

**Annmarie Drury**  
***Insights on South Wheeling***

Carrie Nobel Kline: So can you just start by saying your whole name, starting with “My name is.”

Annmarie Drury: My name is Annmarie Sullivan Drury.

CNK: Once more.

AD: My name is Annmarie Sullivan Drury.

CNK: Okay. And your date of birth?

AD: Is February 8, 1973.

CNK: Okay. And your address?

AD: Is--

CNK: Phone number?

(005)

AD: Oh, 4010 Eoff Street. And my phone number is 233-1228.

CNK: Okay. And can you tell me about where you grew up and what, what that neighborhood was like and some of the central people in your growing up, family, neighbors?

(009)

AD: The neighborhood where I grew up is, and where we still live, is South Wheeling, right, right in the shadow of Bloch Brothers Tobacco Company. And there's, there's houses only on one side of the street. And the other side of the street is, is factory and, and a big parking lot. And we had--Most of the people in our neighborhood were pretty old. There weren't usually children for us to play with. I have one sister. There was a woman who lived to the left of us had a beauty shop. And the man who lived to the right of us had a barber shop. And we often, we often played on that, on that big parking lot that was across the street from our house. We knew our neighbors pretty well. The neighbor who had a beauty shop would sometimes come to her porch to watch us on the parking lot! And maybe she would be encouraging, or discouraging, about what we happened to be doing. Like she recommended at one point that, that we should become professional roller skaters, in all seriousness it seemed. There's Pat.

CNK: So we left off with this, your neighbor who thought you should be professional roller skaters.

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AD: I think that was--Well, she also, she watched us too to see when it was that we needed haircuts! And she would invite us in or tell us that she thought she had a particular style that would be especially nice. And when my sister finally did go get her hair cut, our neighbor said that she had been waiting for years to get her hands on my sister's hair. Because my sister was much more afraid of, of going to, to the beauty shop than anyone else in the family, and her hair was really, really long by the time she went! And the

neighbor on the right side of the house was very nice. He was a--He's a very gentle man. Probably--Well, I don't know, a lot of people in the neighborhood were Polish, of Polish descent. He might have been. He had a very small dog named Sweetie Pie. And they went for a walk every day at about four or four-thirty. Harry was pretty old, and he walked really slowly. And Sweetie Pie was a really, really little dog who walked really quickly. But because Sweetie Pie was so

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small, they kept in, in pace very easily. And Harry would bring things over to our house. At Christmas time he would bring those red net stockings full of gold, gold covered chocolates. And at Easter he would bring things. And every once in a while he would just show up with something for no special reason. And there was also, I guess, in our neighborhood the other outstanding figures were this group of boys who belonged to a family a few doors away who were, not terrorist figures, my sister and to me, I guess. They were bad. They got into trouble all the time at school. They did things that nobody else dared to do.

CNK: Like what?

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AD: Well, they, they chased us home from school. It's mostly that they were very open about being bad. They chased us home from school in front of, you know, in front of the neighborhood! And nobody stopped them. They stole things from people's houses. They would do things like write on people's fences with marker maybe, or break things. They were, they were allowed to, but they didn't seem to have rules for going to sleep at certain times like we did. We would be in bed, especially those springtimes when school's almost out and it's late, really late. We would be in bed, and we could hear them on the parking lot playing baseball! That was hard. And they, they broke people's--I remember them breaking the necklace of one of my friends at school. Things like that. And I think that people were usually surprised to find out that we lived so close to those boys because we were such quiet, quiet girls! And the only time that I ever saw anyone get the better of, of those boys was when,

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when my friend who lived up near the corner took their, she took their mailbox down from their porch and walked over to the river, which was just a couple streets away, and threw it in. And for a long time after that they didn't have a mailbox. They didn't get one soon at all. And the mailman always had to just stand outside and whistle until somebody came out to get the mail. And this family had very mean dogs, so it was hard for the mailman too. Because it was, it's never any fun to spend time standing out in front of that house since the dogs would come to the window. And you figured that they probably couldn't get out, but they acted like they were angry and strong enough to be able to. Those were probably the most significant people. The other thing that I suppose had a big part in our growing up was the river itself, which we went to with our parents on walks. And then by ourselves later. Every, every so many years somebody would hang over a swing from one of the trees that was

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along, like it was down the riverbank. And so we'd spend--Especially for a couple of years we'd spend almost all our time after school playing down by the river building little huts and swinging on the swing

and walking back and forth in front of the barges. And sometimes we would try to--We would stand by the--We'd stand on the bank and, and jump up and down and wave and try to persuade the ferryboat drivers to come and pick us up! But the one time that one of the drivers did start to turn the ferryboat around we were so, we were so frightened that we ran away and hid! We collected shells by the river too. And some people swam in the river occasionally. One of the, one of the boys, in fact, who lived in that family of mean boys a couple doors down drowned one summer when he was diving off a barge. That was a real shock to everybody. And I--Oh, one--There's one other neighbor who was across, is across the alley from us, she has shutters that look out onto our yard, or blinds. And so she can

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look through them without, without our seeing her there, which she must do, she must have done an awful, awful lot. And we would never know until after when she would call us and say something about, oh, who had been visiting us in the backyard or the way that we were cutting the grass or what our cats were doing in our yard. She's afraid of thunderstorms, and so she would call us whenever there were those thunderstorm watch little squares on the television. Sometimes everyone would hesitate to answer the phone when it was about to thunderstorm. Sometimes we would be glad when we were going out and it was about to thunderstorm. But often we wound up going over there, somebody would go over. And it's very complicated to get into her yard. It seems, in fact, that it's often complicated to get into people's yards in that neighborhood for one reason or another. The gates don't work quite how you think they would, or you find that there are lots of plants blocking the

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walkway all of a sudden. Or some gates aren't meant to be used, and you can't really tell that until you circled the house a few times. And it was true of this person's gate, that the back gate was too high to be reached by, by many people, especially children. And the front gate was scary because there were dogs in the neighboring yards. But we would go over there and sit and watch television if, if it seemed that lightening wasn't going to come through the television set. Or else we just sat and waited! Sometimes she would have lots of supplies out on the table just in case the storm was so bad that we had to go downstairs to the, well, to the garage, I guess.

CNK: Supplies?

