquainted -- I certainly had the ear of Phil Hallof. He wanted business to... He wanted to change the environment, but didn't have strong skills other than he certainly had the ear of the community. So I had *his* ear. The Chamber group, including Dave and others, we were together, so we were a strong link to what happened at city hall. (chuckling) And I was "Mr. Inside" kind of in there, being a council member.

RB: Now, was this election 1972?

HJ: About '72, I believe it was. And I only stayed in for four years. But at that time came... We started this district. I hired the first downtown district executive along with the city administrator at that time. We were very lucky and hired a very talented young man who eventually brought in a development, which is now across the street where the Target store [is] and then it was a Casey's Sporting Goods. And that became what was probably one of the most controversial issues in the last thirty years in Kirkwood. Would you agree, Dave?

DJ: Mm-hmm.

HJ That [issue was] whether we should have a discount store in our downtown area. It required tearing down the old Kirkwood Hotel, which was a historic building but it had fallen into disrepair. That for two years became the issue. What we did was go out and have with -- Bruce Heckman was his name -- listening sessions, trying to convince the community that our downtown district had to become viable or the city would deteriorate even further. The city was really on the brink. Well, Webster Groves [and] other cities around us were in that same situation. Kirkwood, the way I view it, kind of led the way saying, "We're going to do something. If you don't like it, get out of the way." [That] was kind of the attitude that we took on that. Ultimately the Target store did come, and that really was the beginning of a whole redevelopment of the whole downtown area. We brought in the open-air market, which still operates. The idea at that time was we needed some type of a magnet. We did not have an anchor store in town to bring people into Kirkwood. People would come into the market [and] then shop in other stores downtown. This was the same group that did the other... Some of those names, just for

the record, were Dick Zoellner, Phil Hallof and myself from the city hall, Bill Hayes, Dave Jones, John Dodson...and John Green. We were really the ones that really kind of put ourselves on the line. And they did. Dick Zoellner and the bank president Bill Hayes had people coming in closing their accounts saying, "You're ruining our town. I'm not going to do business with you anymore." And they put themselves really on the line.

RB: And that was about the Target development?

HJ The Target store.

RB: Was there preservation interests there, or were they...?

[Tape meter, 200]

HJ: No, it was just more that, "You're bringing in competition that will kill us." At the time was the growth of the whole discount store fad. (chuckling) Which is not a fad because they're still here. Dave, can you...?

DJ: In fact, it did. Many of them probably were killed. But they would have been killed by the surrounding shopping centers, which were just totally surrounding between Crestwood and West County and so forth. That was a time where there were probably four shoe stores in Kirkwood and several children's stores. Since then I think through strong encouragement by the city and Chamber of Commerce, of encouraging specialty and service shops to come in, ones that were not competing directly against Crestwood Shopping Center and West County Shopping Center, and I think as you walk up and down the street now, you don't find the kind of stores that were here twenty-five years ago at all, and yet many successful stores [are] there now.

RB: But now, let me ask you: This open-air market, does it include a farmers' market-type thing?

HJ: That's exactly what it is, is a farmers' market. That was opposed very strenuously again for competition reasons by the supermarkets and the grocery stores, but people also felt that would bring in rats; it would deteriorate the surrounding neighborhoods. And that was very strongly opposed. Do you remember it that way, Dave? I was on the city council through a special meeting one afternoon and I brought up legislation which brought the financing for it. Actually, Joyce Flaherty is the person -- who was the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce -- [she] had seen an open-air market over in U City [University City] and other places in the country, and she was really, in *my* opinion, the one that brought that idea to it in the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce picked up the idea and ran with it.

RB: Now, when did that [take place]?

HJ: That would have been back in the early '70s also.

RB: Somewhere around '72, '73... Between '70...

HJ: '72 and '76, right.

RB: Now, that development, though, seems to give a little balance. For example, those that thought the Target sort of store would be too much competition for them as small business operators, but here is an open market which really is based on very small sellers.

HJ: That is true, except these were outside sellers that would be coming in. I think maybe the opposition was more just from the community of "Gee, we don't know if we want that

kind of operation in our town.” Well, it has become really one of the most popular things.

RB: People come from elsewhere.

HJ: People come from elsewhere. Our planning was they would come to Kirkwood, buy their produce, and then come up into the business community and shop elsewhere. Well, it really didn't work there. They came, got out of their car, went to the market, got back in their car and went and shopped somewhere else. So it wasn't the magnet that those of us that were involved thought it would be, but it became a very, very popular addition to the community.

[Tape meter, 250]

Another just kind of a side comment: The people that most strongly attacked the Target store and thought -- well, the old arguments that people always bring of “Not in my backyard” of development -- ultimately became the strongest supporters of the Target store. I remember clearly seeing some of the people that were up shaking their fist at me and others on the council saying, “You can't do this to us!” were pushing shopping carts around the new Target store with big smiles on their face saying, “Ain't this great!”
(chuckles)

RB: That's right, it's just hard to get away from Wal-Marts and different [stores] when you need them.

DJ: You can look at that open-air market when you leave. It's just at the other end of this next block. Only open Thursday, Friday, Saturday. But you can see the structure and get a good idea of what it's about.

RB: It does look very interesting. I've never had a chance to be there while it was open, but I look forward to that.

HJ: You know, on my list I put... Of course, these are personal opinions. One was "Who were the most influential organizations in town?" And another was "Who were the most influential people?" I will give you my views. Dave can fill in what he thinks. I feel that the most influential organization *definitely* was the Chamber of Commerce. That affected *everything* that went on in this town. Four of the mayors came from Chamber of Commerce leadership, so there was a definite link and a close lobbying... You know, the same people that were the businesspeople were Chamber of Commerce people, and ultimately became city council members. It probably worked that way in all small towns, but it certainly worked that way [in Kirkwood.] We had a very strong and active Chamber of Commerce, so the creating of ideas that came out the Chamber of Commerce eventually were sold to the council and the mayor to say, "This is the way that we want to go."

RB: But on the other hand you could have a town where it would have been the Bar, the legal profession, that had come into power.

HJ: Mm-hmm. That is true.

DJ: And that's what it was prior to Bob Reim's time.

HJ: Mm-hmm. And the other group in my opinion was the League of Women Voters. There was a group back in that period of time that were very politically active, a bunch of young women that were just supportive. And they worked in many ways hand-in-hand with the Chamber. Kind of the same people that led the Chamber of Commerce. Kind

was a double whammy of influence in the community. Back in those times, I always said the word “business” was a dirty word in town. And it was in a lot of the suburban bedroom communities. “We don’t need business. We’re a bedroom community. We shop elsewhere; we work elsewhere. This town doesn’t need a viable business community.” Well, the whole structure of government there was supported by sales tax. And if you didn’t have a strong business community, you didn’t get the sales tax and the government couldn’t operate.

[Tape meter, 300]

Fortunately, the people at those times on the Chamber of Commerce and in the city hall were aware of that, that the sales tax was the king! I always look and I don’t want to be critical of Webster Groves, our next-door neighbor... They did not have that. They were not sold on that. They turned their back on potential business and paid dearly for it for another twenty years. Eventually [they] came around in their... *[To his brother]* Would you look at it the same way?

DJ: Yeah. I think Webster [Groves] tended...⁷ Their officials for thirty years tended to listen to the community when they said, “Not in my backyard. We don’t want change.” In Kirkwood, they had some leaders including Bob and Phil and Herb that said, “We’ve got to go out and talk with the people and explain why we need to change this.” And did a good selling job on it to the community.

⁷ Throughout the interview the Jones brothers referred to Webster Groves as “Webster.” At one time there was a separate community by this name, but in 1896 it merged with Old Orchard, Webster Park, Tuxedo Park, and Selma to form Webster Groves. Apparently St. Louis county residents now use “Webster” as an abbreviation when speaking. Source: <http://mo-webstergroves.civicplus.com/index.asp?ID=199> Accessed 24 November 2003.

RB: So that plays into this other question you had: “How does one account for Kirkwood’s prominence in the county?” Does that have something to do with it?

HJ: Mm-hmm. Certainly I think Kirkwood led the way on many, many issues that were controversial in the county. Kirkwood led the way and was more progressive, and certainly Bob Reim was the first one to come along to have that progressive leadership. And others followed him. I certainly was one of them that kind of (chuckling) sat at the foot of Bob Reim and learned a lot from him. And people would still argue with this today, I guess, saying, “Leaders are there to be guided by what their constituency wants.” The constituency doesn’t often know all of the facts or just disagrees with progress certainly in small towns. It wasn’t force-fed, I would say it was more of an education process. Wouldn’t you, Dave?

DJ: Yeah.

HJ That really said, “Look, folks. It’s not just the business district that dies. Then it goes out. It’s a cancer in the middle of your town and it starts going out into the neighborhoods. And I think at that time it was going out into the neighborhood.

DJ: No question about it.

HJ: The neighborhoods were beginning to deteriorate. Again, it was a hundred-year old town and it could have really gone a long way. Which then leads to at that same time the advent of condominium growth in suburban areas. What happened in Kirkwood when condominium development came along, I happened to be on the Planning and Zoning Commission at that time.

