

Today is Thursday, Sept. 25, 1980, and I am at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Angell at 14183 Wood Rd., DeWitt Twp., Clinton Co. Mr. Angell, would you like to start by telling me when and where you were born?

I was born at the home where I now reside at 14183 Wood Road in the present house which has been remodeled twice since. My birthday is Dec. 1, 1908.

Did your parents live here right from the time they came to Michigan?

No. They did not live here from the time they come to Michigan. The Angell family come into Massachusetts in 1631. This next year we will be celebrating our 350th year of the Angell family in the United States. I find, in looking at the history, that they moved on several occasions in Mass. and then ended up in Providence, R. I. in 1636, I believe it is. From there they moved into NY state and from NY state into Wayne Co., Mich. The Angell family later settled on a farm north of Lansing on Turner St. and that is where my father was born. He had two brothers and four sisters. Their father's name was Oliver S. Angell, which is my name taken from my grandfather.

So your grandfather was Oliver S. Angell?

Right. "S" stands for Smith.

Who was your grandmother? Do you know her name?

I think her name was Cornelia Phelps(?) [Durfee]. [1850-1908]

Was she from Michigan?

Yes, I do not know the history too well. I think we will turn the history over to you and let you explore that.

Do you know the dates of your grandparents' deaths?

I would know that my grandmother died in 1908 in May, I believe it was. My grandfather died in 1918 or '19 [1844-1917]. I'm not sure which.

Do you know what cemetery they're buried in?

They are buried in the Mt. Hope Cemetery in southeast Lansing.

Your father's name was what?

Fred Angell. He had no initial as far as I know.

And your mother's name?

Was Zadie May and her maiden name was Day. Her father's name was Frank Day. Her mother's name was [S.] Cinderella VanAuken.

Are they Michigan people?

Yes. I don't know their history. They come from NY state also, earlier generations, but they did settle in Clinton Co. To the best of my recollection, they lived in Olive Twp. when they were first married. Then they moved into DeWitt Twp. at a location on Boichot Rd. which, when I was a boy, was known as the --- place, later becoming the Victor Boichot place. They stayed there a couple of years but they thought the cost of the place was too high so they moved to a place on U.S. 27 just north of State Rd. on the west side of the road. At that time it was just a trail. I don't think there was even a road going through the marsh section between Stoll and Clark Rd. at that time.

Did they live near Clark Rd. or Stoll Rd.?

The would have lived between State and Stoll, which is a mile or 2 miles to the south of Clark Rd. I should say, when my mother lived on what I know as the --- place, she did attend Gunnisonville School. I think she was about 8 years old at that time.

What years would that have been? When was she born?

She was born in 1889.

So this would have been somewhere around the turn---

Just about 1900.

The early 1900's. You have lived right here on this farm all your life? You were born here?

Yes. I was born here in this house.---

Where were you married?

I was married in Angola, Indiana. We didn't have a wedding. It was back in the days when finances were low.

Is your wife from Michigan?

Yes, to the best of my knowledge has lived in Michigan all the time. Her father and mother did come from Germany which is now Poland. I can't name the place.

Her maiden name was what?

Her maiden name was Bolzer, Mildred Bolzer. She had three brothers and two sisters.

How many children do you have?

We have none by our marriage. Mildred had a daughter previous to our marriage. She has four children and we're quite proud of them as grandchildren.

You still have grandchildren then, don't you?

Yes, and my wife is always commenting about the great grandchild. Her oldest grandchild was married and has. It's about 2 years old.

Did she live right in this vicinity when you met her?

She lived in Lansing. I had known her brother in junior high and had known him in senior high as long as he attended school.

Your father then, he was a farmer?

Yes, I guess you would have to say that the close generations or that is, he and his brothers and my grandfathers on both sides, were all farm minded. So he lived, was born at the Turner St. address and he lived there until he and my mother were married in March 18, 1908.

Do you know where this home that your grandfather had on Turner St. is located?

Yes, it was between Sheridan Rd. and Wieland Rd. on the west side of the road, set on a hillside there and was an ornated type of house.

Probably Victorian?

Yes, I think you would call it that.

Was he as politically minded as you are?

I don't know as you would say as politically minded and maybe, in the times we were living in, they were just as much politically minded. My grandfather and my father, all of us, have been involved in some line of political work or serving our township or---

What did your grandfather do in the township?

He was path master at one time. That's when they used to have local road commissioners, I guess you would call them. They oversaw the spreading of the gravel

on the roads which, back in those days--and I remember still as a boy-- where each farmer at least would work out his road tax by hauling gravel. You'd get up and haul several loads of gravel in a day besides doing your chores. I know that my father was path master at one time while I was a young fellow. I can remember going to the pit. I don't know how much help we were to him but at least we did, as children, go with him. I can remember him handing me a shovel in the pit.