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AD: Food for the dog and for her. Not always, I guess, not always the most logical supplies. Like Slim Fast would be on the table! But that, that was the idea, provisions, yeah. There's also part of the, well, part of the street looks right through to the river. And part of the street is blocked completely by the factory, and blocked if you go to the front door. All you see is factory. And in that blocked by factory section there's a, a place where there's a trailer mounted on a--I'm not sure what it's mounted on. I guess it's mounted on something like a big garage. So it's high up, but it is a trailer. And there's a big difference between those, the feeling of those houses that are blocked by the factory and of those houses that are not. It seems a sort of miserable street at the blocked part of it, and it seems like a tolerable street at the unblocked part. And there's one, there's one elementary school which is about five blocks away from our

street, which is where just about everybody, well,

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everybody in the neighborhood goes. It has a swimming pool, which is sort of unusual for a, a school that's in such a, a poor neighborhood! It has some luxury items inside, and one of them is a pool. There are often in the--There are lots and lots of churches around there, and there are often sales of different kinds of food, like pierogies or pizza or fish. And often bingo too. Lots and lots of people go and play bingo, and they know the schedules for all of the, all of the places around so that they can go every, every night if they want to. And now there's the, there's a bicycle path that runs right along the river from way downtown past our neighborhood. But for a long time there were just the train tracks. And for a while there were trains, but they usually, most of them came at night. And then for a long while there weren't trains, but there were still the train tracks. So we spent a lot of time over by the train tracks walking on the, walking either on the rails or on those cross, cross, wooden crossbars, depending on our moods. Because it was a very different feeling, I guess, to walk on the rails than it was to walk on the wooden crossbars.

CNK: How so?

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AD: Well, the rails were, they're more, they were riskier. But they also were metal, and there was that, it's a different feeling to be, to have your shoes on metal than to have them on wood. And they also would get very hot in the sun, which the wooden, wooden parts didn't, didn't get. And the, the wooden--Well, walking on the wooden flats, that was more a, a laughing kind of locomotion, I guess, than walking on the, the metal, which is more serious and more dignified in a way. We had a good friend who always lived there in the neighborhood, but she moved quite often, and we, we stayed always in the same place. It was very interesting to us that she changed houses every couple of years, or sometimes every six months. For a while they lived right behind a bar that was on, on Jacob Street, which is a street full of bars. And they, they knew pretty well the people who came in and out of their, their family, so when we went to visit we sometimes stood and listened. Not really

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talked, but we listened to people who we never, never would have been brave enough to approach or had any reason to approach otherwise. Usually sort of--Usually they were heavy men, round, heavy men. Some of them were very tall. Some of them are old, but a lot of them were pretty young, like maybe in their twenties, who our friend's family knew because they came in and out of the bars so often. And then they moved, oh, they moved to a house behind the school. And then they moved to a house that was down, down the river some so that we would always have to go there by walking, walking on the railroad tracks! They were interesting because they were so different, they were so different from our family, not, not well--The parents weren't well educated. And they had--The, the company that they kept was very different from, from the company our family kept. Most of my parents' close friends were people who were living in other cities, or at least other parts of the city. And when

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we went to this person's house, well, her parents' friends who were around were not, not people that we, again, they weren't people we saw other places or came into contact with other places. They were--They seemed coarser, and they used different language. They didn't use proper English. And people just didn't come to visit our house who didn't use proper English. And they were--I guess, I think that they were-- They had an effect on our friend, who was just our age, in that she became used to, became used to them. I mean they were a matter of course in the way that they weren't for us. And I guess it's made me think that it makes a big difference, the, the people who you see when you're very small are normalized in a way that people who you meet later are not. So that you don't really see--... you don't really see things like that somebody is drunk or somebody drives a really beaten up car, has a nasty disposition when he's speaking with women. You don't, don't notice those things in a, in a way that affects your judgment of the person, I guess, when you're young. They

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just become--It's all, it's all washed together into insignificance. And what lasts is the impression of a friend who comes to, to visit, nothing more than that. And I think that that's had an affect on my friend in that she's very, she seems to me very accepting of all, all people in a way that, that, for instance, my friends at school in New Haven aren't. And it's not necessarily a really praiseworthy kind of being accepting because it's, it's, it seems to me to be unconscious. And it's not directed, and it's not, it's not that it's an effort in inclusion. It's just that that's, that's the way it is. It was nice to walk with our friend on the streets because so many people would honk their, honk their car horns at her. And if there were people sitting outside on the porch she would be sure to know them, so we would stop and listen to her talk to them. Sometimes they would invite us in, and we would drink sodas. That didn't really happen when we walked up and down the streets by ourselves. And eventually--I guess we didn't think very much about where we lived until

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maybe we went to junior high school when it became apparent that, you know, that people who lived in our neighborhood weren't considered to be very, you know, to be very good people, I guess. There was a stigma attached to living in our neighborhood. And especially kids in junior high can be, I mean they are, they were very vicious. And that was the first time I felt, I think consciously unpleasant about living where we lived. But there was really nothing, nothing to do about it! And we didn't--For a long while there we didn't have people--We didn't really invite people to our, to our house, our friends. We just went to other people's houses! And the only people that came to visit were people who actually lived in our neighborhood already.

CNK: And that was because you lived in South Wheeling?

AD: Yeah.

CNK: What did that stigma feel like?

AD: Umm--

CNK: How was it expressed?

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AD: Well, it was, it was easy--It was probably easier for us than it was for a lot of people because we were, we didn't quite fit into the--We did well in school, and we won prizes and things like that. And so we didn't really fit into the, the mold of, of ugly kinds of, incapable kids who were supposed to come from our neighborhood. But it was a bad--Yeah, it was, of course a bad feeling. And at the same time it was, I guess, that it was sometimes pleasing to come from where we did and to do, and to do well at what we were doing. Say, doing well in school or winning music competitions, winning any kind of competition. And, and, you know, maybe having people's parents ask where we come from and saying that we came from South Wheeling. It was nice to, to, it was nice to see their surprise, and it was, it was nice to puncture their, their sort of blown up impressions of, and, and their stereotypes of, of, you know, of place and people. That was good. But it was, it was, I guess in general, still, it was very hard and unpleasant. Not very nice.

CNK: Did you finally socialize mostly with other South Wheeling kids?

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AD: No, mostly not. Only, only with a couple of people we'd known for a really long time since, oh, since kindergarten. But otherwise, otherwise we were kind of, we were kind of different from them. I mean we didn't, we didn't do the same things. We weren't in the same classes at school because when the division, you know, those divisions by, based on some kind of ability level happened in junior high school, most everybody from our neighborhood was in a lower, lower division class than, than the kids from other neighborhoods.

CNK: What was that all about? How'd that come to be?

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AD: Well, I don't know! I mean I guess nobody could ever see the parents of the kids in our neighborhood weren't, in general aren't very well educated. I don't know. I suppose that, you know, more, more poor people are, are less smart than, than rich people. That seems to be one thing that's true.

CNK: Less smart?

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AD: Well, less smart in a school way. Less able to educate themselves. I mean in, just in--Well, I don't know, it does seem to be that way. And you need a lot of luck to--Well, you need a lot of luck if you don't have a lot of money, I think, sometimes. But--And it's true also, I guess, that in our neighborhood parents don't have the time to spend with their kids or the extra, the money to give their kids things like lessons. And not the time to figure out, or not the time to make a nice yard for the kids to play in. Or the time to, to decide that, you know, that your, their daughters will learn to play the cello or to be great dancers. Or the time to read them, you know, to read them *Huckleberry Finn* before they go to sleep. Because it's, it's just always, because it's harder, it's more disorganized. There's always much more to do, it seems somehow, at homes in our neighborhood than at other places. And it always takes longer and it often doesn't, doesn't come out quite, quite as well!