RB: About what time period was that?

HJ: That would have been prior to 1972, and Bob Reim was mayor.⁸

[Tape meter, 350]

Kirkwood had a lot of pockets of either poverty or deterioration as all communities did, but the condominium developers came in and fortunately picked those pockets of substandard property to say, “We want to come in and put [in] a condominium.” The city was progressive enough, in my opinion, to say, “That *will* be better for our community, to have a condominium even though the community is not real wild about having condominiums or apartments.” But specifically condominiums. The first one, I believe, was right by the Kirkwood Park. [It] was Parkside, which was really a high quality one. And I happened to be on the subcommittee of the Planning and Zoning that approved that. That was built, and people said, “Well, that’s not so bad.” And some others came. In each case, in my opinion, it was a *dramatic* improvement of the use of property and the appearance of property [when compared to] that [which] was there before. Ultimately it got a little bit out of hand, and really when I was in [as] mayor and we put a moratorium and put a dead stop to condominiums...

[Tape meter, 376. End Side Two, Tape One of Three]

[Tape meter, 001. Begin Side One, Tape Two of Three]

DJ: The only comment [I have] on the condominiums: I think as it developed they became very desirable because you had many of the older citizens that ended up selling their old homes here with young people buying them and still staying in the community, having the nice choice of condominiums to still be a part of community.

⁸ Placing this circa 1968 to 1972.

RB: So that was pretty early for condominiums, right? I mean, if you're talking about the '60s or even the mid-'60s. Urban renewal is what we're talking about here.

HJ: It would have been right kind of at the end of the whole urban renewal process, right. And again, there was not a community around... We're *totally* surrounded by communities that had an outright ban on condominiums. In Kirkwood, it was allowing it to happen under very strict guidance and controls... And there were probably some mistakes that were made, but not very many.

RB: And you decided then in your term as mayor to have a moratorium...on condominiums.

HJ: Mm-hmm. Because what they were doing was running out of the old deteriorated property and they were starting to buy up big old historic homes on big lots in totally residential areas. At that time we rewrote the whole zoning ordinance, and put a moratorium [on condominiums], and drew the lines in saying, "This is where we will allow business to grow in the town. This is where we will allow multi-family [structures.] If you're a developer, don't even come to us unless what you want to do is within these areas." And we were hardnosed about it.

RB: So...when you look at it today, you see that you have been able to maintain a good selection of historic properties including in-town commercial-type properties as well as residential.

HJ: Mm-hmm, that's right. During that time... And Bob Reim was the first one to bring in city planners [and] "experts" to say, "Here's how your town should be redeveloped." And what they would say [is], "You have a core of business and you surround that by multi-family [structures], which is then surrounded by single family." So we did that.

And if you drive around Kirkwood, the multi-family pretty much surrounds the center of town where people can walk into town and support the downtown community. And that's pretty much the way it works. In *my* opinion, the experts gave us a lot of good advice and a lot of bad advice. Which we paid high prices to get it!

RB: Kept paying for it in some cases.

HJ: That is right! Because when you're taking a hundred year old downtown business district and try to revitalize it, small business owners aren't very good at... And just have no experience in that. So...even though we had a hired professional from our downtown business district who was good at a... But we did hire in professionals saying, "Here's what you ought to do."

I want to digress a minute. When we did this downtown district, [it] was right at the time when revenue sharing from the federal government -- meaning the revenue sharing concept was you send your money to the federal government, [and] they would in turn send back to the towns. Depending on the size of the town and the population and so on, a certain amount of that...the local government would decide how [it would] be spent. That was the big thing back in those times. And the towns that had their act together got more money from revenue sharing and community development funds. And we were right there at the right place at the right time with a plan that we could take to these agencies and say, "We're redeveloping our downtown. Here's our exact plan." We received *hundreds* of thousands of dollars that other cities did not get because we had a plan. When we talk about why is Kirkwood the leader, [it is because] other cities were slow on the pickup on that. Eventually they saw what we were doing and started doing it,

but we had the head start when the money was really flowing. So there were probably 2,000 trees planted in the downtown area, because we felt we had to beautify the area.

The streets were reconfigured, redesigned. I remember very clearly a group of us at one time were considering... You know that downtown Columbia was “malled” at one time, one-way streets and all.⁹ We were going to do that to Kirkwood Road, which is a state highway. We were within really *days* of trying to do that mall [in] downtown Kirkwood. And what we did was send off a... One of our representatives went to a conference in Washington, D.C. of community development type [interests.]

[Tape meter, 050]

And he came back -- and in fact, he *called* and said, “Stop what you’re doing until I get back!” It was John Green that went, was sent out. He said, “They’re saying this is a mistake, that malls are not working.” And of course, most towns tore up their whole downtown mall eventually -- and we were on the brink of doing just that [creating a downtown mall.] (chuckles)

RB: Wouldn’t that have been a great challenge to the highway system?

HJ: (chuckling) Oh, absolutely! It was. Although we had had land planners who had come in with plans kind of along that line, but Kirkwood controls the highway system [within the city limits.] Lindbergh Boulevard,...the only full north-south road in St. Louis County, Kirkwood controls that part that is in our city. And that is why Kirkwood Road has remained Kirkwood Road [within our city limits but is Lindbergh Boulevard]

⁹ Referring to the practice of defining a commercial area with one-way streets, thereby creating a pedestrian mall of sorts. This was usually done in an effort to revitalize a business district. However, it has generally been an unsuccessful approach since it actually tended to choke traffic, thereby discouraging use of the area.

everyplace else in St. Louis County. *[To his brother]* How many miles of that would that be? Twenty miles?

DJ: The _____ highway?

HJ: Well, Lindbergh from...

DJ: At least twenty.

HJ: At least twenty. And Kirkwood has held a tight fist. County executives off and on through the years have tried to attack that. Part of the reason is again the Chamber of Commerce, they... If you would turn the highway, and you've seen it in other towns where a fast moving highway runs through the downtown of cities and just destroys it. The way the buildings were, there was no way you could widen Kirkwood Road. And we just fought it. I remember telling Gene McNary while I was mayor... [He] was having to deal with it. Part of his was personal. He had to drive down it. And of course, we have the railroad tracks. Whenever a train comes through, everything stops.

DJ: Thirty-five times every twenty-four hours! (chuckles)

HJ: Thirty-five times a day a train comes through Kirkwood *today*.

RB: *Today?*

DJ: Yeah!

RB: Wow, it's that active?

DJ: Well, freight trains... You know, we get four Amtraks, but the freight trains... You had one while we're sitting here, and here comes another one right now! (laughs)

RB: Wow!

[Background sound of train rumbling through area.]

HJ: So we were being very parochial in that, taking care of ourselves, kind of saying to the rest of the county, "The hell with you. We're not going to let you destroy our downtown area." And that has stayed solid through that whole history.

RB: Is there a plan to build a viaduct?

HJ: Oh, yes. When the planners were coming in, they had talked about building a bridge which would start up at the north end of our downtown district and end at the south end, and totally... You know, we would be under the viaduct, which was not very appealing. Not appealing at all.

DJ: This is the coal train coming through.

RB: I see.

DJ: The Union Electric plant at Labadie, Missouri -- which is their largest power plant, a coal operated plant -- receives on average two trainloads of coal a day there.

HJ: And they go right through our downtown! (laughs)

RB: Are they able to keep the numbers of cars down? Or is that within your...?

DJ: You mean coming through here? No, that's railroad use. That works for them. On average it's probably -- I would guess from watching it for years -- about eighty-five to ninety cars that are in a freight train.

RB: Because, gosh, if you could keep the numbers down, maybe that would...

DJ: But there's an overpass right a block here and another one two blocks and another pass two blocks that way, so... (laughing) So the locals don't come up and down Geyer Road at all!

HJ: The locals know how to deal with it. Everybody else sits in line waiting for the train to pass and get infuriated by it. And historically through the last thirty years -- really a hundred years -- we're a railroad town. One thing that we learned and that I learned in a lesson -- well, in city hall -- is you don't fight the railroads and win. *Ever*. Back in the railroad days where [they were] "King of the World" and they still think they are and act like it. I mean, even to get them to cut the weeds on their right of way, you don't win.

DJ: This is *the* Amtrak station in St. Louis, too.

HJ: Right.

DJ: There's one right downtown, but everybody that catches Amtrak catches the train here in Kirkwood.

HJ: And there is a reason why... You know, there was a station in every municipality. There are ninety-one municipalities. Not all of them had train tracks through them. This is the only one that survived, and I would credit Bud Barnes and the community for *this* remaining as the viable train station and the only train station.

[Tape meter, 100]

RB: Is that when Mr. Barnes in state office?

HJ: He was in office. Of course, he kept the passenger service. He was very instrumental, I think, in keeping that train running. One by one, the other stations died off. The Kirkwood community has pumped in -- city and residents -- thousands of dollars of private money into this station to make it... You know, when they were going to come in put on the low bid for a new roof -- and it was a slate roof historically on there -- the city residents ponied up the difference, \$10,000 or whatever difference, to put in a slate roof.

