

Northville Township Historical District Commission

Oral History Interview – James Schrot and Edward Mroz

June 9, 2006



James Schrot

Edward Mroz

Former Northville Township Constables

RA – Richard Allen
JC – John Colling

JS – Jim Schrot
EM – Ed Mroz

RA. We are meeting today, Friday, June 9, 2006, to interview Jim Schrot and Ed Mroz along with John Colling and Richard Allen to do an oral history interview. Both Jim and Ed have an extensive background as Constables plus other things that we don't know that we are about to find out. Maybe you should each identify yourselves so that our recorder can identify voices.

JS. Okay, Jim Schrot, a retired Constable from Northville Township. I started with the Township in 1967 and then became an elected Constable in 1972. I also worked with the Township police department and retired after twenty-two years with them as a Reserve Lieutenant. It's been a great interest to work with the Township and watching it grow over the years. Today I think it's reached its limit, its full growth.

RA. Ed, would you speak so your voice becomes identifiable.

EM. Okay, my name is Ed Mroz, a resident of the Township since, let's see, December 1, 1978, is when I moved into the Township. I was a Township Constable first elected in 1988 'til we were disbanded in January 2004, was it Jimmy? Yeah, 2004. In addition to that I was a reserve police officer here from 1979, May to November 30, 1999. So that was twenty plus years. Previous to that I was in law enforcement in the city of Livonia. I was a reserve officer there for ten years, from 1968 to 1978. Previous to that I was a reserve officer in the city of Detroit from approximately 1965 through the early part of 1967. As a Township resident I've seen it grow from basically, when I came out here, a rural community. I can remember when I first moved out here, Haggerty was a gravel road, a ruddy gravel road on top of that. It has continued to expand, our public services, the library and everything has just continued to grow. It's amazing in these few years of progress that I've seen and lived through, like my partner, Jim, said, I think we're peaking out right now. I'd like to see it a little more personal like it has been and not just another community, so to speak, like Livonia where any piece of ground that's open, they want to put a building or a parking lot on it or a mall of some sort.

RA. Jim, when did you move to Northville Township? Where did you come from?

JS. Well, we came, actually, from Washington State. I was discharged from the service and we stayed there for a while and then moved to the Township. That was approximately in 1953 or 54. I guess I've been here ever since.

RA. What made you pick Northville Township from Washington State?

JS. Well, we have relatives in Michigan. I have a sister in Farmington. The area driving through it, it seemed like we kept coming back to it. We built our first home, actually, in the city of Northville, at 40 Welch at Horton

RA. Was it south or north of Eight Mile?

JS. It was north of Eight Mile.

RA. The Oakland County side.

JS. Right. We located the home on Seven Mile, west of Beck, which dated back to about 1835. There were additions on the home, but we were the third or fourth owner. It seemed like there was a lot of

activity during the Civil War in that location for the Underground Railroad and different things. It's kind of a unique situation. If you go down the basement, it is still stone, it still has the bark on the beams, going down the basement. It just seemed it was a great place to raise a family. We have three boys and one daughter. It's always been a good atmosphere in that area of the Township.

RA. Your home, if I recall, backs in to Maybury Park, which was Maybury Sanatorium at that time?

JS. Right.

RA. It's a notch in the property, let's put it that way.

JS. Yes. It was a sanatorium. It was a working sanatorium. While I was Constable, we took the last person out of the sanatorium, escorted them out. After that it kinda declined and then went down to when they made the State Park and the living farm, and it seemed that it just fit in with the family...another enjoyable thing.

RA. When you came in the area when you were Constable, was it full time or part time?

JS. Well, we were on call at any time. We didn't work on a schedule, but we made our own schedule so it wasn't a routine, the same thing everyday. We might go out in the morning; sometimes we'd go out in the evening, a lot of times at night.

JC. What actual duties did you have? People that are listening to this today, we don't have Constables.

JS. The education and the working things were the same as your police officer today. What's kind of unique is out of the Constables in 1929, they formed the State Police. We worked with the Sheriff's Department. We took care of the local things in the Township that were involved in the county, and we also worked with the district court. We formed the district court officers. Other than that...We also worked with the DNR; we were Deputy Conservation Officers. We patrolled Maybury State Park and took care of the West End of the Township, which was rural. A lot of people don't actually realize or know that one thing at Six Mile and Northville Road used to be a dairy farm. That burnt down, a lot of our patrol was in which is now Highland Lakes—that was Death Valley. There were 102 roads going in. People and curious kids couldn't find their way out. We kind of escorted them out. Napier road was another area that was rural. We had poaching, we had stripping of cars; we've had a drug bust, beer parties, anything that would entertain the people, they were out in that area. We also took care of the Detroit House of Correction if they had escapees, because we knew the area. We could locate some of the prisoners easier than they could because they weren't familiar with it.