CNK: As opposed to how? Paint us a picture of how you were raised. Tell us your parents' names and just what kind of people they were and what you would do in your own home.

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AD: Well, my parents' names were, are Maureen Sullivan Drury and John Drury. We weren't so, we weren't very different from, I guess, most of the families around in many ways. We did--Our parents did pay attention to the things like--Well, they liked that we, the idea that we would have lessons in different kinds of things. Like I took music lessons from the time I was ten until I graduated from high school, which is very unusual in our neighborhood. And my sister took tennis lessons. And we took dance lessons and gymnastics. Art lessons. We for a long time didn't have a car, so we went to places that were close. We would go to the river lots walking. We would ride the bus sometimes out to Wheeling Park, which was a great, you know, it was a very big, exciting trip not to be taken lightly. My sister and I read books a lot in our house. My father was home because that's where he worked, so that was a little unusual. My mother was the one who worked outside the house when she was teaching.

CNK: Your mom was a teacher?

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AD: She was a teacher out--She was the teacher of English at Wheeling College.

CNK: And your dad?

AD: Was a translator who worked just upstairs with a typewriter that made a lot of noise so that in the kitchen you could hear the sounds, especially when he was using the space bar. You could hear the floor shaking a little bit. I mean it was the ceiling in the kitchen. You could always tell when he was working or what he was doing. And my sister and I used to get cross because we couldn't--Sometimes he would start working early on Saturday mornings, early being eight-thirty, and there wouldn't be any way for us to stay asleep while the typewriter was going, we thought. Anyhow--And so my father was able very much to set his own hours, which he did. And he would get up very early in the morning and work regular numbers of hours a day, like regular eight-hour days. And he would divide it up in, in various ways depending on

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what it seemed like we would be doing that day. I played softball in this, in the South Wheeling Softball League from the time that I was in second grade until about the time I was in seventh. And when I started playing they were desperate for a pitcher and found that I could throw the ball over the plate, I guess a reasonable percentage of the time. So I started pitching when I was in second grade and pitched all those years. And for a while I did, did very well. The team never did well. We were always, we always did poorly. But it was nice to play, and it was nice to go to practices after school. And my parents, especially my father, liked that I was playing. And they liked to come to the games, which were on the field right behind the, I think the nail plant, nails, LaBelle plant. Which isn't really a very, it seemed like such a big field, but it's not really. It's sort of smooshed back in there behind the factory, behind the parking lot and right next to the house that's decorated for Christmas all year round. It's a red, it's a red house with tons and tons of, of plastic ornaments

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outside, shepherds, Jesus, all kinds of bells, Santas. Thousands and thousands of ornaments are on that house, and it stays up all year round. So I remember sometimes during practice we would just shuffle around, and I remember standing out in the, in left field. It was very, very hot, and nobody was hitting any

balls to me, just looking at, looking and looking at that Christmas house. I think the only thing that's happened is that there have been more ornaments added. And I don't think now that anyone will ever take all those ornaments down! There are so many.

CNK: Did you know the owner?

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AD: No. Eventually--We didn't know the owner. I think nobody knew him, but some people knew who he was. And one time finally when I was downtown somebody pointed him out to me as, as the owner of the Christmas house. But he, he looked, he looked appropriate for that role ... because he wasn't--He looked very introverted. And I think that he was wearing headphones, and he wears, he wears headphones all the time. At least every other time I've seen him he's been wearing headphones. He's a difficult man to figure out. I'm not sure what his name is or if he has any friends or if he talks to people. Or where he works. I suppose he works somewhere downtown because that's where he was. Maybe, you know--Or if his colleagues know if he lives in that house that's covered with Christmas ornaments. But it's a famous house, and you can see it from the highway. And sometimes when people's friends come to visit, they'll take them driving past the Christmas house. And my sister didn't play sports, but she worked at, well, she worked at the zoo at Oglebay Park once we had a car.

CNK: At the what?

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AD: She worked at the zoo at Oglebay Park helping to take care of the animals.

CNK: What is her name and was she older or younger?

AD: Her name is Virginia, and she's a year and a half younger than I am. Because my father was from New York, we did go every so often to New York City on the bus, which was, which was nice and different too because most, most people in our neighborhood haven't been to New York City. And we sometimes, once we had the car, went to Columbus in the car to visit my mother's family. We got the car when I was in third grade. It wasn't a very nice car. It took us a while to realize that. At first we were so excited just to be getting a car. We got it--We, we got it from Wheeling Island, a person on Wheeling Island who was selling it. And one of my parents' friends drove us over to get it. He drove a really nice blue car. But this car was green that we were getting. Green and very big. And I remember that we drove home with,

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with, not, not with my parents. Because it seemed to us that there was no reason to think that either of our parents could drive a car. They never had before when, you know, had driven us anywhere. So we rode home with our, our parents' friend, not with our parents. And I remember that our parents' friend stopped us, stopped to get ice cream for us on the way. And our, our parents did make it home okay in the green car. But it was always my mother who drove, never my father because he grew up in New York City and never learned to drive. And I remember going to school and telling my teacher that we had just gotten a car and that it could go as fast as 120 miles an hour. Sometimes--I guess I hadn't really looked very closely at the speedometers on cars, and I didn't know that every car has a speedometer that goes up to about 120 miles an hour at least! And it was an old FBI car. This was what the man who sold us the car on Wheeling

Island told my parents anyway. And that seemed too, I thought, I guess it was, if it was an FBI car it must go much

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faster than regular cars. And my third grade teacher said that she hoped that my father didn't drive it at 120 miles an hour. But I didn't tell her that my father didn't drive it at all! And the car--It was nice for a month or two in my sister and my eyes, but after that it lost status really, really rapidly! And it, it didn't--It soon made, it soon seemed to make way too much noise and be not, not as all shiny enough, also to be the wrong shape. After a while certain shapes of cars mark them as being sort of unreasonably old! And it happened quickly with it, the Ford Torino. And it kept needing repairs. And when it would get the repairs, I guess, my sister and I would be disappointed that it didn't, it didn't come out looking better than it did. And sometimes they seemed to be incomplete, like it, it started to rust, and it needed some body work done on it. But when they finished with that body work they didn't repaint it its, its shiny green color. They just left it sort of modeled gray. That was really

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embarrassing for us. We would have our mother--By the time we were in junior high school we'd have our mother drop us off a short distance away from school if possible, and then we would walk so that no one would see us drive up in that car. That was if it was raining. We didn't usually get a ride to school anyway. Yeah, we were always, we were always hiding for a while there because of the green car! And we went--Well, we went a lot to the playgrounds around where we were when we were growing up. And a lot, lots of all kinds of things that now seem very, very uninteresting are, are yucky and commercial. Yeah, they seem that way now, but then they were a really big deal. Like going to look for Easter eggs at the Hills store that was in Benwood. Or going to Benwood Park and getting ice cream. Or going to Dairy Queen and getting ice cream. We got a lot of ice cream.