Put in thousands of dollars in beautification: painted the building, steam cleaned the building. And it got the attention of the Amtrak people. Of course, we were strategically located, also, but it was an effort led by Bud Barnes in my opinion that kept it. And still is today. It's ten times better than the downtown St. Louis Amtrak station.

RB: Its uniqueness could be of great benefit in the future.

DJ: Mm-hmm.

HJ: That is right. This passenger service is subsidized and someday it's going to die probably. The government...

RB: Or they'll retool and do something else. In that case they'll have to probably follow...

HJ: Do trains still come into Columbia?

RB: No. In Jeff[erson] City, though, they pass through there.

DJ: Well, that's just track.

RB: And there's quite an interest in it, too. People taking the train...

HJ: *[To his brother]* Well, what was it is when we were in school?

DJ: Columbia was always just a "back in." Came in from Centralia... (laughs)

HJ: Yeah, the Wabash... _____ Wabash back in to Columbia. You could take the train from to Columbia back when we were in college.

RB: So one of your questions was about Kirkwood Junction, then.

HJ: Well, during this whole time when we trying to revitalize the downtown area, we came with the theme [of] "Well, we don't have new buildings. What we better sell is...bring back the 1890s look." And we did that. The old cloth awnings went back up on the buildings. We encouraged people not to put a new façade on their building [but rather to]

bring back the old façade. And part of that was: the train station became the trademark and the logo for the downtown district. We wanted to come up with a name and identity, and it was a contest. It was a PR [public relations] man for Casey's Sporting Goods store who was walking the tracks trying to come up with an idea, and about three blocks from here is a railroad sign identifying... Just a little white sign saying "Kirkwood Junction." He spotted that and said, "That's our heritage. We're a railroad town going back to 1865. It was called Kirkwood Junction by the railroad then. Let's bring it back."

RB: Who was this, now?

HJ: I can't remember his name. *[To his brother]* Can you?

DJ: Ken Connor? Who are you talking about?

HJ: No, a fellow that worked for Ken Connor.

DJ: Oh, okay. I'm not sure who it was.

HJ: Not _____ Todd _____, but the guy before him. I can research the name if it's important, but anyway...

RB: About what time was that, now?

HJ That would have been back in the 1970s when we started our downtown district. When the taxing started, when the revenue sharing money was coming, when we spiffing up, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars in the downtown district. When the Target store was built -- Target, Casey's, other [businesses], fast foods -- when they came in, the district went to them and said, "We're an 1890s look. We want you to follow that." So Target put an old railroad baggage cart out in front. The McDonalds hamburger store put in a railroad theme motif. The bank building... Commerce Bank was building a new

building. They were going to come in with a new glass building, and we said, “No, that’s not the look we want in downtown.” So they built a traditional looking building that fit in with the theme.

[Tape meter, 150]

RB: So that’s one way to accommodate the new business, by making it fit in.

HJ: That is exactly right. And we felt “We can’t look like the West County Shopping Center or the Frontenac Plaza. We don’t have the dollars nor do we... We’d have to tear down the whole town.” The decision was to build on what we already had, bring it back. And the open-air market fit in with that whole plan. And it’s basically worked. *[To his brother]* Would you...?

DJ: Mm-hmm, yeah, absolutely.

HJ: Would you agree with that, Dave?

DJ: Yeah, what people love about living in Kirkwood is it’s like living in an out-state town. There’s a business district. And there are probably only three other communities -- maybe Ferguson, Florissant, Webster [Groves] and Kirkwood -- that still have a downtown.

HJ: Right. And there are ninety municipalities in St. Louis County.

DJ: And this is by far the one that’s the healthiest, I think, of all of them. People *love* it. It’s just... It’s like living out-state, and yet you’re right in St. Louis, and they love that.

HJ: Two things I wanted to point [out]: Since I was here and involved through all of that, people from all over the country from other downtown districts have come to Kirkwood and said, “We’ve heard about you. We like what you’ve done. You tell us how it

happened in Kirkwood.” And I’ve talked to people from both coasts and people in between that have come and said, “We’ve heard about Kirkwood. You tell us what you did.”

The other thing that I wanted to back up to and one of my questions was “Who were the most significant leaders, the individuals?” And Bob Reim is certainly the one who started it all in my opinion.

DJ: No question.

HJ: And Dave agrees. Keeping in mind we’re talking about a competitor. He was in the printing business.

DJ: He was *enormously* successful. It’s the biggest printing company in St. Louis, and ranks in probably the top hundred in the country.

HJ And when he got elected, he came in with that press group which you remembered, and that ended up kind of the old guard against the new guard. The young Turks were coming in running the city in a then near-hundred year old town. That whole administration was very controversial because they kept coming up with things, and the old guard didn’t want it to happen for a variety of reasons. What he and that administration brought in was, they said, “We’ve got these people up here screaming at us, shaking their fist at us. We’ve got to somehow get them on our team.” So they appointed them to commissions. And they set up a commission for everything under the sun, whether it was beautification or... And all of a sudden these people were back inside the city hall on a commission. That really started just the whole involvement of the community -- being involved with city hall, probably more than any other city in St.

Louis [County] certainly. Bob Reim and his group brought that. Then we started developing the downtown. Things started working, and people started moving to town *because* of the community involvement, that you could be involved. There were really kind of two separate groups. There was the city hall group and a very strong school group. Two major government agencies in *any* town... Usually they were separate people.

[Tape meter, 200]

Frequently they were at odds with each other, but we were very fortunate in Kirkwood to have just *outstanding* leadership from both of those sides. You can go through in history, and every other city ultimately had controversy. [They] had a bunch of kind of off-the-wall leaders, or dishonest leaders in some cases. Kirkwood has been blessed all through the history to have honest leadership in their city or in their school district.

[Sounds of flipping paper.]

DJ: You just had this program, which was a city annual report in 1965 when Bob Reim was mayor. And it just shows (laughing) a list of the committees!

RB: Well, here they're numbered. Oh, no, those are area chairmen. There were eighty-two area chairmen of various groups, and there [is] a page and a half in small print of many, many, many committees. So that was actually the structure of decision-making, was these committees. I know Judge Edwards and Mr. Reim also...

HJ: Dave was on the city council at that time.

RB: Now, how has that structure...? Has it continued? I mean, is that a legacy from them?

HJ: It is a legacy from them that has continued, and is in *my* view the heart of the whole success and development of our town. The community involvement with strong leadership at the top... Since those people involved in the community are kind of on the team, and the leadership of the community is saying, "Here is the direction we feel the town needs to go." And they got the support of the community because...they were on the team and they said, "Yes, we agree with you." Or sometimes they would disagree, but they would work it out.

Our kids now are the next generation coming in. They're forty years old. They're equally involved in the community and want to be involved in the community. And I think the strength of the whole town is that the young people, the people out of high school, are saying, "After I go to college, I want to come back to Kirkwood." In a lot of towns, the young people want to get out of town as quick as possible. But it's not that way in Kirkwood. They want to come back and as soon as they can afford to because Kirkwood real estate is ten to twenty percent higher than maybe even the next adjacent community, because of that demand for the real estate.

RB: Now, how do you feel about that? For example, your children...will establish here in town. But are there some people whose children will not be able to? I've seen that happen in towns where it is a good place to live, values go up, but then [people cannot afford to purchase a home there.]

DJ: Kirkwood is not really a financially upscale town. There are *huge* areas of houses you could buy for under \$110,000, which in the St. Louis area is not a whole lot for a house.

[Tape meter, 250]

And you can buy houses for \$85,000 to \$100,000 here in Kirkwood. So it's not that they're all fine old homes from the 1860s selling for \$400,000. There is a *total* cross section of home prices here. Even the ones that are selling for \$100,000 here or \$85,000 you could probably buy for \$65,000 in another community, but it still puts it within the realm of possibility. Within the reach of someone.

RB: _____ diversity of housing.

DJ The housing stock is *totally* across the board.

RB: Still there's a trend, I think, in a lot of places, especially that have done like Kirkwood... Improve living conditions, quality of life is high, and that kind of thing. Some people call it in certain areas, "gentrification." I think part of the trend would be that people from outside see it as a nice place, and so there is a lot of movement to it from, say, professionals or higher status people; and the people that live there then have more and more difficulties either staying or their...offspring may not be able to stay. Do you see that trend at all here in Kirkwood?

HJ: Somehow a significant number...either through parent help or just through their own hard efforts eventually get back into town. Dave's daughter is...right now buying a house in Kirkwood. First house she...

DJ: But you still have large neighborhoods of smaller houses that really don't lend themselves to be -- because of lot size and so forth -- of really being upscale. So it's more in the bigger, older homes you're seeing younger couples coming in and pouring money into them. And certainly everybody is taking care... Everybody that's owned a house for very long is kind of astonished at what their house can be sold for now!

(chuckles) And they tend to take care of them better than they probably did forty years ago.