RA. Were there two Constables at that time?

JS. Yes.

RA. Who was your partner, or partners as time went on, before Ed came on the scene?

JS. I was just thinking back. I had Joe Lukomski. He was also with the reserve department. I had Dick Mitchell for a short time. His father, you might say, was the active, original Constable of the Township. I had Paul DeJohn for a short time; and then I had Ed Mroz, and he's been with me for a long time. We worked real close together.

RA. Where was the home base for the Constables or law enforcement for the Township at that time?

JS. We worked right out of the Township Hall.

RA. And that was where?

JS. Well, the first one that we worked out of was actually in the City, which, I believe, it was possibly the original library and then it became Township Hall. Then we moved on to Sheldon Road in the Child Development Center, and then we moved on to Six Mile. Unfortunately, I never worked out of the new Township Hall.

JC. Ed, you're kind of quiet. Do you want to add to that?

EM. I came in kind of late in the game, you might say. I was elected in '88. I actually took over my duties in 1989. I took over for his previous partner, Joe Lukomski, which is kind of unusual because Joe and I graduated high school together in the city of Detroit from St. Andrew in 1958. It was just strange, when I decided to join the reserve department before I became a Constable, I was walking up to Township Hall and he was coming down the front steps in full uniform. I looked at him, because I hadn't seen Joe since we graduated; this is in 1979. A conversation came about and I found out at that time that he was a Constable as well as a Reserve Officer. I said, "Wow." I've always been completely orientated to what I can do and something I like doing and at the time when he actually left the Township of Northville, I applied and ran for office and was elected. As to our duties, like I say, during my tenure, our jobs, basically what we did, started to be supplemented by the police department as it continued to grow from a very small department. I can remember back when I worked as a Reserve Officer, when we worked Sunday night there would be just my partner and I as the only two officers on duty. There was no backup other than the city of Northville, and sometimes they would and sometimes they wouldn't. So basically it was just he and I, and we handled the entire Township on a Sunday evening patrol. There were quite a few touselles around the time and you did what you had to do. As a Constable, there were a couple instances I was involved in, One, I can relate, we had a problem with dogs. It actually happened at Maybury State Park, where they were attacking the animals. Jim and I both had a real good relationship with John Beemer. John was a great guy and was instrumental in bringing the farm back online. I talked to the regular officers and there wasn't a whole lot they could do. They could just position someone there all evening. I contacted John Beemer and they were having a problem with the sheep. I told him to put them out that night, and I was going to spend the night out here. I came on the scene at probably 11 p.m. and stayed until about 4:00 in the morning. I remember the sheep being out in the field, and had those dogs appeared and caused them any harm or duress, I was going to take over the situation whatever way possible. I can safely say from that time on we never had a problem with those dogs; I don't know what happened to them but I never saw them after that. There have been other instances. I remember one of the previous Trustees, Russ Fogg, he contacted Jim and I one evening. People had contacted those animals, loose animals, there's a name for them, I can't remember it. Anyway, they had caught one in their trap, they set these traps up and the people never came out to take the animals to the park and release them. So they kept calling us. They called the police department, but they're not going to get involved in anything like that, so we went out and rectified that situation too. There have been other instances too. Patrol, certain areas of the Township which were rural, we used to do a foot patrol on them. As to poaching Jim mentioned earlier, we had quite a problem at Maybury where some of the residents were actually poaching. We appeared on the scene one afternoon and met with one of the DNR officers, one of the sergeants, I don't remember his name. He was quite pleased to see us out there with them. It was quite an isolated area, and poachers are poachers. Most are done with bow and arrow, but you never know if they're armed.

RA. I remember as a Trustee hearing the story one night that someone was hunting in there and they went to Jim's house, and he said, "I think I know where he's going to come through the fence." And they got him. Jim, maybe you can embellish the story. I just know the short version I heard.

JC. What were they poaching, deer?

EM. Yeah.