CNK: And you walked there?

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AD: We would walk, um hmm. We would--We went often to the--Well, we always went to the Christmas parade in the wintertime.

CNK: Tell me about that.

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AD: Well, it was usually too cold for us to be completely ... to the parade! There were bands always. I don't remember what was so impressive about it to us. I think it was mostly just--It was more that, that people had actually come out of their houses and were lined up along the curb, everybody. We always saw lots of people from school. And there were--Nothing was that spectacular to look at. I mean I think we had that feeling when we were standing there, but it was, it was exciting that, that people had come out to look at it all anyway. There were--Well, for some years we were in it for one reason or another. Like I was in it with bands for a lot of years. And sometimes Bridget was on a float or a fire truck, I think.

CNK: You would go through South Wheeling then?

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AD: No, it would only go through downtown. We would come up from, up from home. And we practiced with a junior high school band marching around South Wheeling so that we would be ready to march around downtown. And sometimes we marched right past our house, in fact. And that, that march from the junior high school, which sometimes seemed a little out of control. The band director wasn't always at the front of the band. And so--And we never had instructions as to exactly where to go. So it was sort of a toss-up at every corner whether we would turn or not and just how far south we would go before the band director would manage to tell the people in the front that they should turn around. And they also weren't really careful about which streets they marched up and down. We marched right down our street, for example, which is too narrow even to, for, for the junior high school band. That would be sort of messy.

CNK: What did you play?

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AD: The flute. But it was, it was nice. The most impressive part about marching was the drummers. And at least--Because they played loudly and, and with some rhythm. And we felt like, like we were a real band marching somewhere. We had some--We felt that we had some dignity because of the drummers who were usually not--They were--Most of them were this--Most of them were from our neighborhood, a little farther south. They weren't usually much help in any situation, but they were, they were real, were a real plus as far as the band was concerned.

CNK: What junior high school was this?

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AD: It was Wheeling Junior High School on Chapline Street near, that must be 35th and Chapline Street. Right, right there by the river also.

CNK: Is that still there?

AD: Um hmm. It's still there. Now it's Wheeling Middle School instead of Junior High School. We went to church sometimes growing up. For a while when we had the car we drove out to Wheeling College Church. But eventually we, we were going all the time to St. Mary's Church, which is on 36th Street. My sister and I didn't like St. Mary's Church as well as we liked Wheeling College Church, but that was too bad! Because St. Mary's was very ...

CNK: Why was that?

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AD: It seemed--I think it seemed a very white and decorated church--

CNK: Which?

AD: St. Mary's. And we didn't like that. At least I didn't like that; it made me uncomfortable. The ceiling was too high. That made me sort of nervous. Yeah, it was all a little too ceremonial! Wheeling College seemed a little less that way. There were plain chairs that you sat in for one thing, and the ceiling was not incredibly high at all! We went sometimes to St. Mary's and then sometimes to the Polish church which was on 45th Street. The Polish church had Polish mass sometimes. And we didn't always--They would tell you ahead of time which, which mass was going to be Polish. And it may even have been a certain Sunday, like the second Sunday of every month or the second and fourth Sundays. But we didn't

really keep track of that too well, and sometimes we wound up there when, when there was a Polish mass!  
Which was--It was nice for variety sake, but not, not--It was nice to hear the

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sound of Polish. I, I guess maybe it was better than English because you could imagine. Like in a sermon in Polish you could just imagine what the priest was saying. That was, that was fun to do. And there was a choir in the Polish church who sang in Polish. Mostly the choir was made up of pretty old people as, as, I guess, was most of the congregation. But you could hear in the voices of the, the choir that they were old! There was a sort of slow, thin sound about, about them. And they also sang, they tended to sing slowly. And they would, they would slow down as they sang so that by the end they would be dragging, they would be dragging a lot. They took a long, long time sometimes to get through a hymn at the Polish church. But the Polish church was much prettier inside than St. Mary's. It was very nice. It was really blue, and the windows were awfully pretty windows.

CNK: Can you describe them?

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AD: I didn't take in all of the pictures, but in, most they were pictures and they were stained glass windows with pictures relating to the immigration from, immigration into America. There was one, one had the Statue of Liberty on it. I think there were some boats. It was unusual to have windows like that in a Catholic church, it seemed to me, because they were telling a real, you know, a real life kind of story and a recent one. They always had cookies in the basement of the Polish church after mass. They were good cookies. And it was the--I'm not sure how they always found a priest who was able to, to speak Polish. And the, the same priest took St. Ladislaus, the Polish church, as took St. Mary's. So at St. Mary's he always gave masses in English, and at St. Ladislaus he often gave them in Polish. I suppose there aren't many priests who could do that. And in general, the--Well, everything was sort of slow, I guess, about St. Ladislaus. Like the, the people would come slowly to church.

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At least it seemed that they came slowly. The cars would drive slowly. People who were coming from close by, they would come walking slowly, most of them. I--Most of them were, I guess, well, most of them were old and a lot of them couldn't move that well. And inside, too--I guess there was a very patient feeling church. You--It wasn't like, it wasn't like, well, the church where we went when we were on summer vacation and, which was on an island.

(Tape One, Side Two)

AD: And at the Polish church definitely people were going to stay. In fact probably that's the thing that they, you know, had been planning still, at least many people. It was their main, main event.

CNK: What was?

AD: ... church. There wasn't anything--There was no, no reason to be anxious to leave.

CNK: I'm sorry, can you say that again?

(005)

AD: I said there's no reason to be anxious to leave the Polish church for the people who were there. The

Polish church was right next to the ice--It is still, next to the ice factory, which is a hard place to figure out. In my mind those places are really closely associated. I mean we never knew--We would always see the ice factory when we were coming home from church, walking by it. We never knew really how they make ice there or why they have a, they have a place along the river it seems where they're authorized to, I'm not sure authorized, to, to dump things. But what kinds of things would a ice factory have to dump anywhere. That was puzzling also since it's just water that's involved in making ice. And there are ice machines out in front of the ice factory and trucks there coming and going at sort of odd hours sometimes. And I know somebody who I went to high school with who worked at the ice

(018)

factory. I think he worked in the nights, but I'm not sure what he did. And for a while the ice factory had, had a sign on it that said trespassers would be shot. And it wasn't, it wasn't one of those signs that you get from a stand in the mall that's a joke. It was a really serious looking sign. And so we would always cross to the other side of the street when we walked by the ice factory during the time that sign was up because we didn't know how, how they determined who was a trespasser and who was not. But the ice factory came so close right up against the sidewalk that we thought it would be easy to be mistaken for somebody who was trespassing. It was an awfully scary sign.