Where was the gravel pit?

There were several small gravel pits around. One was up here on the north side of Clark Road, just east of Gunnisonville. The other one that I remember going to was, I believe, we went to what was known as the Peabody Pit also, at one time which is a little better than ½ mile west of Gunnisonville on the north side of the road.

But they were really mostly involved in farming weren't they, both your father and grandfather?

Yes.

Did they raise cattle?

Yes to the extent that most farmers did. Back in their day and it was quite true up until the early 40's, at least most every farmer and a few cattle and produced their milk for their family and had a little bit of cream or whole milk. The herds were not large, from 4 to a dozen cows probably. Even in 1932 when I come back to the farm, we had about 14 cows and were milking by hand.

Did you sell milk?

Yes. During my boyhood days, why there was what was known as a condensory in Lansing where the whole milk went and it was skimmed and processed. Then that went out of existence along in the early 20's. There was a time where there was little or no market for whole milk in the city of Lansing. I can remember going with Dad to take cream to the creameries or the butter bath(?). Then along in about 1921, I believe it is, they started what was known as the Lansing Dairy, where a group of farmers contributed money, so many dollars per cow--I think it was \$10 per cow—to start what was known as Lansing Dairy. That turned out to be a processing plant and went to around 1958. I was the director at the time that it had to consolidate for economic reasons with McDonald Dairy. My uncle, "Durf" [Durfee] Angell, had been a director of Lansing Dairy prior to that. But my uncle and my father were both among the early producers along with the various the neighbors up and down the road, which were the Keck family, the Willard family, the Gladden family, which probably you'll will hear about as time goes on---

Did you ever come in contact or know anything about the dairy over in DeWitt?

Yes. If I remember correctly, there was a cheese factory and I can remember of having visited it. I can't be sure. I think for a short time we might have sold some milk there too.

You just mentioned the Gladden School, the Gladdens. This was too far away from the Gladden School or from the Gladden area for the people there to be coming to church here at Gunnisonville, was it not?

I don't know as it would have been too far away. It's only a couple of miles between corners, but I don't recall that people from that community come this way. Milie

Weiland was my father's sister. They lived two miles to the south of us and they went into Lansing to the Baptist Church. I do remember that. [Milie Bell Angell m George F. Weiland]

I suppose I was really thinking of the days before the automobile which made it little closer when you could go by automobile. I was thinking more of the horse and buggy days.

Yes, but to my best recollection, I don't remember the people from the south coming to Gunnisonville except at social times or fair times. The Ladies' Aid had a fair every fall 'long about the end of Oct., the first of Nov. Then the surrounding communities for 4 or 5 miles and, in fact, people from the city of Lansing would come out to the chicken pie suppers and it was a big affair.

Some time back when we were talking, you mentioned the road tax and I wonder if you could tell me how much the road tax really amounted to.

I'm afraid I couldn't tell you in dollars and cents. All I know is, that to pay your road tax, they'd tell you to haul so many loads of gravel. I haven't familiarized myself with dollars and cents value of it. Taxes were much lower in those days. Even as late as 1944 or '45, taxes on 80 acres were only \$60. That happened to be [on the] vacant 80 that I had bought across the road. Taxes were, I think I recall from being supervisor of DeWitt Twp., that there was one tax roll for the whole township [which] was only \$17,000 as opposed to better than \$3,000,000 today.

What years were you supervisor?

I was supervisor the years '65 and '66. Then I lost an election and was out for a short period. Then I was back for a year and a half because of a recall of the supervisor who took my place.

And what year was that?

It would of followed right along '67 and '68.

I wonder if you could tell me a something about the changes that you've seen in the township, in the community, the number of people that are here now as compared to, say when you were a youngster; then when you were a supervisor.

Yes, as a rural community, or course, the center of location or the center of gravity so to speak was the Gunnisonville School. At the height of enrollment one year we had 57 pupils there under one teacher. However, that did not last for long because we had some people that moved in and moved out again right away. I think I read just recently in the history where there were about 50 students along in that area or that time as opposed to 220 at Gunnisonville School in 1964, I think it was. So there has been lots of growth; for instance, the --- place or the Victor Boichot place, that I spoke of here a few moments ago, has since been plotted. The Clinton Village #2 and #3 which are better than 100 homes on 80 acres.

I believe Clinton Village #1 was also part of the Boichot land, wasn't it?

No. Clinton Village #1 was a part of the old Keck place off from State Rd. The J. Keck family owned 60 or 80 acres in there and that was known as Clinton Village #1. It backed the Boichot which was on U.S. 27. That's where Boichot Acres #1 and #2 are. Then we've seen Boichot Acres #3, which was the old Ike Morgan place back in the day when I was a young fellow. No, Boichot #3 was on the old Joe Boichot property at the corner of

Boichot and US27. And Boichot north and south. And Dondale is on the Ike [probably Isaac] Morgan place which has 33 or 35 lots.