HJ: Well, and one thing that has caused that... Now almost any community you go to -- certainly in the suburbs, I don't know how it is out-state -- they have a minimum housing code. And when you sell your house, an inspector comes in and gives you a laundry list of things you must do before that house can be reoccupied. Kirkwood was one of the first communities in St. Louis County to have a minimum housing code. That goes back again to the Reim administration. Therefore, the housing stock has not deteriorated in town. Because of the turnover, every time it's sold, it's upgraded, improved.

DJ: And Kirkwood has terrific hammer in backing up their code standards in that Kirkwood is the only community in all of St. Louis that has their own electric and water department. (chuckles) So they're capable of saying, "You don't get any services until you..." There's no other community in St. Louis that has that ability. (laughs)

HJ: Has that hammer. And it is a big hammer!

RB: You don't belong to a certain co-op that has a certain independence there.

HJ: That's right. We distribute our own electric into three-quarters of the town. Part of it is served by Union Electric. But you still buy your water from town. And you don't live very well if you don't have the water and electric!

[Tape meter, 300]

DJ: (laughs)

HJ: (chuckles) So it has worked. And Kirkwood again was very progressive. It took other cities years before they adopted that minimum housing code. So it has done wonders for

just the housing stock in our community. And the neighborhoods I don't think have *ever* been... We've lived here for sixty-plus years. I don't think the neighborhoods have *ever* looked as good in Kirkwood as they look in 1998. And there's a variety of reasons for that. That minimum housing code is one of them. A viable business district is another. A viable school district is another. And all of those are tied together, which brings me to the point of who are the most influential community leaders.

RB: Bob Reim stands out. I'm curious to know else...

HJ: Okay. Bud Barnes stands out. He was working strictly in another arena, in the state government arena. But he was out there slugging it out for what's good for Kirkwood as were the other state representatives. So then there's Bob Snyder, Bud Barnes...

DJ: Well, and Herb won't say it, but he *clearly* was the guy that picked up the torch from Bob Reim. There's no question about that. Phil Hallof was a good mayor but not really an aggressive progressive guy. He was very responsive to the community. He listened to the more progressive people -- to the Bob Reims, and to the Herbs -- when he was mayor and Herb was on his council. But clearly Herb was the guy that picked up the torch, in my opinion _____.

HJ: Well, I'm going to stay quiet on that. Another name from the school side in my opinion -- and Dave may [or may not agree] -- is a school superintendent named Tom Keating, who died suddenly really at the peak of his career. [*To his brother*] But wouldn't you say that Tom Keating was one of the more dynamic leaders in the community?

DJ: Mm-hmm.

HJ: Francis [A.] Scheidegger -- whose name you may be familiar with -- he was on the city council for twenty-five years.¹⁰ Through those years -- he is now in his seventies -- he represented, I believe, the... I don't know how to put it. Kind of represented...the interests of the more common man in the community, and stood up for their rights. [*To his brother*] Would you agree with that?

DJ: Absolutely.

HJ: Another person that I would...

RB: But his role, though... Was he not the legal coun[sel]...? No, he wasn't the one that...

HJ: No, no.

[Tape meter, 350]

DJ: No, he was the recycling guy. He's the one that started the recycling center. We have one of the premier recycling centers probably in the state, and he has visited that -- although he's been out of office -- he has been there twice a day for thirty years, ever since the day it opened! (chuckles)

RB: He's quite old now, isn't he?

DJ: Yes, he is, but still active as a photographer here in Kirkwood. But the recycling center and the open-air market would be interesting for you. They're only a couple blocks apart. Swing by as you...

[Tape meter, 360. End Side One, Tape Two of Three.]

[Tape meter, 001. Begin Side Two, Tape Two of Three.]

¹⁰ Scheidegger's obituary may be found in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, January 14, 1999, page B1.

DJ: ...the grade coming into Kirkwood. And that was really a controversial part of Kirkwood's history because of the route chosen. Comes from a town called Valley Park, and it is the greatest uphill railroad grade this side of the Rocky Mountains, (laughing) and that's why these trains...

RB: They're pretty slow when get to this...?

DJ: A lot of times... The other one wasn't going this slow, and this one obviously has a greater load and it is... For like fifty years they had to keep -- until the diesels came in -- they had to keep steam engines down at Valley Park around the clock...to help boost the trains up this grade into Kirkwood.

RB: Really, I didn't even think of that.

DJ: (laughing) So you can hear our windows... We've heard these windows rattling...!

HJ: And that Kirkwood Hill, [which] is what it's called in the railroad world, is known throughout America. (chuckles) There used to be a roundtable. When we were growing up there was a roundtable -- at the site of where the open-air market is -- where they would put that engine on and manually turn it around so it could go back down.

There was another name on influential people that I put in. I would call him a "hired gun." He's the city administrator -- the current one -- Mike Brown. I believe that he has brought, through his administrative leadership, Kirkwood to the heights that *we* feel it has gained. *[To his brother]* Would you agree or disagree with that?

DJ: Mm-hmm.

HJ: He is a very quiet behind the scenes man, but... He was hired by my administration. He was there as -- he had come from Webster [Groves] -- and was just the city administrator.

One thing we have not talked about is the charter, the change in the charter. I'll back up to that to say that the League of Women Voters were the ones that were responsible, in my opinion, for getting that ultimately onto the ballot. I worked with them, Bob Reim worked with them, and others did. It was somewhat controversial in the beginning. Kirkwood was only one of three cities in the state of Missouri that had the old council form of government. Everyone else had gone to a more updated form of government...

RB: City administrator.

HJ: The city administrator. And the League of Women Voters started just through a petition process picking up steam, [and] ultimately brought it to a vote. And ultimately it was passed. I was on that charter commission, [and] was involved from the very beginning and then was the first mayor to get elected *after* the new charter [was passed.]

RB: Let me put a little bit of a date in there, chronology, then. If you were on the first charter commission... If I recall...

HJ: Oh, there had been a charter commission prior to that back in the '60s.

RB: Yes, 'cause I was talking with Mr. Reim and others. I think it was maybe even in the late, late '50s, say '59 or so, even before the election. They had tried to have a charter established...

HJ: That's correct.

RB: ...unsuccessfully.

HJ: That's right.

RB: And that was one of the things that encouraged them to get into politics and decide to [take the attitude of] “Well, let’s join them, then, if we can’t...”

HJ: That is exactly right. That was when Dave and I were just first into local politics, [the] local scene. At that time we still ran the newspaper. And this newspaper opposed the new charter at that time. The old guard of the city was very strongly against it. Again, it was kind of the young Turks coming on, trying to bring in progress into the city. At that time, the old guard prevailed, and [it was] voted...down fairly significantly as I recall. They really slam-dunked it into defeat. And that set from the ‘50s to the ‘80s... It was discussed often when I was on the city council. At that time the city was, oh, probably a \$15 million business. Elected officials with no particular expertise were running whole departments of the city, and it just didn’t make any sense at all.

RB: It didn’t improve as time went on.

HJ: No, it did not improve. The city kept getting bigger, more technical, more involved, and yet you had people that were just totally unqualified. Every now and then you’d get lucky and have an engineer maybe get elected or an architect elected who some expertise, but more often than not... Like...while I was on the city council [I] was in charge of the Police and Fire [Departments.] Well, I had no absolutely no experience in... What you had then were the department heads...running the city, influencing their councilman who was their commissioner...

[Tape meter, 050]

So anyway it did change. The League of Women Voters certainly get the credit.

RB: And did they begin this new movement then in the late '70s? Or would that have been...after you were mayor?

HJ: You know, I'm not real good on dates. No, it was before [I was mayor.] I went in in '84, so that election would have been like in '82 or '83.

RB: Okay, so now you served on the council during the '70s then?

HJ: Right, and then I dropped off the council...

RB: [You served on the council from] '72 to '76.

HJ: ...for eight years. And then got back involved again in 1984 as mayor.

RB: So in the intervening time you served then on this...charter commission.

HJ: That's right. Just the two years before, and it was about a two-year process. I felt it was kind of what spurred me to run as mayor. It was a fairly close vote and whoever was in the city hall, even though the charter was changed, could have -- and it did happen in other cities, Webster [Groves] specifically -- kind of ignored the charter, and they kept running things the old way. So some of us got elected to say, "The charter had been changed. We're going to run the city by the way the charter [states.]" We hired Mike Brown, made him the Chief Administrative Officer.

RB: So you were the first mayor then...to hire?

HJ: To hire a city administrator who had the power to really...run the city.

RB: And he is still in office today?

HJ: He is still there today.

RB: That's a good stretch.

HJ: Yes, it is. What happened in that change is that the elected officials gave up a great deal of power. They were...telling the parks commissioner what to do, the street guy what to do; and all of a sudden they gave up that power and the administrator was their boss, not the councilmen or the mayor. So it really took a lot of commitment to kind of step away. You may not always agree with how he ran it, but he was the guy in charge so you had to let him do it. We had to come down on councilmen from time to time who would try to overstep and jump by the administrator.

RB: But that has also been quite a cooperation...required...[for] the administrator to [work] with the...[council.] Because council or the elected officers are...