CNK: It seemed to scare your parents as well?

(028)

AD: No, I don't think that it did scare them!

CNK: Did you experience the same patience that the parishioners did at the Polish church?

AD: I don't suppose I experienced that patience anywhere. But I did more at the Polish church than at, than at St. Mary's. No, I can't say that I did! No.

CNK: How were you received there--

AD: Well--

CNK: In the Polish church?

(034)

AD: I don't know. I think--I don't know if we were--Well, we, we just went there and, and were there. And I guess that--I suppose that the people who went there lots and who had been going there forever knew one another really well and knew who, you know, they, they knew who they were. But there was never a feeling that we were intruding in any way. It was a very--Whatever kind of--I don't know, whatever kind of special, special fellowship those people who are Polish and had been there forever had, wasn't, wasn't at all an overt kind of--It wasn't overt, and it wasn't exclusive. It was a very silent kind of fellowship. So-- And there were people who we knew at the Polish church, like our old third grade teacher. There were a lot of familiar people that way.

CNK: Did your family practice any kind of ethnic traditions of its own?

(047)

AD: No. No, we didn't. We had--No we didn't have any traditions. We knew that we would pay special attention to St. Patrick's Day, for instance. So we knew that we were Irish. But no, no traditions.

CNK: Was St. Mary's a place that had a lot of Irish people?

AD: No, I don't think so. There were probably a lot of Polish people at St. Mary's too. I don't think there were a lot of Irish people anywhere around.

CNK: So it was something you kept to yourselves?

(057)

AD: Well, I suppose so, although it didn't seem that way because we hardly, we hardly ourselves kept it! And it never seemed--It was--It never seemed something that involved any kind of, any kind of practice or any kind of, or necessitated any kind of acknowledgment that was, well, any kind of overt acknowledgment ... didn't, it wasn't very significant.

CNK: Was it in terms of how you view other people in Wheeling, either adults downtown or kids at school? Were you aware, well, this person is from this nationality?

(066)

AD: No, I never was. The only time that I thought about it--I ... the way that I became aware of it at all, thinking about ethnicity, was when we went, I guess when we went to visit my mother's family in, in Columbus where ... often in neighborhoods there often people seem to be all--I realized people didn't seem to have any attachment to an ethnicity the way that--Then I became aware that, you know, that having, like having a Polish church and Ukrainian church and a Lithuanian church right very close was kind of unusual. And that people, you know, sold pierogie sandwiches was also kind of unusual. Nobody, you know, nobody did that in my grandparents' neighborhood. It, it seemed, you know, in that way, I guess, I realized that there was a sort of unusual ethnic strength in neighborhood around. But it wasn't, it wasn't something that, that was related in my mind to the kids who I went to school with at all.

CNK: Did you say Lithuanian church?

(083)

AD: Um hmm. There's a Lithuanian church in Center Wheeling.

CNK: Do you know where?

AD: It's, it's near Eoff Street in Center Wheeling. I don't know. I can see it in my mind, but I don't know the streets well enough to know. It must be 26th, 27th, 24th. It must be around 23rd Street and Eoff Street.

CNK: So maybe just south of the Lebanese church, Lady of Lebanon?

AD: Yeah.

CNK: Wow, this is fascinating. Anything else come to your mind? These images are great.

(096)

AD: Nothing else comes to my mind.

CNK: Do you feel like talking a little bit about some of your, more about school? Maybe some of the teachers, either elementary school or junior high, or even getting up into high school, what those years were like.

(100)

AD: Well, the teachers in elementary school were--I think most of them had been teaching in, in Ritchie Elementary School for a long time, or they seemed pretty closely connected with one another. It was a very

gentle school, that elementary school at that time. Now people say that, that it's an unpleasant place in many ways. I don't know because I have never gone back there. But it was then very gentle and the teachers were, it seems to me they were very gentle. And I guess--Well, I guess in a way elementary school always seems like a, at least in retrospect, seems like a hopeful time. I mean many of the kids who I went to elementary school with, you know, got into trouble in high school, or didn't finish high school, or did very badly in high school. But I remember being in elementary school with them, and, you know, they did very well or we seemed always very evenly matched, the kids in my classes

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and I, to me in ways that later we were not. And it's, it's sort of puzzling to me to think that there developed such a big gap. Like by the time I was in high school, the people in my neighborhood were, you know, they were not, they weren't thought of by people in my classes as good company. I mean they were hardly regarded by them at all. There was such a, there was such a division by that time so that I would, you know, the people who I rode the bus to school with were not people who I saw again all day in any of my classes at school. And then we would get back on the bus. But in, in elementary school we all--You know, in elementary school these people won, these kids won awards, and they got special prizes and they did very well at different kinds of things. And it's difficult to say--In some instances it's very difficult to say why such a, a gap opened up, I think. I have a friend who did very well in

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elementary school with all his--We were always in the same classes and did, you know, got the same kind, got the same grades. We did the same work basically. And now she's, she hasn't gone to college, and she still lives in South Wheeling. And she--Things just haven't worked out well at all. It's very puzzling that, that things worked out so easily for me when they didn't for her. Because the real, you know, the real truth of any comparison that a person might make, I think, is, is in that elementary school time when we were practically just the same in many ways. Junior high school was not such a good place, I don't think. But maybe that's because it's an odd time. Elementary school was nice because we often had programs, and lots of people in the neighborhood would come. We had a spring program and a fall program when everybody sang and sometimes did little dances. But the main

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part was singing, and the band played. And parents came to that and took a lot of photographs. And elementary school is nice too because we could walk back and forth. And we had certain--Certain years we had certain routes. For a while we weren't allowed to walk by ourselves anyway. But when we were we knew there were some routes that took us by an awful, awful lot of dogs. For a while we had, we knew every dog that we would pass. We had our own names for them. Sometimes we had little games that we played with them that involved running, running past their fences, usually in, in the different ways that they responded! And again different, different walks home had different sorts of moods with them. Usually we liked to walk down the alleys, I guess, because they seemed more exciting. Walking down the streets felt very peaceful usually. Except for one street, which was Jacob Street which, I guess, felt kind of grungy to walk down. We didn't too often walk down that street.

CNK: Who was we?

(170)

AD: My sister and I and usually one of our friends. And sometimes too we would take certain ways if we were going to stop somewhere, like to stop at the store and get, and get candy on the way home. And everybody--For the first, you know, for the first four years everybody was within walking distance. You went to that school. And then for the last two years there were some people who came down--Oh, no, that's wrong, there were always people who came on buses. It was nice to be someone who walked to school because the buses, people always had to wait for their bus to be called, and we could just exit! That was exciting. It was much more efficient.

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CNK: You talked about this dichotomy that was somehow created by the time, I guess, junior high school came where you'd be on the bus with people and you wouldn't see them all day?

AD: Umm.

CNK: Well then you got back on the bus, did you have relationships with them still?