JS. Actually, there were about three locations at Maybury where they had cut the fence and put it back to get access into the park. That was real heavy poaching going on in that area. Another area that was real bad was Napier between Five and Six along the railroad and the overpass. What Ed mentioned about Highland Lakes, we had a unique situation there. It was when they put the sidewalks, the asphalt in around the lake. The geese would land in the lake and then swim in to the shore, and then do their thing up on the asphalt and then go on the grass. People would get very annoyed with it. They contacted different animal control, different things, and they said there was nothing they could do. They called us and I said, possibly we can. The way we solved it was about twenty feet from the shoreline, we drove stakes in and then put a string all the way around the lake. The geese would land on the lake and swim in, hit the string, and then go back out on the lake. They were very satisfied. They could walk on their paths and enjoy their evening.

RA. I know leaving tall grass along the shore keeps them out too. I know another one that had the most unique one. They bought a tape recording of a goose distress call. They had a PA system and they played it every fifteen minutes. The geese would land and hear that distress call and were gone. Eventually, they would quit coming.

EM. Relating to that same thing, I don't know if that was the cause of my demise. During Halloween we used to have a lot of problems in the Township, and I was working as a Reserve Officer at that time. We used to cover the Township pretty extensively. I can remember at Highland Lakes, chasing some young people that were doing egging and that type of thing in the Township, and tripping over something in one of those backyards chasing one of them, and I did a complete somersault back there. I don't know if it was one of Jim's lines or what, but it came out of nowhere in the pitch dark. It was just little things that come to mind.

JC. Most of the activities you did, were they self-generated or people calling in?

EM. Oh they called. We used to get calls like this from the Township Board, certain people. Russ Fogg was really involved in the Township, and anything in that regard he showed a lot of interest in the Township. We got a lot of support from most of them. Some things you just didn't want to bother the police department with; they didn't have the time and it's not in their field of expertise. So they would contact us and we'd take care of it.

JS. I think what the people enjoyed or took advantage of, was that with their own family or children, they could contact us and find out about different problems. We handled questions on drugs, some on marijuana and different things like that. They felt if they went to the police department, it might create a problem, where we could just advise them and steer them the right way. It seemed more personal to the people in the Township. At one time we had a phone hooked up outside the building where the people could drive up and call in, and we wouldn't even see them. We would talk to them and advise them on what they should do or not do. It was kind of unique. I felt that the Constables, and that was statewide, they had more personal contact with the people.

EM. In regard to personal contact with people, the Township one year authorized us to enforce the dog ordinances. I think you were on the board then, Richard?

RA. Yeah, probably. If you did it, I was.

EM. I think you were. It was funny some of the comments we got. Half the people we contacted didn't know there was an ordinance about that. I remember doing a lot of footwork, because this was done on foot. You would drive into a subdivision and then walk the subdivision. I can remember Jim, at days end, Jim would take half the street and I would take the other. Usually we were quite tired. One thing we did get was a response from the people. When they found out we were out there, they just feel we gave them stuff about inoculations and that type thing. It made a lot of sense for the protection of their children and of course, the neighborhood children to get their animals inoculated and licensed them. If they got lost, we could find them. By far most people were behind us and the endeavor, and I know the response of people coming into the township hall to get a dog license was unbelievable. I don't know if it was tripled or quadrupled, but it was quite a following of the people that they followed the letter of the law. We also did this at Kings Mill one time. We set up a class on Saturday and Sunday for people who were employed. It is difficult at odd hours to come into the Township and pick up a license. We actually handled that right out of Kings Mill. We didn't have to do all the walking; they came to us.

RA. When you were not being Constable, what else did you do?

EM. I retired from my position at Progressive Tool after 46 years, ten months and four days. I was nineteen when I started and was 66 when I retired. Progressive Tool was one of the largest, if not the largest, manufacturer of tooling in the United States at that time. They are still quite large, course the competition is out there. As an employee there I held a lot of different positions. I was a shipping and receiving man, I was Traffic Manager for several years. I did a lot of purchasing. I handled various things.

RA. Jack of all Trades?

EM. Yeah, I worked my way up. I started out as a truck driver and worked my way up.

RA. How about you, Jim?

JS. Well, actually, before I went into the service, the army, I served an apprenticeship as an electrician and then I went in the service. When I came out I finished working as an electrician, a journeyman, 42 years. I never utilized that in the Township. I figured they had their building department and inspections and that was no concern of mine.

JC. When were you in the service?