During the time you were in the township office, was new buildings, new businesses coming in as quickly as they are now? Did you have the same kind of spurt of building during that time that you're having now?

Yes. There was one year there while I was supervisor that--I can't just be certain just which it was--we had better than 300 building permits there in one year. I remember it because the (?) Appraisal Company was in here and they were appraising all of the homes. Because of so many new homes being built, they did not get the entire appraisal and the appraisal come into me in Feb. for Mar. assessments. There were a lot of incomplete homes and we had to take the Board of Review out on the road. We reviewed the homes very hurriedly and set up the estimated value, sort of speaking, which turned out to be fairly accurate based on a real appraisal, however, and was very happy about it.

When was Clinton Village #1 established? Now this is the one right off State Rd.

Yes, I believe that was along about '53 or '54. That would be ascertained by checking the maps at the township.

Were there the same difficulties with drains and sewers when you were in the township office as we're having today?

Yes, to an extent. The fact was that, when they started new subdivisions back to the 20's on up through the 50's, there wasn't much thought given to the problems that might come by subdividing. So there were locations--Clinton Village #1 happened to be one of them that got in there-- that would have had more suitable properties. The result was, during the years that I was supervisor, while I was on the township board as trustee, clerk, and treasurer, that we had these drainage problems come up, along with health problems also that we had to contend with. In fact, it was while I was supervisor that the state law became effective where, by law, you had to sit down and take real notice of the outlet drainage for a subdivision to be allowed. Along in the early 60's was the beginning of where, in our particular area, the studies were being made to consider drainage, of suitability of soil, and so forth. From year to year there has been improvements. Didn't cost us as much to make the observations back in '65 as it does today.

What about when roads were built, new roads were opened or paved? Was there a great deal of difficulty with the drainage system that you had at that time? Were many of those old drains and tiles destroyed? Did that cause some of this back-up, flooding, that they have? Do you think that?

I don't know as road construction itself had that much to do with it. However, I would point out that, back in the early 30's, we had a government program which was called the WPA. Many drains were put in subdivided areas of the 20's by WPA's construction of which there was no county supervision, no state supervision. The local supervisor handled those things and so the drains were not properly—I won't say there weren't properly designed because they probably took in the gravity flow and so forth-- but they weren't mapped so you could go back and trace them and this sort of thing. During my

term in office, there was considerable problems with drains and presumably there are still some of those problems.

Do you think there is an answer to the sewage problem between Bath, DeWitt? Do you think we're going to have a good answer to that?

I guess I'll have to say, "possibly." There never can be an entirely economically suitable answer to sewage disposal as long as we permit subdivisions to be built in every nook and cranny. That is, in other words, my thought is and I have felt for the last 5 or 6 years especially, that you would see a gradual trend to going back into central locations for living because once you establish a subdivision out here five miles out here from another one, you got to service the area. It wasn't meant that we would service continuous areas where there is only one or two families to a mile and so it has been a costly procedure. I will have to say that probably I was looking ahead when I was in government beyond the outlook of a number of people and I did promote sewers because of the stance that I had seen in Prairie Creek and so forth where I had seen sewage flowing in surface water.

I feel there is no doubt about it we needed the sewer system. I think the health department said we had to have it because of contamination to the wells.

The general population had said you had to have it but the economic costs have been so outlandish, partly because you couldn't sell people on going ahead with sewer systems. Then economic conditions, inflation had been so great the last few years you just can't keep up with it.

You mentioned the 1930's. Now, where were you working? This was in the depression years. Where were you working at that time?

I'd have to back up and say in June of 1928 I graduated from Ferris Institute. I did not have a job at the day of graduation. However, within a week following that I had committed myself to going to Michigan Seating Co. where I was a bookkeeper accountant.

Are you saying "seating" or "seeding?"

"Seating," a furniture manufacturing company. They made old fashioned fiber furniture and rattan furniture. It had just gone into the overstuffed, upholstered furniture at that time. I worked there for one year or a little better. I had a cousin, well actually a third cousin, that knew some accountants in Detroit and we thought it would be an advantage to get into the big city and earn big money and so forth but in the fall of '29, I can't be sure whether it's Oct. or Nov., I went down there and went to work for this accounting firm, very enjoyable work. But my first check--presumably it must have been the first of Nov. because the stock market crash of 1929 come in Nov.--my first check that I received, I could not get it cashed. I stayed there 3 months and each month I was given the preceding month's cash, and only getting \$150 at that time, I couldn't live in the big city and get my transportation and so forth, so I quit there and want back to the Michigan Seating Co. I went back at the old salary of \$150; worked there. Along about a year later, why things really got tough for the furniture industry. In fact, it was tough before the depression. And then they cut our salary down to \$85. In 1932, along about Jan. I think it was, they cut us back to half-days which made it \$42.50.