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AD: Only--Well we had relationships with the people who we always had had relationships with, our two friends from the neighborhood. But in, in general, the people, the bus was filled with people we, we, who knew our names, but didn't, didn't speak to us. Some people who I had played softball with were on the bus, but they weren't people--They pretty much ignored us, and we pretty much ignored them!

CNK: On what basis? Where, where did this separation come from? Was it, was it that you were winning these prizes or was it that people who came to your, your households spoke good English, proper English?

(198)

AD: Well, the separation had always been there in that we had always ignored, we had always ignored most, most of the kids in our neighborhood, and they had ignored us too. I don't know where that came from. I mean that was a long, long time ago. We were scared of the kids in our neighborhood in general. Just--We were scared of everybody! The only--So it's--Yeah, so there's really no way to say where it came from. It only became more pronounced in that it seemed to be sanctioned in a way by school by the time we got to high school, that, that separation. But as far as our perception as being ... kids, that's the way that it happened always. And not based on anything like, not based on anything like that, that the people who came to our house spoke good English, but just on the fact that they were, we were strangers to one another for whatever, you know, we were--Well, I suppose we

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were all pretty scared, in fact, and busy with our own projects. The only striking part was it was that it was true during those years that the people who had been our, our good friends in the neighborhood became more distant, I guess. And, in fact, when we were on the bus didn't, didn't talk to us very freely, nor did we talk to them very freely. The school bus was a strange place. It's often strange, I think.

CNK: How so?

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AD: Well, it, it's awfully close quarters, and it's an awful lot of kids. And people's meannesses come out in striking ways on the school bus really. It's a long ride from, from our neighborhood to school. It takes, say, twenty-five minutes. There's a lot of time for things to happen. For a while there was somebody living in our neighborhood who was black. And the people on the bus were so mean to her that she stopped riding it for, it was for a good while. Then she came back again and nothing happened. But it was a, it wasn't a really comfortable place.

CNK: What ways were they mean to her?

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AD: Well, they threw things at her and called her names.

CNK: Racial names?

AD: Yeah.

CNK: But you somehow were, were real encouraged by your teachers?

AD: I suppose that we were, yeah.

CNK: Did you feel close to some of your teachers?

(245)

AD: Not after elementary school really. But in elementary school definitely. In fact, all of the teachers. Particularly in elementary school there was one--Well, there was one teacher who was the teacher of this class that was called the gifted and talented class. You took tests, you know, to, to get into it. And I think, in fact, they let in a lot of kids--Well, I know they let in a lot of kids who didn't meet the state standards for that kind of class. In fact, I am sure I didn't meet the state standards for that kind of class, but the, the teacher in charge of it, I guess, wasn't very interested in, in keeping the state standards! So we had-- Beginning in fourth grade we, we always had our English class and then some other special class with this particular teacher. So it came to maybe two or so hours a day. It was very, it was unusual. It was, it's a very strong program, I think. We did an awful lot in that class, and the teacher was very--Well, she was very kind. She had--She was a very distinctive person who ... She walked in a, she walked in a very distinctive way with her toes turned out. Well, everything was distinctive about her. And--

CNK: I'm sorry, can you say that again?

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AD: I said everything was distinctive about her, really. In fact, so distinctive that I hesitate to describe it! Because I feel that it, she, it would be so recognizable to anybody! It was a good--I guess that, you know, we did some--The class was unusual in that we, for an English class, in that we, oh, things like we had to make up our own spelling words by going to the dictionary and finding them. And we read--We had these sort of fancy reading books from which we read parts of *The Iliad*, say, or *The Odyssey*. That was unusual too. We played lots of, lots of games that were supposed to sharpen your mind, like games in which there are four people coming to a party and they have four different color of car and, you know, four different children and live in four different neighborhoods, and you're supposed to figure out from these little clues who lives where with what child and what car. And math games.

CNK: I'm afraid it will pick up that knocking.

(290)

AD: And we took trips with that group of people that the rest of the people didn't take.

CNK: Can you say that again.

AD: We took trips in that class that nobody else took, like to--We didn't go very far ever, but--And we had guests come too. We had a French teacher come! And we learned to sing songs in French and, and to have small conversations in French. And people would--Well, people would--Sometimes parents would come. One person's father collected antiques, so he would come and talk about his antiques. And my father, since he knew a lot of languages, would come and give a little lesson. I think he usually gave a little lesson on Turkish, which was supposed to, to connect somehow with our study of English grammar. And we went-- One place that we always went was to see the miniature exhibit at, at the Oglebay Park Stifel Center, which was lots of doll houses that were really elaborately furnished in small, small furniture. Things like teeny little

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teapots and teeny little magazines. Teeny little lights that worked. The interesting part about the exhibit was how much stuff really worked.

CNK: Were you able to relate Oglebay and the Stifel to the other elements of your life in South Wheeling?

(315)

AD: I suppose--Yeah, I certainly--

CNK: I guess you had some affiliation with Oglebay because your sister worked there you said?

AD: She did work there, yeah.

CNK: And was driven there?

(318)

AD: Yeah. Yeah, that's when we had the green car. It never--Things--No, things never seemed very disjointed to me in that way. Except, again, our car was the loudest car of all picking anybody up when the zoo stuff was over at Oglebay Park. But that just seemed like bad luck to us.

CNK: Bad luck. Well, did you look forward to going to school?

(331)

AD: Usually. Well, usually in elementary school in general. Almost never in junior high school. There were certain, I guess even, even elementary school had its, well, had its traumas. Like in, in second grade there were, oh, what were called speed tests when you had to do math really quickly. It was multiplication. In fact, lots of things that year seemed to be concerned with doing things quickly. Like we were learning to write in script, and we would have these tests where we had to write--The teacher would read letters, and we had to write them in script really, really quickly. I remember forgetting how to write the letter Z. I couldn't for the life of me how to do it. And those math speed tests were very hard for my sister. They were every Friday, and she was always, always, oh, she was always in bed until the very last minute, often late to school on Fridays. Sometimes so upset that she stayed home from school

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because it was so dreadful to be asked to do math with such rapidity. I think it was always addition. Oh,

no, it was multiplication. So there, there are those kinds of things. There were spelling bees at school every so often. In fact, the spelling bee was kind of a big deal. It happened in the spring. I think it started--It was for fourth and fifth and sixth graders. And people practiced at home. And whoever won that spelling bee would go onto the next spelling bee and the next spelling bee after that. And it was sort of, it was sort of sharp competition at times. I mean to the people in the spelling bee it was important, at least to some of them!

CNK: Including you?

(364)

AD: Yeah, it was important to me, I think. Well, it was important to me that I not fail, and I was standing up. It was so, it was so frightening to stand and speak into a microphone.

CNK: Microphone.

(369)

AD: And it was also, it also became important to, to beat this one certain boy who was in my class. That, that too mattered.

CNK: And then junior high brought some new troubles?