HJ: Yeah. The way it works is you hire him to do it, and you may not like some of the things he does, but on the big picture he's got to keep the mayor and council happy or they find someone else who runs it more to their liking. And we just happened to have... Well, he ultimately was named as one of the top administrators in the state. You know, we had a real winner. We were very fortunate. There was talk about going on a nationwide search for our city administrator. We happened to be very fortunate to recognize the talents that he had and hire a guy that sitting in the seat right in front of us.

RB: So he was here from Kirkwood?

HJ: Yeah, he had come over from Webster [Groves] as the assistant administrative... *[To his brother]* Is that, Dave, pretty much the way you would recall that whole...?

DJ: Mm-hmm.

RB: There's another thing that has a kind of a historical trajectory that I've picked up in earlier interviews...that you've mentioned here also, and that's about Meacham Park. They had begun to extend services there, during the Reim administration.

HJ: That is correct. As a result of a very tragic fire, some young children were killed...because someone had stolen the battery out of the fire truck of the Meacham Park Fire [Department]. That was during Bob Reim's administration, and he saw to it that fire service went to Meacham Park and certain other kind of limited services did go. The history of Meacham Park was: It was a predominantly black community, [a] poor black community on the edge of town. Historically they were the servants for the people that lived in Kirkwood. As progress came, the Chrysler plant came, that makeup of that community changed from kind of an old generation-after-generation to a new face of people -- still black -- but crime, drugs... Everything that comes with a suburban ghetto came into Meacham Park, which is just a mile and a half from where we're sitting.

[Tape meter, 100]

DJ: And even though it wasn't part of Kirkwood, it *was* part of Kirkwood School District. So it had a great impact on the city.

RB: It's in the county [at that time], and yet it's not a part of anything else either, is it?

DJ: Correct. It was just part of St. Louis County.

RB: When did the Chrysler plant come in, I wonder?

HJ: Oh, back in the '60s.

DJ: Early '60s, yeah.

HJ: What happened during that time is that Kirkwood went and annexed a hundred foot strip, part of Meacham Park, which ran along Lindbergh [Boulevard], which had great business potential. That caused a wedge between the black community and the white community that up until the annexation time and maybe even up until today was an open wound of hatred of how the white man came in and stole the black man's only potential. It really wasn't that way. They were part of St. Louis County, an unincorporated area. It was not... Well, you will never convince the black leadership of the community that they didn't get royally screwed. And maybe they did.

RB: Now, when did that happen, that annexation?

HJ: That would have been in the '60s. It was a hundred foot strip. Just off of Lindbergh.

RB: So they didn't annex the entire community then?

HJ: No.

RB: And that was Kirkwood's annexation?

HJ: That was Kirkwood's annexation. I really can't remember if that was the administration prior to Reim's administration.

DJ: I don't believe in the various times it was brought up that Meacham Park had ever shown any interest in being annexed either. The community as a whole was not interested in being annexed.

HJ: Mm-hmm. There was no interest on really *either* side other than the people in the leadership position said, "Hey, the black students go to the Kirkwood schools; they live right next door." But it just really kind of kept looking the other way. Finally, the crime got so bad in Meacham Park where they would call the county police for an emergency

and they may show up tomorrow afternoon! And open drug deals. It was *really* a bad environment. Of course, that environment doesn't just stay within the boundaries of Meacham Park. We were right next-door. It was coming into Kirkwood. All of a sudden there became reason -- *real* reason -- for both communities to say, "Maybe we'd better do something about this." Kirkwood, of all the communities that surrounded Meacham Park, was the only community that said... Even though that same crime leaked out into their community, Kirkwood... And it was primarily because there had been a hundred years of intermingling of the two communities.

DJ: And the school district.

HJ: And the school district. That Kirkwood was the logical one. So that started out where I, in my opinion -- I was mayor at that time -- felt that both sides even though they felt the time maybe had come, there was stalling opposition and particularly in Meacham Park. And through a process of really education on both sides that [total] annexation was passed [in 1992] with a seventy percent majority on both sides. Incredible in today's electoral process, an incredible majority.

RB: And that was an annexation of the entire community then?

HJ: Of the entire community. What we said to the Meacham Park residents, "We will give you the same services that any neighborhood in Kirkwood has, whether it's street, garbage pickup, water, electric, and most importantly police. This is what we will offer you." Even though there was still a great distrust, and it came out angrily in many public...

[Tape meter, 150]

You know, of how the white community had mistreated the black community. It finally prevailed and the annexation happened with the understanding that “we cannot afford to take on that responsibility. We’re going to have to bring in some commercial development along Lindbergh to help pay for that. You have to understand that there will be some development. There may even be some condemnation of land, but we will still uphold the integrity of the residential character,” such as it was, in the community.

RB: Who were their leaders? Were their leaders church people or...?

HJ: Primarily church people. There were a few... Joe Cole, Bill Jones are two names that come [to mind.]

DJ: But it was always a very fragmented leadership. Just bickering. No three of the leaders could ever get together and agree.

RB: Did they have any businesses there...from that community?

DJ: Barber shop and a bar, and that kind of... Just something serving that immediate area.

HJ: And apparently that characteristic of the black leaders was not just local. I’ve been told by [people] all over the country that that is why black communities [decline.] A primary reason [for] that [is] black leaders just will never march in the same direction for a common cause. And they *never* did in Meacham Park. Joe Cole and Bill Jones, who were the two most influential, were archenemies. Hardly ever spoke to each other. If one walked into a community meeting during this annexation [debate], the other one would get up and walk out.

RB: But somehow you were able to bring enough people together to have that kind of vote, seventy percent.

HJ: That's right. You know, I think it was mostly of saying, "Trust us. We will do what we say we're going to do." Whereas their response was, "Why should we trust you? The Kirkwood government has never been trustworthy before." In fact that, in my opinion, was not true. The Kirkwood government, the Kirkwood churches, the Kirkwood business community, and the Kirkwood service clubs went into that community year after year, pumping money into it, but it was always deemed as a handout, and looked upon that way. *[To his brother]* Would you basically agree with that?

DJ: Mm-hmm.

HJ: I know the Rotary Club and Lions Club and the churches did.

RB: I'd like to ask one question: Do you happen to know historically how that community came to be? In other words, I have the impression that it's not that ancient, Meacham Park, as a residential area.

HJ: As I understand... Do you recall, Dave? It was subdivided by a developer into small thirty-foot lots -- as just a promotional -- with the idea of selling it as another suburban community. And how it happened that it ended up as a predominantly -- almost a hundred percent -- black community, I don't know. We can research that, and the historical society can probably *[tell you.]*

RB: Well, I was just curious about it. Doing research in the Bootheel, I came across some kinds of hints, but I don't have any real facts to it. As you know, there was a lot of movement from the farm to the city. In fact, after mechanization, most people lost their jobs. A lot of these residents had moved up *[further north.]*

[Tape meter, 200]

DJ: Yeah, historically Kirkwood... Two blocks off the main street here, from Argonne [Drive heading] south, apparently were kind of where the black servants back to Civil War times lived. And...today there's still... It's gradually some white moving into that area, but there's still these two streets, Fillmore [Avenue] and Harrison [Avenue], that go back. As they go south, it kind of spreads out. There are more blacks in the south end of town. Of course, that's just across one of the main streets, Big Bend [Boulevard], beyond that. But I don't honestly know how Meacham Park started.

HJ: I think part of the property was slave land grants and there were other parts of the community where there were slave land grants.

RB: Okay, so it could have had an older history.

DJ: I'm sure that Kirkwood history book would tell that story. There's a hardbound book put out thirty-five years ago, I guess, on the history of Kirkwood.

RB: To me it's interesting...the relationship between Kirkwood and those people from that area. History has a bearing on it, I'm sure, depending on how it's viewed (chuckles) from his perspective.

HJ: And there is *still* to this day... There is in the process now -- and part of that whole annexation saying, "The city will aggressively try to develop the eastern part of Meacham Park for business." Well, as it turned out the next administration came in with a plan that was much more aggressive, in my opinion, than *we* visualized. It almost took up half of the...

DJ: The western end of it.

HJ: The western, yes. About half of the Meacham Park. And they would be right out the back door of *major* commercial development, which of course, is not considered a desirable thing to have happen to your residential area. Well, through tax increment financing it came up where hundreds of thousands of dollars would be pumped into the neighborhoods, but it became very controversial that once again the white community, the white business was coming in and trying to steal away their homestead, their land, although prior to annexation there had not been...a home sold in Meacham Park for years and years because [it]...was just [an] economically depressed poor neighborhood that nobody wanted to live in, and particularly with the crime nobody in their right *mind* would want to buy property there. There was community development and a lot of home rental and then a HUD [Housing and Urban Development] project that came in that really pushed the city under. It brought in the baddest of the bad from the downtown areas which really just changed the whole character.

RB: That would have been during the '60s?

HJ: '60s and '70s, right.

RB: HUD project, it would have been like a multi...

HJ: It was multi-family. The way the HUD operates -- when your name comes up for HUD, you may be living in north St. Louis and [they] say, "We have an apartment for you in Kirkwood." And [you] say, "Well, I don't want to move there." "Well, this is the way it works." So it brought in all kinds of...

RB: It lost its integrity somewhere in terms of the population.