Now this is for what period of pay?

For a month's pay. You just couldn't pay for your laundry and board and room and so forth, so I decided to come back to the farm. I guess I'll have to say I was coming back to the farm and helping dad with the chores every weekend anyhow. In our conversation, [I] decided to come back because he needed help. So in coming back, why I never really got the urge to leave in 1932; stayed in the dairy business until 1962.

When you say, "in the dairy business," was that here on the farm?

Yes, on this farm.

Then you went to work where?

Even at the time-- we dispersed the herd in 1962, March 19, 1962--I was trustee on the DeWitt Twp. board. [I], more or less took it easy for that summer doing crop farming and so forth. Then along the line I got more involved and the supervisor decided he was going to quit and I run for election in 1963 as supervisor but didn't make it because the supervisor decided to run again and got elected. Then in '65 I did get elected as supervisor. We should say somewhere along the line when I married a [Mildred] Bolzer in 1934.

I was just going to ask you when you were married.

Apr. 12, 1934.

And she was from this area?

From Lansing.

Where did you live in Lansing?

On Clippert St.

On Clippert and her parents were from there? Were they born there too?

No. They were from Germany.

Directly from Germany?

They lost a boy on the boat on the way over from Germany.

Oh, they did?

Yes, the sharks ate him. That's how they did things at those times.

Buried him at sea. Oh dear! And then your involvement with the community, what other offices have you held?

I guess, basically, my first community involvement didn't start 'til along about 1942. My father had been on the school board on different capacities, either as treasurer, secretary, or director. There was some disagreement between board members and I remember very definitely he coming and asking me if I would run for a school position. I was elected as director in 1942. I served 12 years for the Gunnisonville School as director or secretary of the board.

What grades were at Gunnisonville School at that time?

In the beginning it was a true 8-grade school, kindergarten through 8th grade, which made it, actually, nine grades. During the time that I was director and served on the school board, we voted to transport 7th and 8th grade.

Where were they going to then?

They went to Lansing. Lansing had been, in the main, our high school area throughout my life. There were some residents that went to DeWitt; for instance, the Livermore family is in the history of Gunnisonville. The two girls, Thelma and Ardiz Livermore,

went into DeWitt High School. Then the Stanton family moved in about 1917 or '18 and they went to Bath.

Now Gunnisonville School is consolidated with Lansing?

Yes. That happened in 1965, I believe.

That was not when you were in office, was it?

It was while I was in the township office but not as a school officer.

How did people feel about that consolidation?

The reason for it, consolidation, the state law become effective where you had to be a member of a high school district. There were several studies made. One study was made about joining DeWitt High School. Another study was made on Lansing High School and then there was a study made on having a high school district within DeWitt Twp., the southern part of DeWitt Twp. I guess none of the studies come to real fruition before a vote was taken on them. You would have to ask some of those who were on the study because I was in township government. I did not function in the school study.

Did you think it was a good idea?

It satisfied my personal thinking because, as I had said before, we were a part of the Lansing District, sort of speaking, by transporting pupils and also because of our involvement with Lansing proper school functions, high school age, in years before.

So you felt it was a good thing?

Yes, due to the fact that you had to join a high school district.

What do you think about the effect on the children? Do you think that the consolidation was good for the students?

In my opinion the consolidation was very effective. In view of the fact that it took the children to an area they were familiar with, their education was of an equal grade and some feel a better grade than they would of received in either of the other local areas, Bath or DeWitt. Busing did come into the situation during the time we were transferring to Lansing. It has grown to bigger proportions. At this particular date we visualize the possibility that busing will be relinquished to a certain extent. The thing that I would oppose, not that I'm opposed to the ethnic minority, or whatever they may be called, coming into our schools. It's more that I'm opposed busing for the benefit of making an ethnic minority and other population of equal proportions.

And you think the environment of Lansing school's system would be as beneficial to the student as if they stayed in a smaller community?

I see no reason why it hasn't been and shouldn't be. I don't think numbers necessarily mean a difference in the education formula or the social standpoint. I think at the times their social functions that are on a larger scale that you can benefit from rather than detracting from.

Where did you go to school?

I went to Lansing High School.

I mean elementary grade school.

I went to the Gunnisonville School in our own community here for 9 years. I'm not sure. We may have it on tape now. The primary grade, or kindergarten as it was called, I became nervous because we had a man teacher and he was spitting your hands and so forth for every little infraction of rules. I had to quit in the first year. I did get through

the kindergarten, however, that year. We had eight grades we had to complete in the country school.

Can you tell me anything about the Gladden School? [located SW corner of State & Wood Sts.]