JS. I served from 1950 to 1958..

RA. Let's see, in the 50s. What do you remember particularly about shopping, schools, or what have you in the area?

JS. Township?

RA. Township or City, either one.

JS. One of the most unique little restaurants, it was kind of a coney island, used to be at Five Mile and Northville Road where the gas station is. It seemed that people came from everywhere to go to that place?

JC. Was that Carl's Place?

JS. Yes. We didn't have a lot of stores or restaurants. There were a few in the City; but as far as patrolling both with the Constables and the police department... At DeHoCo they had a mess hall set up in the basement for those working on the road. You could go in there and eat. It was kind of unique. It was cooked by the prisoners and you just ate there and left.

RA. DeHoCo was functioning when you were here. I kind of recall there were farms scattered up and down. Maybe you can give a little background on DeHoCo and what they did.

JS. Right. What was unique back then was the area from Napier to Ridge on that side, which would be the south side (5 Mile?), was the pig farm. The rest of the area on the north side was all farms, and they grew all the products for Maybury Sanatorium and the State Hospital, Child Development Center, Hawthorne Center. About that time almost 60% of the residents in the Township worked at one of these facilities. Like my neighbors, their family, they worked the farms, they worked in the kitchens. It seemed like the whole township was involved in it.

RA. Local employer.

JS. Right.

EM. One thing Jim is forgetting also are the years of service he has given to the Township as a resident and law enforcement and his farm. We used to wonder talking to the law enforcement officers around here how in the world he held on to a regular job with all the sidelines he had. We used to get a good laugh out of that.

JS. It was kind of unique when they started the fire department in the Township. They put the call out and they said, "Can you help us out?" Most of the time it was building equipment or restoring it.

RA. Bob Toms (Fire Chief).

JS. That's right.

EM. Oh Yeah.

RA. The original...

JS. Fire chief.

RA. I'm going back to the military, he was the original scrounge artist.

JS. Yes, he was.

RA. If there was something to be found that he could get for next to nothing, and rebuild it, he had it.

EM. He was a unique individual.

JC. Back then if you did fire work, did you get paid for it or was it strictly voluntary?

JS. The first part was voluntary. I was with them for 10 years. It seemed that they got all the equipment working and operating. I remember one time they put out a little article in the Northville Record for volunteer firemen. It was kind of unique because the first three who responded were about five feet or under and they couldn't reach the pedals on the truck.

EM. I don't want to interrupt you, but you just brought something to memory. When Jim was working as a reserve police officer we were partnering up with one of the regulars and to this day I wish we could of got a picture of it. When our Chief of Police, Jim Werth, when he was a younger officer, course he was a lot bigger guy, there was an incident when Jim and John were working together. They both got out of the car at the same time and looked like a couple of Lion fullbacks coming at you.

JS. That was at the time, when they had the Dodge Polaris, I think it was called.

EM. No, no, that was Malibu.

JS. The little car. I remember that because we had to come back to the station and get another car because when I got out of the car I folded the door, (laughter). It was kind of unique. I know one thing when they started the police department; actually, who became chief at that time was a Constable of the Township.

EM. Oh yeah, Chief Nisun.

JS. We worked together for about three years and then we started the police department. That involved wiring the cars and doing our own maintenance.

EM. Wasn't our second chief, Chief Hardesty, didn't he come out of the Constable Association?

JS. Well, his father did.

EM. Oh, his father. I wasn't sure if he did or not. I know he was a reserve and then became a regular office and then eventually made chief.

JS. They lived in Salem and he took care of the west side of Napier Road.

EM. Washtenaw County.

JS. Yeah. He backed us up an awful lot.

JC. Getting back to when you first started with the fire fighting work, was that combined with the City and the Township?

JS. When I started with the fire department they were starting their own, although they had a mutual aid with the City. They gave me the job of driving the tanker truck. That was kind of unique because at that time we had a station on Sheldon Road, and the Child Development Center had a fire station so that is where we worked out of. I was responding to a fire and I was supposed to turn west on Seven Mile. They cross the horses at Sheldon Road (and Seven Mile corner) because the barn was located up there (St. Lawrence Estates now), and I'm coming down the hill and it was a little bit slippery, kind of a rainy,

snowy night, The horses were crossing and I didn't want to hit them. So I was blowing...this thing had an air siren and had an air horn. So I figured I can't make the turn. I went straight. I was going to go up through the City and then go across. I'm not sure what they called the race, but it was a big money race. I went by and I'm blowing the siren and the horn. The horse that was supposed to be the big winner was in front and it turned and ran backwards. We had quite a controversy with the Township and the racetrack for the next three days trying to figure out what had happened.