[Tape meter, 250]

- HJ: Absolutely, absolutely. So therefore where[as before in] Meacham Park they all knew each other and had been there for generations, now there was a new element and for the most part a very bad element. Drugs, crime.
- DJ: It has immediate access at both ends onto I-44 [Interstate 44]. You pull out of Meacham Park and you're a block away from being on the interstate or you're going downtown, so transportation-wise, it made it very easy for people to...
- HJ: So when Kirkwood [annexed Meacham Park]... And I credit the Kirkwood residents. They went in with their eyes open, knowing [the problems that existed.] You know, and other communities were looking and saying, "Are you out of your mind? What are you doing talking about annexing an area like that?" Because there were other pockets in St. Louis that were similar to that that nobody would touch. And when you get seventy percent of the community saying, "We know the risks, but we feel in the long run everyone will be better off."
- DJ: And we certainly have taken a beating in the media in that the crime that's still out there is no longer reported as Meacham Park, but it's a murder in Kirkwood now, which distinguished that it's that. So that's been a little bit of a downer for the city reputation.
- RB: What are some of the positive outcomes since annexation out there?
- HJ: Well, certainly the crime has been cleaned up considerably, but not totally cleaned up. There is an early childhood center there called "Educare." [It takes children of] the young age [of] one to four, and [puts] them into an early childhood center to get a structured [environment.] These kids were coming out of [a situation of] having no [structured] background whatsoever into a top suburban education system, and they were

lost from day one. There's more and more efforts through tutoring and early childhood [centers] to help these kids, because those kids weren't just hurting themselves, they were hurting everyone else's kids by the fact that the school system was having to kind of crank down to accommodate these kids. So...I would say [that] the fact that the crime has been cleaned up and the education effort has been stepped up... Plus with the business developed, now thousands of dollars of TIF [Tax Increment Financing] money will ultimately be pumped into that area for the good of that *immediate* community. The money will not go anywhere else in Kirkwood. It will go right into that Meacham Park neighborhood.

RB: And was the city of Kirkwood instrumental in getting that grant or acquiring that...?

HJ: Well,...they went really on a nationwide search to bring in developers. And it *is* considered prime commercial property right on highway [Interstate] 44 and Lindbergh [Boulevard, which is] a major [St. Louis County traffic artery.] Except that because of the fragmented ownership... You know, developers like to go in a buy a cornfield.

[Tape meter, 300]

They don't want to have to deal with 150 homeowners, and particularly [those of] a minority where... In fact, the whole situation chased away -- what was the name of the...? Opus? Not Opus. Anyway, out of Milwaukee. A major developer came in, and it got... Racial implications [started] hitting the newspapers, and they pulled out. [They] said, "We don't need this. We'll go buy a cornfield somewhere."

RB: Do you see any...sort of integration moving from Meacham Park into other areas of Kirkwood?

HJ: Even before the annexation, it did in the south part of town. Particularly the southeast part of town is predominantly black than it ever was.

DJ: But definitely more upscale than Meacham Park.

HJ: More upscale, right.

DJ: So it's a logical step. Not in[to] the other part, into the white community where the homes are in many cases out of touch. But in some of the north areas where houses are not that expensive, no, you're not getting people from here [the south part of town] to there. But I think they move upscale from there [Meacham Park] into the south part of town, which is definitely not a problem part of town at all.

HJ: Of course, the whole HUD project would come in and buy up a house in a hundred percent white neighborhood and bring in the inner city black, and that happened all over the suburbs. And it really tore neighborhoods... It *really* did great damage to the neighborhoods, just [in] the conflict between this one family there. Totally a fish out of water situation.

RB: That's right, for both sides, I'm sure.

HJ: Absolutely. Now Kirkwood has been fortunate as far as our location. The north part of St. Louis County, as the blacks came out of the cities, they came more to the north end. And traditional cities like Kirkwood, Ferguson, and Florissant, have been *much* more hard hit by that population movement.

DJ: Not Kirkwood.

HJ: [*Correcting himself*] Kirkwood has been *less* impacted. Although the Kirkwood schools are twenty-five percent black as are every school district...

DJ: *[unintelligible statement]*

HJ: ... I think the minority population of Kirkwood, is about seven, maybe ten percent now.

RB: Okay, well, I'm looking over our list. We're running out of our second tape here pretty quickly.

HJ: You know, one thing that I would like to just mention.

[Tape meter, 350]

Fires are always a part of history in communities, and Kirkwood has had some *major* fires in the downtown area, any one of which could almost have burned down the whole downtown area. Would you agree, Dave?

DJ: Mm-hmm.

HJ: And I think just for the record they need to be mentioned. Dave, can you rattle those off as far as...?

DJ: You know, we saw...three of them right in these two blocks here, where the buildings are all just row-tight buildings. It's a miracle the whole town didn't go. This is in the last forty years since we were teenagers.

HJ: We were... When I mentioned we would work around the clock, night and day... We heard a huge explosion [and] ran out the door and saw that a building up on the corner, which is now a park, was totally engulfed in flame. We turned in the alarm, as did others. It was ten o'clock or eleven o'clock at night. I think we looked at each other and said, "This building is [in danger.] We're in jeopardy." Because the wind was this way. "This is going to burn down the whole downtown business district."

RB: That was in about 195_?

HJ Oh, this would have been...

DJ: '60s probably.

HJ: ... '60s or '70s. A building right behind us, a Kroger store, burned.

DJ: Right across the alley from us.

HJ: Right across the alley there, burned to the ground. Only the back wall...

[Tape meter, 377. End Side Two, Tape Two of Three.]

[Tape meter, 001. Begin Side One, Tape Three of Three.]

HJ: ... burned to the ground. And it's a credit to the Kirkwood Fire Department, I think, that this downtown, the whole heart of the town hadn't burned. It has happened in other Missouri communities.

RB: Right.

HJ: You probably know...more about that than I do.

RB: So the local fire department was here and they were responsive and able to...

DJ: They probably have saved the town at least four times. (chuckles)

HJ: That's right. So just a little sidelight, but you know, those fires are forgotten. We just happened to be here through the forty years when they happened and observed most of the fires.

DJ: The Walgreen's fire.

HJ: Oh, yeah! And then just two years ago a Walgreen's burned to the ground.

DJ: It was a torch! You could hear the aerosol cans exploding like small arms fire from four or five blocks away!

RB: Oh, my goodness!

HJ: I would touch on the Greentree Festival, which is probably in its fortieth, maybe closing in on the fiftieth year. I was the third chairman. Dave was the fifth chairman. I think.

[To his brother] Weren't you?

DJ: Somewhere.

HJ: I pose the question, "How has the Greentree Festival changed in thirty years?" And my answer would be other than getting bigger it has changed very little. It is still pretty much the same type of activities that went on in the first. [They] are still there. There's been a folklife...

RB: Element, there.

HJ: ... that has been added, and there have been refinements and improvements. But it's still basically the same festival, which attracts a 100,000 people during the two-week period from all over the county.

RB: Now, what about the part of it that has to do with reforestation? Talking with Mr. Reim, there, in the early days apparently it grew out of something that...

HJ: There was the elm blight. Dutch Elm, was it? Kirkwood again, being a heavily forested city, had a lot of trees...

RB: They had lost lots and lots of forest and then they set up one of these committees and one of these programs then to get out and also to help plant.

HJ: That is right. And the trees were sold at the Greentree Festival and still today there is a section that sells trees. But that is exactly how it got its name and its beginning is from the fact that the trees in our community were dying through blight.

RB: You say it hasn't changed very much over the years. Has it changed in...its...economic potential? Does it draw people from out of town? Or is it even considered to be that type of thing that would draw...?

HJ: It certainly draws from the St. Louis suburban area, wouldn't you say?

DJ: Yeah. 'Cause with 100,000 people there, and only 25,000 or so from Kirkwood, obviously there are a lot coming from [out of town.]

HJ: Part of that was the fiddlers group. Certainly they drew in people. They had a large tent.

DJ: Their following.

HJ: Had a strong following.

DJ: Craft show.

HJ: The craft show. So it certainly from this part of the region pulled in crafters, automobile enthusiasts. There's an antique car show. A pet show. So certainly all of those attracted people from outside the immediate city. And it is as popular today as it was forty years ago when it was first...

DJ: I think it almost -- to the people of Kirkwood -- almost [has] a factor of a reunion to it. I know that the kids in particular -- our grown kids, you know -- want to be there because they run into kids they knew in high school. They run into old friends, and that's the only time of year they may run into people. They say, "We never go up there that we don't run into somebody we haven't seen [in a long time.]" And that's true for us, too.

RB: And inevitably there'd be a certain number that leave Kirkwood and go elsewhere.

HJ: Mm-hmm.

RB: And so that serves as a sort of a reunion. What time of year is that again?

HJ: That's in the first two weeks in September.

RB: That's a good time for a reunion.