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AD: Yeah, junior high was just unpleasant, I think. The building of junior high was very different from the building of elementary school. Because the elementary school was so old, and in general it had a kind of, what, I guess it had a kind of friendliness that the junior high school building didn't. The junior high school building was decorated in this, it had a lot of yellow carpets and walls with, with circles painted on them, say, or squares or lines that were half yellow and half green, or blue and orange. It was a particular kind of decor. It was very different from elementary school. I think maybe things would have been a little easier if it had seemed a nicer place to be. Also elementary school had many windows, and junior high school had very few. And there was a, a porch on, on the junior high school. That was sort of unfortunate too. Because at elementary school you just walked up, and you

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either came across the playground or you came up the front steps. But the junior high school you had to come from one particular corner on a certain sidewalk. And the porch was right above that on either side, whichever direction you came from. And there were often boys on that porch who would lean over and spit on you or try to spit on you when you were coming down the street. And so, you know, from the very beginning of the day you had to be careful, very careful about where you were going. That's kind of what junior high school was like, all of it!

CNK: Any teachers who kind of saved it for you?

(405)

AD: No, not really, no. Some teachers were good, yeah. There was no saving it, I don't think. But some of them were good. Some of them were bad too. The gym, the gym teachers played poker while we played whatever we were playing. We played--We would play dodge ball, and they would play cards. Or we would play kickball, and they would play cards. They had a--They sometimes used the table that, that, or

part of the table that, that the basketball team used to keep, people used to keep score on in, in basketball and volleyball games to play cards. It was a big, white table.

CNK: Were they making money?

(419)

AD: Oh, I don't know. It was impossible to tell. They probably weren't. And

I--I mean they--I suppose--I don't know. My impression is they would have come out evenly, you know, in the end. They played so much, probably would have come out pretty much how they'd been when they'd started, even. It wasn't ... That was, it was an unpleasant class too because there were some people who played these games really viciously, especially when you were playing, when we were playing dodge ball kinds of games. There were some really big boys who threw the balls really hard so that the whole gym would echo with the sound of hitting the wall. And so usually the smartest thing to do was to get out as soon as possible, or just to go and sit down and pretend that you--Because there were always so many balls flying around that you can, nobody could really tell who was being hit. So it was good to just go sit down.

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And probably, probably most of your friends would be already there sitting down too, and you could sit and talk till it was time to start a new round. Then you could go and stand for a little while and then go sit down. In many ways I think it was easy to get by with that kind of non participation in junior high school.

CNK: Was that sanctioned also ... do you suppose?

AD: Was what sanctioned?

CNK: Non participation.

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AD: Oh, no, I don't think exactly. I don't know. I don't think we were watched too closely. In junior high school we also had sewing class and cooking class and wood shop and metal shop. That was different from elementary school. It was sort of interesting. It was peculiar ... to cook at school. We always cooked things with lots of sugar in them! Except once when we cooked something with an egg and toast.

CNK: In school?

(456)

AD: Yeah, it was funny. Lots of cookies and peanut brittle. All the stuff that involved using a pastry cutter. We had to learn, we had to learn things like how many tablespoons in a cup and stuff like that. Also a certain order of procedure for washing dishes. Besides those things, I think that we were graded on--I'm not sure if we were graded on the results of our cooking. We did have little tests anyway. And in sewing class we always had to make pillows until you got to the advanced level of sewing, which I never reached. They were pillows covered with felt and designs. There was a big poster full of possible pillow designs and all kinds of things like an octopus, a radio, a television, a, a hotdog, a hamburger, a cake. There were--You couldn't just--In fact, I don't think that you could just make a plain old pillow. You couldn't because you had to, you had to sew pieces of felt onto something.

CNK: You had to cut out one of their shapes?

(481)

AD: Yeah, you had to cut out the shape too, right. That was sewing class. Wood shop was nice. So was metal shop, sort of unusual places. And a lot of the, the talent in wood shop was, you know, starting to get your, your project to be used as the example for whatever new thing we were, you were going to have to do that day. Because you would be sure that it was done right if the teacher did it on yours to show everybody else what it should look like. And if you could have something done on yours several times, then you could be pretty sure that it would look good in the end. We only made wall shelves in, oh, in wood shop. And also some, sometimes signs, this was advanced wood shop, which I never got to, sometimes signs that said the name of your family. And you see those on lots of houses down around the neighborhood. And you know, they're the kind of thing that you can buy too. But you can usually tell the ones

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that have been made in wood shop, especially if you were in wood shop. And sometimes they're, you know, they're, they're, sometimes they're spelled wrongly because people are so, so busy just trying to keep everything together that they made a mistake with their name. And sometimes they're, have the wrong, you know, they have the wrong punctuation. Like there's an apostrophe when there shouldn't be any apostrophe at all. And in metal shop we made, oh, dustpans and toolboxes and little match holders and little things to hold cans of soda. We made lots of things in metal shop. That was a big difference between elementary school and junior high school, those, those kinds of doing something classes. And in, you know, in high school there are a lot of vocational classes, but they're not mandatory. And those classes were all mandatory in junior high school. So I suppose that there must be lots of,

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you know, there must be lots of houses that have those old dustpans sitting somewhere. We have it. Or those old toolboxes. And lots of those things, you know, just like those name signs, don't work quite properly. Like the lids don't slide well on the toolboxes, or the dustpan is really never flush with the ground when you put it down. That kind of thing. Or you can't hang things up because they're oddly shaped, or, or the shelves are crooked on the wall shelf. But I--And--Yeah, I, I know a lot of people have them. Sometimes I see them when I go to visit my friends.

CNK: Are those South Wheeling objects or are they spread around Wheeling?

(545)

AD: They're spread around more.

CNK: What kind of development were you undergoing then, say, in junior high school, high school? How were your interests developing?

(552)

AD: Umm. I don't really know. I mean especially junior high school. I don't know. I feel like I didn't really have interests or interests that were, that would develop anywhere. I must be wrong, but junior high school was mostly a, a time for, you know, was a time for trying to avoid social disaster. And that took all my energy really! And it didn't work anyhow! The only thing that happened was junior high school ended. In junior high school I played basketball. That was good. And played the flute still, but not very seriously. And wrote some things for contests but never for anything that was not a contest, I don't think.

Oh, occasionally wrote some things and won things occasionally. Like a--The best prize was a prize that involved, oh, it was a ride in an airplane at the Ohio County Airport. It was good. It was fun. It was sort of an unusually good prize. I mean in later years the prizes were things like, oh, they were riding on the, riding on the *Valley Voyager* on the Ohio River,

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which wouldn't necessarily be a bad prize except that they went riding when it was--Oh, in fact, I, I did that too. It was way too early in the year to go. It was freezing. That was the problem with that prize! It was awfully uncomfortable. But the airplane ride was good.

CNK: What kind of perspective did that give you on your home?