RA. I know one night, it was a snowy night. I began to think it was you I saw, somebody driving the tanker down the hill. He tried to make the turn on Seven Mile and started to slide. I could see his eyes were about like saucers and he was trying to get that thing around that turn on that snowy night.

EM. That was an experience coming down that hill in the wintertime, if they don't get it out there.

RA. The tanker was another thing that the Chief had you put together from bits and pieces, as I recall.

JS. Oh yeah.

RA. He found a tanker and he found a chassis and had these two pieces put together, because the truck was garbage.

JC. Now you mentioned that you worked with DeHoCo. Did you get calls from the other facilities here like you mentioned the youth home, the hospital, and so forth? Did you get involved in those or did the county or state handle it?

JS. The supervisor from the Child Development Center called a number of times, If they had problems there, we'd back them up. If they had some of the people out, the youth, we'd try to locate them. We also had DeHoCo; when they had prisoners out, they had a siren that they would blow. That was a first alert and then they would call any local authority in the area. It seemed like they called Plymouth Township. Northville Township was very small--they only had two officers. We'd respond to that. We knew just about where the prisoners would go to hide.

EM. In addition, they basically had three prisons with close proximity to each other. DeHoCo, and there was one, Phoenix Correctional Facility, the one they tore down. Of course, the Scott facility, did it have a different name then?

RA. Yeah.

JC. Was Scott facility the one on the corner?

RA. Yeah. The one they tore down then.

EM. Yeah, that was Phoenix Correctional Facility.

RA. Okay, I didn't know the name.

EM. Three in close proximity. The people who live in the Township now don't realize. They complain about the one we have now. Back then, where would you put people who needed to be incarcerated? In the western end of the Township.

JC. Another old time thing here, we've had a lot of quarrying done.

EM. Quarrying, oh yeah.

JC. Did you find that the young people like to...?

EM. Yes. One of the funniest experiences I ever had was the quarry on Beck Road where the subdivision is. We responded to illegal fishing. That was a great fishing hole. You know, you really couldn't blame the people to go in there and go fishing. But when you get a complaint you have to respond to it. One time we went out there, it was the funniest thing. We called them over to the shoreline, and I don't know if you were with me that time Jim. The canoe came over. Just as they were exiting their canoe, it flipped over on them, right at the shoreline. Just to watch that, I remember backing away, I laughed so hard. You know, you have to be professional in uniform at all times, but just to see those two adults flip over. We gave them a warning and sent them on their way. That was an experience. Just to see them getting out of their canoe at the shoreline and flip right over. They just got drenched.

JS. You mentioned Highland Lakes. Accessing off on Eight Mile or on that side of the lake, they had a kind of a rope swing.

EM. That was on Griswold, Jim. Swing on Griswold.

RA. I remember seeing a swing in there.

JS. They'd swing off the rope and down into the lake. We'd get calls constantly there and a lot of the motorcyclists used to hang out, that was a good spot. One thing that was unique about Highland Lakes, we have some legends in this Township, and one of them was Goofy Dan. It seemed nobody really knew his name, so that's what they referred to him as. One of his favorite things was, in the wintertime, was to go to the lake over there off Griswold, cut a hole in the ice, and dive in. We constantly got calls that somebody fell through the ice. We knew who it was and we knew that shortly he'd come out and go home. What was unique was that he rode a bicycle. I don't think he ever owned a car; he rode a bicycle all his life in the Township. We had one other person. I can't recall his name. He would walk through the City, usually the first part of October, and carry a cement block. He'd walk down and pick out a window, and throw the cement block through the window. Then, they'd take him to court and the judge would sentence him to 90 days in DeHoCo for the winter. (Laughter) It got to be kind of a situation where it happened every year. Finally, they told him, just carry the block down and sit on the block, and we'll pick you up and put you in for 90 days and then you can spend the winter there. There were more people here who were real legends.

EM. Oh yeah, Every community had a few of those.