HJ: That is right. You know, I also talked [about the topic] on my list of questions most cities in America have annexed and have grown their boundaries. There have been some minor annexations -- the Meacham Park annexation -- but there have been vast stretches of land to the west of us that still remain part of unincorporated St. Louis County. And Kirkwood has looked... Our administration looked, [and there have] been many others [that] did, to expand. And there are a lot of reasons for cities to annex, to get the head count up, particularly when government money is flowing. Tax base. And with the highway 270 [Interstate 270], which is the outer belt highway which runs along part of the boundary of Kirkwood, is probably part of the reason making it very difficult for the city to serve those areas. Just by the boundaries of the railroad tracks and the interstate highway or inner belt highway, that just...

[Tape meter, 050]

And in fact the whole nature of the population was almost more of a rural type population. It just never did quite fit to annex those areas, and they still remain unincorporated.

RB: So you think it has something to do with the demography, the people that actually live out in those areas?

HJ: Certainly they opposed it because they didn't want the big city of Kirkwood "city-fying" their rural area, plus the taxes that came along with it.

RB: [That] would raise the taxes for them.

HJ: That is right. Although they had what by our standards we would say [was] inadequate fire and police protection. And they said, "It's fine with us. We like it just the way it is." Again, looking at it from the city point [of view,] looking at a land grab for the tax base, it just didn't work out. [It didn't] make sense to try to serve an area that was kind of remote from all of the services that we had.

RB: When was the last you all have tried?

HJ: Well, during my administration back from '84 to '92, we took a long, hard look at it, and in fact made... During that time there was real turmoil in whole county for consolidating all of the cities. And I was very much involved in that whole process. Then a -- what do they call that? A county commission that really kind of now controls and has to give approval before any annexation can take place.

DJ: Of course, the county hated to have those (chuckles) county properties annexed, because they lost... They've had a *greatly* diminished territory of their own.

RB: They have their own amount of revenue that comes from those areas, and support.

HJ: Just a couple other little things I had. "What happened to cause Lions Field at the high school to be renamed Lyons Field?" Well, the Lions Club of Kirkwood, which is spelled L-I-O-N-S, funded a scoreboard there. At that time, they said, "We will give the scoreboard if you will name it after Ernie Lyons." L-Y-O-N-S. *[To his brother]* Isn't that how he spelled his name? He was Dave's football coach, and probably few people in Kirkwood now would remember that whole process of how that happened. The Lions Club...had bought the uniforms for the Kirkwood High School marching band for years and years, and then bought the scoreboard.

RB: So it was just a coincidence...? (laughs)

HJ: And Ernie Lyons was a member of the Lions Club. He had died and that's how it all happened. But those little things kind through the cracks of history.

RB: That's right.

HJ: Anything else, Dave, that you...?

DJ: No.

RB: There's the Magic House.

HJ: Oh, yes.

RB: Let's see, now. How did the Magic House end up in Kirkwood?

HJ: Well, I'm currently president of the Magic House, which is now the third largest children's museum in the country. Two women, who were not Kirkwood residents... One was Jody Newman and the other was Barb Freund. [They] were part of the family of the Edison [Brothers] Shoe [Company] dynasty at that time in St. Louis. They thought that having a museum just for children, that [the] St. Louis area needed one, but they did not want to put it in the inner city in a big museum-type building. They wanted to put it into a Victorian-type house. As it turned out, we had a house [the George Lane Edwards House] on the market in Kirkwood in a safe neighborhood environment, in a residential environment.

DJ: Adjoining the middle school.

HJ: Right, adjoining the middle school, so it was kind of a nice match up. So they bought that property, got a grant -- interestingly, a \$10,000 grant from the Target stores. And Target was brand new in town at that time. In fact, I was on the council and the

community was kind of outraged. “What is our new store giving money to people we don’t even know?” Nobody knew what Magic House was or what the whole concept was. Well, it did happen, and it has now grown, and 400,000 people a year come to the Magic House in Kirkwood.

RB: So it started in the mid-‘70s, you’d say?

HJ: That would have been in the mid-‘70s, yes.¹¹

RB: And you’ve come to [be]...

HJ: I am the current chairman of the board of the Magic House.

[Tape meter, 100. Incident conversation omitted. Interview resumes, Tape meter 102.]

HJ: I think maybe we’ve covered... I think we’ve touched on what were the most controversial events in the past thirty years. The coming of the Target store and the first charter were probably...

DJ: Special business district.

HJ: And the special business district. And Dave and I happened to be right in the middle of all of those activities.

RB: We’ve hit an amazing number of these questions. (chuckles) I didn’t know if we would get to them. There’s a couple of items here about the swimming pool bond issue.

HJ: Yes.

RB: It failed in Kirkwood.

HJ: It failed for fifty years up until this year. A water park-type swimming pool passed by an overwhelming majority. Well, it wasn’t overwhelming, but a very strong majority.

¹¹ The Magic House was founded in 1975. Source: <http://www.magichouse.org> Accessed 21 November 2003.

DJ: Passed! (laughs)

HJ: It passed. There had been at least two or three runs at having this community swimming pool, a bond issue. Although Kirkwood has a swimming pool... During the time that I was on the city council we bought actually the site of the swimming pool that was outside the city limits, which caused a bit of controversy. But with some government money and the right pricing... But there were other efforts to put in a community pool, and they were defeated generally quietly and I feel for racial reasons. The community was just not ready to have that happen.

RB: Because in times past, I suppose, their strategy would be...to have two of them [swimming pools.] One for them and one for us.

HJ: That is right.

DJ: But we're talking in modern times.

[All talking simultaneously, portions unintelligible.]

RB: That's no longer possible.

DJ: We're talking the '60s and '70s.

RB: Right, right.

HJ: Although the racial issue never was voiced out loud, there's no question at least in our minds [among those of us] who were on the scene, that that was the reason that people were just not ready for that.

RB: So what you're seeing now in the approval of this thing is...a...

HJ: A total turn around.

RB: A renewed focus on those kinds of racial problems.

HJ: Absolutely. Which is now four years, six years after the annexation of Meacham Park.
So they all maybe are some way tied together.

RB: Might be related in some way.

HJ: That is right. A little better understanding of the diversity of the...

Another that I just mentioned, not a big thing, but we have a number of parks in Kirkwood. Kirkwood probably has more parkland than any other municipality in St. Louis County, one of which is called Emmenegger [Nature] Park. And a man who was a good friend of ours named Russell [E.] Emmenegger owned the old Lemp Mansion out on the edge of our town from the Lemp Brewery.

DJ: Which was kind of [the] summer home of the wealthy Lemp family early in the century.
It's on a bluff overlooking the Meramec River up toward the Chrysler plant now.

HJ: And Mr. Emmenegger lived in that mansion, but he wanted to build condominiums out there, a bunch of homes.

DJ: How many acres there?

HJ: Oh, it was maybe fifty acres.

DJ: At least.

HJ: At least fifty acres. Even though it was pretty much remote from the rest of the town...
And particularly the people in that part of town rose up and said, "We don't want condominiums in our [neighborhood.]" They were in a very rustic, remote [area], [with] large lots [and] heavily wooded. "We do not want condominiums in this part of town."

RB: Did it have any zoning at that point?

HJ: Well, it would take zoning from city hall to approve it. And they were successful in defeating that proposal and the city turned down the request. Well, Mr. Emmenegger had all this excess [land.] It was heavily wooded, right on the Meramec River. He decided -- there were certainly some tax implications, benefits -- he gave that property to the city for a park with the understanding that it would always remain a natural [area] and not be developed into ball fields or soccer fields.

[Tape meter, 150]

That's been thirty years now and still is a rustic [park] overlooking the Meramec River. Now Powder Valley is adjacent to that.

DJ: State Park.

HJ: A state park.¹² And it will remain rustic forevermore. I happen to have a pretty strong hand in that whole development.

RB: That's right, you were on the council then?

HJ: Well, I was on the council, and during this whole battle I became friends [with] Russell Emmenegger, and that whole thing evolved.

RB: Because otherwise it could have turned out to be... It was a conflict.

HJ: A definite conflict, right. And it was a very generous act on his part, although I'm sure he got a certain amount of tax benefits from the federal government on it.

Another very controversial thing -- and then I think we probably need to end up -- is the widening of Geyer Road, which runs north and south through the entire Kirkwood area. *[To his brother]* Would you agree? Do you remember that battle that came?

¹² Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center. It is run by the Missouri Department of Conservation, rather than the state park system.

DJ: Mm-hmm.

HJ: And that was hard fought. St. Louis County wanted to come in and widen Geyer Road. Again the citizens of Kirkwood rose up and defeated that. And Geyer Road still remains as part of Kirkwood now.

RB: Would it have meant the loss of property or would they have taken structures?

HJ: More of just pushing the streets up closer to *hundreds* of houses. It was very controversial, and elections were won and lost in Kirkwood of people running on one side or the other of the issue. That happened to be right when I was going in onto the council. In the previous administration, in the Reim administration, [it] had been the one to kind of bring it to a head. And then we inherited it. Ultimately it did not happen. So as in all cities, zoning usually ends up as some of the most controversial [issues.] There have been very few murders in Kirkwood, but there have been a number of near murders in our town.

[Laughter from all parties]

RB: Right. Well, there's this balance there between development and trying to maintain... Conservation or whatever you want to say.