I know the Gladden School was there all through all the years of my boyhood and up until a consolidation of schools. Right at the present time I cannot tell you the exact date that they consolidated with the Gunnisonville school [1958]. The consolidation was brought about because they had too few pupils to operate the Gladden School. I believe there was a vote on the part of the districts to close or consolidate.

What district was this?

It was known as district #7 or Gladden School.

Now then, the one at Gunnisonville was #8?

#8.

Was that Gladden School a sectional school? Did it take Bath students and DeWitt or--

I'm sure there wouldn't have been any out of Bath Twp.

So then it sat there for quite a while without any students, did it not?

I'm not sure that it was torn down right away. It wasn't long after it was closed or consolidation took place that they tore the building down. The real estate agent got ahold of the property.

Was it used for black students for a while? Someone told me that.

Not that I'm aware of.

Did you parents ever mention a Sunday School class that had been started out at the Gladden School by Mrs. Height(?)

It could be a possibility because the Heights(?) were relatives. I cannot recall that.

Have you heard anything like camp meetings? Was there camp meetings or revival meetings in this area, like around the Gunnisonville Church?

I don't remember camp meetings but they used to have kind of revivals where they would be in the community for a week at a time. They would have night services and things like that.

Those meetings were held in the church?

Yes.

Those were not the old-fashioned tent meetings?

Not to my knowledge. There could have been some prior to my recollection.

Your parents were very active in the Gunnisonville Church, were they not?

Well, Mother was really active. Dad was very supportive.

And she held office. What was she?

President of the Ladies' Aid and she was Sunday School teacher, as far as the church activities is concerned, at different times.

In the process of keeping this record; that is, here was she treasurer or just a ---

That is the church record that you are referring to there?

Yes.

She could have been treasurer, yes, at one time.

Do you know when the Ladies' Aid Society was first started?

Yes, we lived here.

That book starts with 1897.

To my recollection there was a church ladies' aid organization prior to the time the Gunnisonville Church was built in 1887. Whether it was always called the Ladies' Aid or there was some other organization, Margaret Stampfly would have the history on that, I believe.

I have found records of the Sunday School class being held in the school prior to the church being built.

Yes. If your question was on whether church services were held prior to the church being built, I know there was. If your question is on whether there was a Ladies' Aid prior to the church being built, that's a little questionable. I think it was called "Temperance Society" or something like that, somewhere along that line.

Yes, there is some record of the Temperance Society and they had another small building down east of the church from us, I'm told.

I see. This I'm not aware of this, because it would have been prior to my time because the church has been there since 1887.

I thought you might of heard your parents, your mother or your father say something or talk about it a little bit.

Not to my recollection and you see I was born in 1908 and they moved here in 1908 and had always lived in DeWitt Twp. I say "always." Mother had lived in either Olive or DeWitt Twp.; Dad had always lived in DeWitt Twp. They moved to this house in March of 1908 and I was born in Dec. I don't recollect any talk about [a temperance society].

Can you tell me anything at all about the activities of the Ladies' Aid Society, some of the things they did, either of you?

Some of the things, I'm not sure that we haven't touched on that some in the past. In war times there in WWI they made a quilt or a Red Cross quilt and the children of the school went out and sold names; or that is, the people agreed to let their name go on the quilt for 10¢ a name. They sewed these names on the quilt. The money that was derived from the selling of the names and the amount that the quilt sold for was contributed to the Red Cross back in WWI. That is one of the functions and the Ladies' Aid also made bandages and so forth for WWI.

I don't remember too much about WWII because Ladies' Aid was functioning under a different set-up at that time. Whenever there was somebody would burn out or something, they was always providing quilts and so forth, or food or some such thing. Clothing, they had it on the scale of going out and collecting these things for people in need and then passing it on. I can't think of something right on the spur of the moment.

Now, you people have the quilt yet don't you?

Yes, we have the quilt. It's well used, not very presentable. I was so surprised. We have a neighbor girl who used to live over here, but she's married. She lives in Hastings. She drove down here and wanted to buy that quilt. All her folks' names are on it.

What about Gunnisonville? It was quite a little village there. Was that during your time, the store, the bandstand, all those things?

The bandstand I do not recollect. I know approximately where it was. It was on what you would call the southeast corner of the four corners there [Wood & Clark Rds.]. I do

not recollect it. The store I recollect only because of hearing the folks talk about it. They did have the post office there at the store. That was on the northwest corner. The school house was on the southeast corner and the church since 1887.

The bandstand would of been on the southwest corner also, would it not?

I thought it was on the southeast corner.

Same corner the school house is on?

Oh, southwest. I misspoke myself.

In the record that I looked through, there's a mention of something, money for the band or from the band. Wonder if that could have anything to do with the bandstand. Did you ever hear of her mentioning that?

I haven't looked at them that close.

So this was all gone by the time you were a youngster that you can remember the bandstand and those things were gone?