JS. Like Milan George's farm on Six Mile was almost a mile square. He had one program that he worked, and my oldest son worked for him for probably three or four years, while they were in high school. He hired all the kids from high school and they worked the farm. They were bailing, they were planting. If you came back the second year, then you got a little better job. If you came back the third year, then you were kind of a supervisor. He had one program in the Township. Because it was so rural, he didn't want everything growing up in weeds. So he would put everything, all the vacant property in the Township, in corn. You might own the property and live in Arizona, retired, or something. It was kind of a sharecrop. He'd pay your taxes. People were amazed; there wasn't one square foot of vacant property that didn't have corn on it. It was kind of unique. We liked it because it kept it rural.

EM. The Township is growing too fast, but you can't stop progress, I guess.

JC. Of course, I-275 wasn't here. That opened up this community for a lot of people.

EM. It sure has.

JS. If you came east from Napier Road...Napier Road is dirt, gravel, Ridge is dirt, Beck Road's dirt, Sheldon was a, well...we used to refer to it as a lane and a half road because if one came the other way, you had to move over.

EM. I live just south of Six between Haggerty and Winchester, and when I first moved into the sub, I can remember looking north of Six Mile Road. We had a huge barn, you remember that. Just about where the Lakes of Northville, by the old Township Hall, we used to watch the walk-aways from the state hospital (Northville Psychiatric Hospital) coming down the hill, running away. We used to see them walking in the subs, and before you know it, the locals would come pick them up and that type of thing.

JC. Did you get into the walk-aways?

EM. They used to walk into the garages and try to get bicycles and cars if you left your keys in them. We used to have a big problem with walk-aways at one time.

JS. The state hospital was really unique because I remember they had two male subjects that lived there, and after they were done working for the day, they usually had them cutting grass or whatever, they would walk together over to Charlie's (Northville Charlie's Restaurant) and they'd share a bowl of chili.

EM. That's Rocky's now right?

JS. Yeah. For a while they'd call, and then they figured they were just sharing a bowl of chili, and then they'd go back. So they didn't call anymore.

RA. No harm done.

JS. When they got out of there, it was kind of unique, they had one person who was about four hundred pounds or a little better; it would take four or five people to corral him and try to get him back there.

EM. My experience with that is they'd walk away and walk across the street and go and have a cold one at Charlie's, later on Rocky's.

JS. A lot of people don't remember that right directly across from the state hospital, they had the bus station.

RA. I was going to say, maybe expand on that a little bit. A lot of us know about the bus station but not the progression of things.

JS. That's where the buses turned and went back to Detroit. They knew it. They'd just go over there and get on the bus.

RA. Wasn't there a Northville bus line there that from there down went east to Grand River?

JS. Right. The bus depot.

EM. I moved into the township just about the tail end of a lot of this. Some of this I experienced with Jim, but a lot of it happened before my time. Talking about things in the Township, how many people remember there was a baseball diamond on Six Mile Road just west of Beck, Thomson Field? That was beautiful.

JS. That was a unique situation there. It was brought up in the Township Board that we should get more involved with the community and athletics with the children. They residents put it together and donated a backstop for the baseball field and put up a partial a fence in the area. The company I worked for donated all the work for the lighting. It just seemed that the whole community was involved and they put the baseball field together, and it didn't cost anything. The kids played for a number of years. We had leagues at night, and all kinds of activities.

RA. And mosquitoes, they were thick down there.

EM. There's a point somewhere in the township, I'm trying to remember the exact street. It was behind the township hall at the time when I first came out here. I was shown it by one of the regular officers. It was the highest point in the township at that time. It's where Lakes of Northville is now. It was kind of a unique situation to go up there at night; it used to be a lover's lane back then. You could actually see from that point all the way down to the city of Detroit and see the Ambassador Bridge. At that time I remember it being lit up. That was a unique view that anybody who lived here then, whoever didn't partake in that, missed a very great sight.

JC. You used to see it at Haggerty Road, but now you can't because the buildings are there.

EM. Right, but at that point, it was a clear view.

RA. Also on M-14 where the overpass is on Sheldon Road. If you look quick, you can see it. My landmark used to be the Burroughs stack until they took it down. I have trouble getting oriented now, because when the stack was there, it was easy to pick it out.

JS. Regarding that incident of the bridge and the lighting, actually we're the second highest elevation in Wayne County.

EM. Northville Township is?

JS. No, where our property is where the hill goes back. Because that hill goes up again for Maybury Sanatorium. It is very common to see the lighting for the bridge and different things.