HJ: And I think Kirkwood has done an excellent job of maintaining that balance of allowing... You know, here a 130 year old town now, right now has down on our south end just adjacent to this business district probably twenty million dollars worth of development going on. And that has been happening continuously for the last forty years of major development, when other towns in America are drying up... Suburban towns are drying up or are still today the same way they were forty years ago.

RB: Many have lost out.

HJ: And again, I credit the community -- well, strong leadership, but the community who have permitted that to happen, because they could have voted the rascals out who were proposing it. They have not, and I think they're pretty proud of what happened, wouldn't you say?

DJ: Mm-hmm.

HJ: Well, we've used up a lot of your tape.

RB: That's a pretty good use of tape, I would say. We've covered a lot of ground and I appreciate the _____.

[All speaking simultaneously, portions unintelligible.]

DJ: Well, we've probably got enough of those if Ray would like one _____.

HJ: Oh, yeah! We printed this book. This was put out... What year does it say there? Within the last ten years. But as a pictorial history of Kirkwood. It was put out by the [Webster]-Kirkwood Times. Yeah, there's Bob right there.

RB: (laughing) Throwing a pitch, isn't he?

HJ: That's right. There's Dave and I.

[Laughter from all parties]

[Tape meter, 200]

Anyway, you're welcome [to take a copy.] We printed that book, although it was published by the Webster-Kirkwood Times.

RB: Wow, what a nice... This is a serious publication here. (chuckling) That's only the very best in cover and everything.

HJ: You know, one thing just as a sidelight... I'm sure as you interview people, every town has its local characters. And Kirkwood has had a list. One of the most prominent local characters would be Cyril Clemens, who is the first cousin of Mark Twain or Samuel Clemens.

DJ: Not a first cousin, but a...

HJ: And he has lived in Kirkwood for the last fifty years, is still alive -- barely. But he has made his whole livelihood off of his relative, Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens). He established the Mark Twain Society, which was a figment of his whole imagination. But he spent most of his career writing letters to such people as Adolf Hitler, Stalin, Churchill -- the world figures for the last fifty years -- inviting them to become honorary members of the Mark Twain Society. It's incredible. I'm sure in your history picking up... Mark Twain is known, his writing is known throughout the world. These world leaders would write him personal letters back thanking him and signing their signature. The world leaders for the last fifty years, he has a collection of personal letters from them to him thanking him. And then he would go out and give talks around the country. He was a joke in this town because he was such a character!

The story that Dave and I remember: After Harry Truman was out of office, he came back to St. Louis and got off the train right across here. It was met by the dignitaries of St. Louis because the former President [was aboard.] Well, Cyril Clemens somehow was befriended, and of course he named Harry Truman and Bess as honorary members. That whole area where that parking lot [is] was filled with people greeting the former President of the United States. They had a limousine sitting [nearby] and Cyril

Clemens was... He clothed himself from rummage sales. He was there... His socks -- you remember when you were a kid how your socks would get down here? He was like that with both socks, had [a] flea-bitten old... The limousine pulled off of that lot, and Cyril Clemens was sitting in between Harry Truman and Bess Truman!

RB: (laughs)

HJ (chuckling) And the local elected officials were in other cars!

[Laughter from all parties]

RB: Now, what year was this?

DJ: He [Truman] was [in office as President for his elected term from] '48 to '52, so it was probably '53 or '54, right after he was President.

HJ: Cyril Clemens liked to drink, and he would go out and hit all the bars and he'd drive home drunk. And the police would say, "Cyril, We've thrown you in jail. That hasn't stopped you. We don't want to see you in that driver's seat again."

[Tape meter, 250]

Well, the next time they caught him, he was sitting in the passenger seat driving the car!

(laughs)

DJ: With his left foot!

HJ: (chuckling) With his left foot!

[Laughter from all parties]

RB: That helped a lot! (laughs)

HJ: *[To his brother]* What are some of the other stories?

RB: So he's still alive?

HJ: He's still alive.

DJ: Probably not able to communicate _____.

HJ: I'm sure he's not coherent.¹³ But actually -- because I guess he was a fairly good speaker -- people paid him a lot of money to come speak to their groups because he was an authority on Mark Twain.

DJ: He would show up with an apple for each prisoner in the Kirkwood Jail, every morning. He'd be there at six-thirty in the morning, with an apple every morning. God knows [for] what reason.

HJ: That would be after he had gone to the post office, and he'd pick up a bundle of mail. Again, responses from these letters. And he would walk by the police station and then walk back to his home, which was up on Kirkwood Road, which is about a mile and a half from the post office. It got to the point where he would go up -- and Kirkwood Road is a very busy road -- and you'd see him kind of staggering up, and he'd wave to every car that would come.

DJ: Anything that moved.

HJ: *[In a tone of amusement]* Anything that moved! And his eyesight was very bad. He'd wave...

RB: (chuckling) He knew they must know him!

HJ: Tell him the Ora [L.] Dean story about the policeman.

¹³ Mr. Clemens died at the age of 96 on May 16, 1999. His obituary may be found in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, May 18, 1999, page B5.

DJ: Ora Dean was a fairly prominent... He was on the Kirkwood police force, but prior to that had been a fairly prominent boxer in the St. Louis area back in the early part of the century.

RB: Dean?

DJ: Ora Dean was his name. (chuckling) And you would not find him in any boxing books. He was strictly in the local area. But Jack Dempsey had come through St. Louis on an exhibition tour, and they would line up locals to box a round or two with him. And Ora was one of those selected. Dempsey was kind of toying with him, and Ora thought he was doing really well and he really laid one on Dempsey. Knocked him down, and Dempsey got up and hit him into the next county! (chuckling) He was out for like twenty minutes! I'm not sure [he] was ever the same after that! He probably was a little goofy from the start. It was typical of the kind of thing he would do at that time.

Kirkwood had like three police cars, and he had driven up and parked his car and was directing traffic up -- because this was before [Interstate] 270, when there were a *lot* of cars. This was the main thoroughfare in the county. And stopped that, and forgot he'd brought the car up there and walked back to the police station. Something else came up, and he grabbed a car and drove to another part of town and did something there, and walked back to the station. Ultimately [he] had deposited all three cars and he had no idea where... (laughing)

RB: He didn't know where they were?

DJ: (laughing) And the chief said, "Dean! Where in the hell are the cars?" He had no idea where he had left them!

RB: He'd drive them and leave them!

HJ: He'd forget that he had driven up and walked back to the station!

RB: So did you all know this character?

HJ and DJ: Oh, yeah!

HJ: And we knew Cyril. In fact, we printed a couple books for Cyril Clemens.

[Tape meter, 300]

And then had to threaten to sue him to get paid for it! Although apparently he came from a very prominent family.

DJ: Oh, yeah. They had had a farm over in Clayton that involved probably a square mile of what's now [a] *very* upscale [area] from... If you're familiar with Clayton, [it was] along Clayton Road from Big Bend [Boulevard] out to Hanley Road and over into downtown Clayton. They sold that off at one point and that's why he could have the life he had.

HJ: And he had a shock of white hair, and he looked not unlike Mark Twain. [*To his brother*] Wouldn't you say?

DJ: Yeah.

HJ: So he got away with murder! And I'm sure he caused his cousin to roll over in his grave *numerous* times.

DJ: He spoke at [the] Rotary [Club] one time about it. It [was] really kind of a boring talk he was giving. At the end of it he said, "I would like to present one of my books to your president." And he gave him a book that he had had printed, and everybody clapped. It ended, and as they were leaving, he came up to the president and he said, "That'll be \$7.00 for the book."

[Laughter from all parties]

RB: He charged him for it!

HJ: So Kirkwood was like Anytown, USA. It had its characters and its local town drunk.

RB: They're all special, though.

HJ: Oh, they are special and everybody in town... You know, those are the kind of people that people remember -- and the prominent people, the leaders of the community are *soon* forgotten! But the Ora Deans and the Cyril Clemens and the... *[To his brother]* What was the Buck?

DJ: Buck Carter.

HJ: Buck Carter who lived over in a house next to us -- what's now the police station -- in a house that he filled up with newspapers.

DJ: He was really eccentric, yeah.

HJ: My last sight of him was... Are you familiar with the Veiled Prophet ceremony?

DJ: Used to be *the* big parade in downtown St. Louis.

HJ: Yeah, huge parade. We went down, took our kids once, and you could see the red lights of the police cars coming up. But there was one person walking in front of everything, in front of this parade, and it was Buck Carter walking down Lindell Boulevard with his fly unzipped leading the Veiled Prophet Parade!

[Laughter from all parties]

He was not exposing himself. He just was the type that...

RB: (laughing) He forgot!

HJ: Zipping his fly was not high on his list of priorities!

RB: He wasn't an official member, though...

HJ: Oh, no!

DJ: Oh, no, not of anything!

HJ: So I guess we've probably run out of gas and gone way beyond what you were looking for, I'm sure.

RB: Well, thank you all very much, gentlemen.

[Tape meter, 348. End Side One, Tape Three of Three. End of Interview.]