Yes, as far as I can recall. My first recollection would have probably been about 1912 or '13. I do not recollect the bandstand. All through my life I heard about it and there probably are families that could tell you more, the date that it was discontinued. The Wilt(?) family, if they were inclined to talk with you, could tell you. Ronald or Virgilene Zeeb could also help in that respect.

As I understand, the church was closed for awhile and it wasn't used for a while at all. What was the reason for that?

A lack of participation; that is, as it is today and always has been necessary to have some finances to carry on a church. The community was rather small as far as service area. New churches come in, we'll say, that weren't here when the original community was founded and by dwindling membership--. You see, in a rural church area like us, the family grows up and they move out to other areas and so there comes a time when the original families or the families that are the nucleus for a certain period of years becomes smaller. There aren't sufficient people to support the church. That was the basic reason, was lack of membership or numbers of people to attend. I know at one time we attended the church in DeWitt city because it wasn't functioning here. Rev. [Carl] Seipp, I believe, was the fellow that restarted this church [in 1939].

About when?

I won't try to say. It was after we were married, wasn't it, Mother, that this Mr. Seipp come in here and was cleaning the church yard and the fire got away from him, burned the manure out in the field? Yes.

What year did it close? Was that the '20's or something?

It would have been late '20's, the early '30's.

Would the effects of the depression have something to do with it? Maybe people just didn't have enough money to support the church?

It could have. I think it's more lack of the numbers of people to attend. Naturally, finances had some bearing on it. When you get down to the real basic facts of the church history, Margaret Stampfly has more complete knowledge of that.

I was most interested in your mother's activity and her part. Apparently she was very, very active, very interested.

She was interested. When church was functioning down there, the most of her early life, she did see that we got there. In going, you got the duty of starting the fires and things like this. I don't know whether we mentioned it at any time. You had two stoves, one in the basement, one on the upper floor. You had to go down there and start from scratch on a Sunday morning and put fire in there.

Do you remember it?

Oh yes, I remember that.

There's also a bill in there for oil which I assume is for lamps. Do you remember when they just had oil lamps in there?

Oh yes. That would have been prior to 1927, '28, or '29, or some place along there.

When you first got electricity?

Yes, electricity was brought in here. My dad was quite instrumental in getting it extended to our area. I recall he had to go out and solicit the neighbors around to see whether they would join in. They had to pay a certain amount of money. I think it was \$100.

This, because you needed so many people on the line before they would put it in?

Yes, before they put it in, before they would make the extension.

Let's go back a minute to when the township government--You were telling me about the year and a half that there was a recall and you went back into office, in the township office for supervisor. Now we're talking about, who was in office at that time?

Reginald Nelson was the one that was recalled.

For what reason as far as the people in the community was concerned?

As far as the people or, the thing that brought it about was he made new assessments. In his mind he saw the value of farm land along the Lookingglass River and some other properties, hit or miss. He saw a greater value than farm land values. He put assessments, as I remember, of \$1,000 to better than \$1,350 an acre on these lands. That and beyond that, he made some other assessments which weren't quite as conflicting and the people were up in arms over the assessment figures. That was their reason for going through with the recall.

You know there's that stone building down on State Rd. that was used as a town hall. It's on the north side of State just off [US] 27 now. Was that built specifically for the first town hall they ever had?

It would not of been the first town hall that they ever had. The first town hall that they ever had was in the city of DeWitt on the north side of Main St. just to the east of what we knew of as Brazee's store or where the Chinese Restaurant is currently. There was a building in there, a one-story building. That's where I first knew anything about township government while attending the spring annual meeting. Each year they had what they called a spring annual meeting.

Is that where the township held their meetings and conducted their business, the township itself, in that little building in DeWitt?

Yes, in the early days.

That was on what present street?

Main St., just east of the corner of Bridge and Main, on the north side of the street. Then at a later date, and I don't know how it happened, that the township annual meeting was held down here. That was a township hall? I can't tell you the number of years either, but I know that in the '30's, depression days, the first meeting that I ever had anything to do with chairmanship was held at that meeting. I went to a spring term meeting and they appointed me chairman for some reason. I've been lost to know today why I was appointed. It was one of those where there was a conflict and they had so much of a crowd there that they marched through the hall to cast their vote for the different-- Now, whether that was-- we wouldn't have cast our vote for supervisor, I don't know. There was something of a conflicting nature that they had us go in the front door and out the back door to vote. I remember that.

So you really don't know when that building was constructed or if it was constructed especially for the township?

I just can't be sure. I might be able to rack my mind, but Ronald Zeeb would be the most familiar with that situation.

Who is that?

Ronald Zeeb, that is the same house with Virgilene. You see, his father was Justice of Peace for as long as I can remember in the early days and right up till as long as they had a justice of the peace. I can't recollect for some reason or another how that building fit into it.