EC. What most people don't know is way back when the glaciers were here, Detroit was underwater, and the beach line runs right through Northville Township, in fact, I live on it. It's sand all the way down where we are, which were the beach deposits. Further out you got what they call moraine, which are the stones and stuff dropped by the glaciers.

EM. Yeah, I have boulders on my property, huge boulders.

JC. To the east of us was a lake at one time, 10,000 years ago. That's why you've got the rise up there in Hines Park.

JS. One thing that was kind of unique in the Township, the City had Parmenter's Cider Mill and we had Foreman's on Seven Mile Road. Actually, at that time, the first murder in the Township was handled by the Constable. I had the radio at home; I heard, well at that time, Nisun was about three miles away. He was trying to respond to it. I was less than a mile and I responded. The person who did the shooting was coming out of the building at that time, and I apprehended him and put him under arrest as the Constable in the Township. Nisun arrived and the Sheriff's Department arrived after he did, and they said, "No, they were going to take it over." Nisun said, "No, it was handled by the Constable in the Township and he's going to carry it through." I carried it through district court, circuit court and put the person away. But it was confusing in court because the establishment was called Foreman's Orchard, and the person who did the shooting, his name was Foreman, but no relation, and the person who was killed was Jim Foreman. It really got confusing. It just seemed like I had to handle an awful lot. It was a real experience.

JC. Were there Township attorneys who worked with you?

JS. They did, they were part time at that time.

JS. Ah, I can picture them. Who was that?

RA. Morgan, Don Morgan. He had the distinction of writing letters to the Township Board and when he got through, you had no idea what he said. Legal jargon. You worked for the court system for a while?

JS. Right, District Court.

RA. What did you do there?

JS. I was the Court Officer. I worked for Judge Dunbar Davis. I went over and I talked to him and I observed the court. I could see that it was kind of a state of confusion at times. I said, "You need a kind of a partner, a court officer." He said he never had one. I said that, "It's up to you if you want to try it." We worked it for three days, and he says, "That's it. You're here." He's a legend in himself. He always wore bow ties. I went to one of these novelty stores, and I saw the bow tie, and it had one red light and one green light, and a little button that you push. So he says, "Okay, the red is defense and the green is the prosecutor. Okay." Then, he'd start and if the defense kept going on and on and on, he'd push the button and turn him off.

EM. That's called judge control.

JS. That got to be kind of unique in the court. Everyday it was actually better than watching television the way he handled things. He could have three cases at the same time, all going. He was a great tennis player. Actually, the way he put himself through law school, he was an ironworker. A number of the big bridges in the state, he worked on those. He never got to Mackinac.

RA. He wasn't that big a man as I recall. When you think of ironworkers, they're gorillas.

JS. Very strong.

RA. You don't see a fat ironworker.

JS. It just seemed like we had so many different things in the Township and around the area that we don't have today.

RA. Where was the court held at that time?

JS. In Plymouth. Actually in the City and Plymouth. I think on Monday and Wednesday we met in the City, and Tuesday and Thursday we met in Plymouth city hall. Then shortly after that I developed a night court system for him. He said, "Well, we can handle it." I said, "Okay, I'll show up in the evening and go through the roster and check in and check the attorneys and get everything ready." We did that three nights a week for a while.

EM. That's four jobs, Jim. I only held three.

JS. Sometimes we had a little conflict because if there was an arrest made in the Township, sometimes either the Constable or the police department, I was sitting next to the judge. It used to shake up the defense attorney.

RA. I've exhausted my questions, do you have anything else?

JC. No.

EM. We've covered a lot of territory.

RA. Is there anything else you would like to bring up?

JS. Well, I had one little thing here. At the Historical Society, do you have a museum and different things and are you involved in that?

RA. Well, I am and I'm not. My wife (Pat) works for the Historical Society in the Archives Department and is on the board of directors. They're kind of the collectors of historical documents. The Township is trying to develop, they're not going to compete with Mill Race, but they want to pick up things that are peculiar to the Township and are slowly acquiring them and are in the process of getting funding for a display case downstairs to show some of the historical things for the Township. What do you have?

JS. I don't know if you have a copy of this or not (Zoning map). This is before they developed everything in the Township.

RA. What were the circles for?

JS. There were two things.

RA. Is this the distance from your house?

JS. This is where I live. If we had anything in the area, like escapees from DeHoCo, these are five miles apart, I mean a mile apart. I could pretty much tell in the area how long it would take me to get there. Also, we were involved with the weather watch and the sky warn. If there was a storm approaching, I knew it was approximately five or six miles from the house.