What were you the chairman of, some sort of committee?

I think it must have been chairman of the tellers or something, I just recall in the early days, not that important.

Has there been a lot of change in the township government? Do we have the same elected officers that we always had or have there been more added, more positions added? I mean in the time that you can remember.

You always had the township supervisor, township clerk, township treasurer, and two trustees to the best of my knowledge. There may have been a time that there were no trustees. The justice of peace--they had two or three or four justices of peace scattered around to handle small claims and so forth like this. There may have been a time that there was just the supervisor, clerk, and treasurer, and the justice of peace, but to my recollection, in the time that I've had anything to do with the government, it's been the supervisor, clerk, treasurer, two trustees. Along about 1966 or somewhere along there, we went to four trustees because we had more than 3,000 population or something like that.

As the population increased, that sort of thing would have to change and I guess we have a lot more committees too.

On that scale, the only thing in my doing with the earlier part of government, they did have what they called a police and fire committee. The other committee that they have today, zoning and all of those, are new or added committees. I would not know how many committees they're adding today.

They even appoint committees to investigate a situation if there is controversy over something. So we have all sorts of committees in there.

Yes, that's a matter of "passing the buck" as far as I'm concerned.

I agree. Do you know when the newer building, the one that is use now, when that townhall was built?

I guess you would have to get it from the records. I know you could go in the one that was built east of DeWitt at 414 East Main St. Originally, after we got rid of the township hall right in the city of DeWitt, moved out, and the new building was built at 414 Main St. on the south side of Main St. in DeWitt and that never served as an office building. There was a time that our annual meetings were held there. In fact, our clerk Warden Kyes at that time, insisted that you could not hold any meetings other than at Township Hall #1.

But now, that's the second one that was in DeWitt?

Yes.

414 Main St.

Yes, and just a few years later after that one was built, we built this one down here, thinking it would be a fire hall and a meeting place for the south end of the township.

Which one are we talking about now?

The one on Weiland Rd.

The one that's there now?

That is there now.

The newer one, not the little stone building on State?

No that stone building on State, dates back to, I would say, around the late 1920's because it was built on similar cement blocks that our old milk house was here. The history of that I just can't recollect at this time.

That one on Weiland Rd., then was built some time later. You don't remember the exact date?

Four, five, six years later after the one in DeWitt city.

Am I understanding this correctly, that the one in DeWitt city was used more recently than the one on State Rd.?

Not more recently, but as far as township meetings were concerned, first we had number #1 township meetings in my boyhood days, we'll say early 1920's, was at Main St. near Bridge St. on the north side of Main. Then at a later date in the 30's for some unknown reason, we held township meetings at the State Rd. address where you referred to the little stone brick block building. At a later date, after we sold the township hall in the city of DeWitt, we built the new one. Or at the time we did sell it, I guess that's the way we should say it. We built the new one at 414 Main St. in DeWitt. Then we held our annual meetings at that hall for a number of years.

Where were the business meetings held at that time?

The only business meetings they had would have been the annuals and elections and stuff like that. It wasn't until 1965 that we had a business address, so to speak, other than the supervisor's, clerk's, and treasurer's, homes. In 1965, and that was after this building at Weiland Rd. was built, the first office that was in there was a police officer moved a desk into one of the rooms there in that building and they carried on police activities from there.

That's in the same building that the town hall is in?

Yes.

Now?

Yes, that is right. The room that is currently being used for the treasurer and computer was all one large room at that time. There was one desk in there. The telephone was in the hall on a built-in cabinet. They would go from that desk there out to the phone in the hall. That's the way our board acted at that time. Not to belittle them, just the fact that they weren't impressed that township government wasn't big business yet. I should say that the police officer mainly was there in the evening.

At the time I was elected--I believe it was in 1965—supervisor, I chose to go into the township hall because of the liability that you had with senior citizens and so forth coming into your home. The time that I was elected supervisor was about the time the senior citizen exemptions and so forth like that come into existence. You knew you were going to have a lot of traffic. So I chose to move in the hall and I may have overstepped my bounds. Nobody is going to take me to task at this time. I just said I was going to go over there and then told the board about it afterward. I used the same desk, however, that the police officer was using. On other occasions [I] used the phone in the hall the same way.

Do you have any idea how much it cost to build the first building that was put up there or how was this done? Was it millage or taxes?

We were among the fortunate townships that seemed to have had cash on hand so we never had to go out for millage request to get either the building at 414 Main St. or the one at 708 Weiland Rd. financed. We took the money from the general funds. There again, we might have overstepped our duties. We have heard that since it transpired. It may not have been exactly the proper way to do it but if it hadn't been done, we probably wouldn't have a decent township hall yet.

As I recall, and these figures can be checked through township records, I believe, the township halls each cost us in the range of somewhere between \$50,000 and \$75,000. I faintly recollect paying \$55,000 for the one in DeWitt, but I'm not sure.

Then, apparently, all the buildings were not put up there at the same time, so you had township hall with one police, a volunteer policeman, I would assume. Is this right?

It was not a volunteer police. Our police department started by giving the constables the authority, which they had some authority by law to do some policing activity. Couple of them were serving evenings for awhile and then along about '63, I would say, my nephew, Bruce Angell, was hired as a police officer. It might have been a little later than that. I guess that should be checked.

Then it was at some time later that the police station that we have now, the police office that we have now was built?

Yes.

What about the fire department?

When the original building at 708 Weiland was built, there was what could be called an office, a small reading room, a community room, and a fire department, and furnace room, and toilets. A one-bay alley, so to speak, or east section of the same building, was the fire department. At later date the fire department was not large enough so they expanded it another bay, doubled the capacity of the fire department building, another vault. In fact, there had been two vaults in the building over there in my time. One of

them in the earlier years when we started using it for an office building. Then another one was put in when they built the additional fire department.

And then the library was built?

The library was built at a later date; and then the police building at a later date.

The police building itself was at a later date?

Yes.

That has enlarged in number of employed policemen since then, hasn't it?

Yes.

What do you think about chartering, DeWitt Twp. becoming a charter township?

I was always, more or less opposed to it. I can't see that it's done us any harm. Neither can I see that it's done us any good. Without getting into politics, I have a problem seeing the difference between an administrator and what they call a superintendent. Just at a lost to see the difference; that is, I think there has be cooperation there irregardless of what the name of the office is. Without that, you have a hard time with meeting your goals.

I don't think that the charter township is going to work out the way many people thought it would. When the complaints of the ordinary people, of the voters, is that a lot of their voice in the government has now been taken away from them because of it being a charter township.

That is one of the objections that you hear among the people.

Yes, basically, that was about the only thing it did; that is, actually they can raise your taxes because of being a charter township. By and large the public had the willingness to come up with the dollars at a time that they were needed if you could prove that it was needed. I like to see things giving the people their way.

I might point out that, just recently, here at the Gunnisonville Church, all Methodist churches for that matter, had to go out on a pension fund crusade. You give these people their way knowing you have to come up with a certain amount of dollars and that it's a freedom of choice thing, then you're more apt to oversubscribe than undersubscribe, and you have the good will of the people. I know, in this case of the pension fund crusade, we were responsible for \$3,119 over a 3-year period. With 65 membership, [it] amounted to about \$16 per member. We have, as of this date, come up with \$4,570 as commitments and about 1/3 of that has already been paid in, which they could have taken a 3-years' time to pay it.

All you have to do is let the people really understand that there is a need for whatever you'll be doing.

This is right. I thought that it would be a good idea to bring that in because some time it will be history.

Let's hear a little bit about you, Mrs. Angell. You were born in Lansing?

In Lansing, and we was married in '34. I came out here and didn't know anything about farming and I helped out in the barn.

What did you have to do?

Milk cows and feed them and get them.

You had to learn how to milk, didn't you?

Yes, and things like that.

How did you like the farm after having grown up in town?

Good. And we lived with his parents all our married life until they died and we lived right here.

Where was your home in Lansing?

On Clippert St.

I suppose you went to school in Lansing.

Yes, I went to school in Lansing.

Where did you go to school at?

Allen [Street School], then Pattengill; and Eastern. I didn't go to college or anything.

What do you think of Lansing now compared to when you were growing up?

Our folks would really be surprised.

Do you like what they have done in the name of progress and improvement? Do you think Lansing is a nicer place to go into now than it used to be?

Yes, I think it's nice what they done, but I think they've spoiled it for shopping on Washington Ave. I don't think there is going to be a shopping center there many more years.

You don't care about the mall?

No. It's the parking.

You can't park in there anymore? You have to park?

No, because it costs so much, I know Margaret Stampfly and we go quite a bit, but gosh it just seems like we could do more in the malls than we can downtown. And I think in time to come it will be just office buildings down there.

Did you ever work anywhere in Lansing?

No.

Do remember riding the trolley? They were still in operation when you were young.

Well, I imagine, but they wasn't on Michigan Ave., I don't think.

You lived close enough to town, you really didn't need to use them, did you?

We lived down 12 blocks from Grand River.

Did you have an automobile?

The folks did at the tail end, but until then we had horse and buggy 'cause I remember it.

What was your house number?

416 Clippert. It was the 7th house, I believe, from Kalamazoo. Two teachers from Allen St. School bought the family place.

Do you remember any of your teachers that you had in school? You must remember one.

No, I don't know. Probably would if I just sat down and think about them---

Well, I have to agree with you. I think Lansing used to be a prettier place than it is now. I liked it much better. I don't like the removal of the boulevard down Michigan [Ave.], you know.