RA. Tell you what, when we are finished here, let's talk to Joyce Carter. They have a large copy machine downstairs; she can copy it and give the original back again.

EM. You know what's interesting as of late is the Record. They're showing pictures of the Northville community pre-1900's, most of them.

RA. My wife picks the pictures out, and every so often some piece of misinformation gets in there and the editor catches flack from everybody.

EM. Yeah, like Northville Plaza. My wife said, "Mention that when you're down there, about TGY." When my son was a little guy, he loved that place.

JS. One of the most informative people in the Township, was the farmhouse right here.

RA. Gibson.

JS. Three sisters lived there. One of them passed away just recently. When they made up the first book in the Township about the history and things liked that...

EM. You were involved in that, weren't you, Jim?

JS. At that time I was involved with the Civil War skirmishing and traveling all over. They said, "Can you handle the Civil War part?" I said "Fine." They said, "We want more history," and I said, "Have you contacted the three sisters? They'll help you out because they have albums after albums of pictures back when." If you look at them where the racetrack is, the hotel that used to be up on the hill, they had pictures of that and all kinds of stuff. They helped them out.

RA. When you go back to the Civil War, I'll get shot if I don't ask this question. You mentioned the Underground Railroad. What do you know about it as far as Northville Township's involvement? I know Salem was definitely involved. There's a rumor that there was a safe house up on Reservoir or what have you.

EM. I didn't realize that the Underground Railroad came out this far.

JS. Right across from us, I'm trying to think of a name. It would be right next to Thomson-Sorenson's, right to the front of their property there was a large home, mostly fieldstone. What was unique about it was that home had two basements, and one of them was the Underground Railroad. It was kind of a bad situation through the development in the Township, we tried to keep that home, and one of the ideas we had was to turn it over to the Parks and Recreation and they could use it for an office and different things like that. They were going to keep $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre of property with it. But through miscommunication, somehow that house got torn down.

RA. That was probably when they started to develop the Thomson Gravel Pit. That guy went in and knocked stuff down without a permit.

JS. We were really upset about that, quite a few people in the Township. We don't seem to keep anything today.

EM. It's hard to preserve.

RA. That's why the historical group was formed. We don't have an historical district, quote, unquote, like a lot of places do. We have a piece here and a piece there and a piece somewhere else. That barn they moved was one of them, and there's another house that's been offered to the Township that dates

back to the 1830s. Now the question we have to figure out is how to move it and not let the taxpayers pay for it, and that may be the challenge. But the owner of the house wants to donate the house but doesn't want to contribute anything to move it. It only has to go a mile, fortunately. 7 Mile and Napier is where the house is.

EM. What about when they moved the barn to Maybury. That was unique for something that huge. I was amazed they could do that.

RA. This is easier because there are no power lines, but right now the Historical Commission is looking into getting a site plan drawn up for Thayer Park out there. Putting buildings in haphazardly doesn't make any sense, and we're starting to get to a point where we need an overall plan.

JS. One of the unique places in the Township, actually the City and Township the way the property is, is the Fish Hatchery. We lived here when that was operating. It used to be kind of a fun thing to go down there and watch them harvest the fish, get them ready to transport. People don't know today what the Fish Hatchery was all about or Fish Hatchery Park. What are they talking about?

EM. Or even where it's at.

JS. Many times we tried, and I've gone before the Board, to try and get some kind of a board put up with information about the Fish Hatchery.

EM. An historical marker.

RA. That may happen yet. Several groups are working on things. The Township is a piece of the pie and there is one that works for the Township and there is one that is much broader based.

JS. You can tell my main hobby is trout fishing, and I belong to the Fly Fishing Club. Every year when they have the program at the Fish Hatchery, we show up to teach the kids fly-fishing. We have to keep the history in the Township, that's the main thing.

EM. There's so many new residents, they don't know. They get confused between the Township and the City.

RA. You get, every so often, a newcomer who is a history buff. We just had one, but unfortunately, she just moved out of the area. She didn't live here long, but she stirred up more stuff on history than anyone who's lived in this Township forever. She's sorely missed. (Jen McFall)

JC. You have people here who have moved from Livonia and get upset because there are raccoons in the back yard.

EM. That's true, I came from Livonia. (Laughing)

RA. Okay, thank you.

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