(590)

AD: Well, I guess not a very--It was a very fast airplane ride. It was, it was interesting to see how all the places hooked together, places that had seemed very separated by altitude, I guess, were not so much from the airplane. So you could see how the places related to one another in more two-dimensional terms. Like north, south, east, west. It was also an interesting airplane ride because the man who took us to the airport had one of those radar detectors in his car. And I had never seen a radar detector before. It was, it was fascinating first I thought. I didn't understand what it did. And at first--When I began to understand I thought, no, it's not possible that a teacher would have one of these in his car, certainly not possible that he would have it on while he was driving us. But he did have one in his car, and he did have it on. And I guess he did speed when it didn't beep and didn't speed when it did. That was, was another discovery associated with that particular prize.

CNK: That prize was for what?

(621)

AD: It was for writing something. I'm not sure what it was that I wrote. On a certain theme, and I'm not sure what the theme was. I think that it had to do with outer space or space travel in some, was supposed to in some way. It was exciting--Well, an added part of winning this prize was that the, the same boy of the spelling bees was thoroughly indignant that I had been the winner and not him. That was, I guess, fun to make somebody so upset and not have had to, you know, overtly try to do, try to do so!

CNK: So writing has been with you for a while?

AD: Umm, for a while.

CNK: How has that developed for you?

(644)

AD: Well, I don't know. It's--There aren't very many--After, after elementary school in that class where we wrote, we wrote very often and we had to write stories and poems frequently in that class, there weren't many other places where I had to write anything. Sometimes it makes a difference to have to write, I guess, to have to write something besides essays and reports. There was a summer when we went to a, my friend and I went to a program that was, it was at West Liberty State College. And we wrote all month there. That was after sophomore year of high school. That was a good, a good thing to do. It was good to, you know--What we did was, I think that we read things in the morning, and in the afternoon we had, just had

to write from, maybe it was for three hours. And if you have to then, you know, then you come up with things. And sometimes I remember it was very dreadful. I mean it was--Because you could see that it was very sunny outside, you didn't really have

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anything to say particularly. It was boring. It was awfully quiet. You could fall asleep. It would be nice to be reading or be nice to just go--It would be nice to leave! Sometimes it's very difficult to see any reason why you should write anything at all. But that must always be true, or must often be true. That was a--It was a good program. And people who I've talked to at school, in fact, have been very surprised that there's a--I guess their image of West Virginia doesn't really jive with there being a program where people read poems by Wallace Stevens and tried to imitate them. But that's what we did. I don't think it's, it's so--I wouldn't have thought that it would have been so startling, but it was to them.

CNK: Have you been to much of the state outside of Wheeling?

(705)

AD: A fair, to a fair. Yeah, we traveled all over with the marching band in high school. And then traveling to do things like go camping. Yeah, I've been pretty many places.

CNK: And did Wheeling seem like a very different place from the rest of the state? Or did it all line up pretty well?

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AD: Well, it seemed a little disappointing in comparison with the rest of the state, I guess. Not too, too industrial. Too populated. I, I thought often that I would, you know, that I would like to live on a farm somewhere. That I would like that better. And ... there's more spectacular--There's so many places where the way that hills and the mountains look is spectacular. This seemed a little disappointing.

(Tape Two, Side One)

CNK: You were talking about other, other people, maybe some of your Yale colleagues, their impressions of West Virginia versus your own. I think you were also talking about your development writing. Go either way on that. I sort of ... I apologize.

(005)

AD: The only other things about people's impressions about West Virginia ... I think the people have been disappointed when they found out that where I'm from in West Virginia is, is here. I--Somebody said to me, I guess he looked at a map very excited to see what part of West Virginia I lived in, and saw that it was way up here, north in the panhandle, and said that it was just a cartographical error that, that where I lived was called West Virginia. I think he was hoping that, that I would be from somewhere like, oh, I don't know, Albertville, West Virginia, or something like that. There's a person--There was a person in my class at Yale who was from farther south in West Virginia. And, in fact--Well, he, he's a very nice guy, and he, he seems, I think, to many people like, like you would expect a person from West Virginia to be, very friendly and very unpretentious. Someone who goes home and works as a

(019)

construction worker in, in the summer. And everybody in the town knows his name. And at graduation, in

fact, he won this prize for being the most, the most friendly, the most tolerant, the most generous person in our college was, was the gist of the prize, I guess. I think that's how people imagine someone from West Virginia to be. He was sort of the epitome of that. As far as writing is concerned, there were, there was a special class for--There was another kind of gifted English class in high school, but I didn't--I think that I hadn't scored highly enough on things in the past, those kinds of tests you take to get into those kinds of programs to be in it, so I wasn't in that. Still, sometimes, I mean I, yeah, I wrote by myself. I guess at sometimes it seemed, it mostly seemed a kind of commodity, being able to write. Maybe that's more recently. Like it's much, it's much easier--Well, people will pay more attention if you can write things down well. So it's convenient. Like if you send a, sending letters, especially if you, if you need something or you want something. Like if you want help from somebody, if you can write well then you can send them

(037)

a letter, and they'll probably help you. You just make more sense to people, I think, when you can write well. And that way it's handy and not, not that I can always do that, but you can see that that's, that's one thing that happens. And that, that, you know, when you can't things will be hard. I have a friend in, who lives just up the street from me at home, and who can't, you know, he can't explain himself very well speaking either. And there are many respects in which he could use, well, there are many respects in which he could use help. But he's not able to, able to get it, I guess. And, again, it's an instance in which people have slower, and which no one's really watching very carefully what, what's happening to him. He's sort of slipped out, slipped through junior high school and high school. And it's--Wow, this is a tangent! It's, it's strange to have somebody, you know, to have somebody so close by who is so,

(049)

maybe who would need so little to get off on the right foot somehow, but still for whom there's nobody to, to provide that. It seems that that often, it seems that that often happens in our neighborhood. And it's, it's odd, one gets a different perspective, you know, going away to school, for example. And also being given an awful lot of money to go to school. If, you know, for people who need maybe 500 dollars to get on a bus and go somewhere and find a job. The idea of being given thousands and thousands of dollars to go to school must seem--I don't know what it seems like. Ridiculous? Impossible? It seems unfortunate that there is such a, such a big difference. And certainly at school there's been, I felt, a difference between how, how demanding--I remember when I, that when I arrived at school most people seemed pretty demanding to me in what they expected of, of other people. Even--You

(066)

know, often in very innocuous ways, but, but still it was striking. I mean the, in what they expected to have, or assumed that they would have, or assumed that people would do from them, for them. Very different from the way that people were at home, and very different from the kinds of lives that people who I had graduated from school with who live in my neighborhood, you know, from the way things are for them.

CNK: Can you say where you went to school?

(072)

AD: Where I went to college? Oh, to Yale University.

CNK: So the people you met there were somehow more demanding?

AD: They were more demanding. They were just used to more, I guess. I mean they were more demanding in the sense that they thought there should be somebody to come and clean our suite, for example, my first year. That was sort of strange. Oh, expected, oh, expected to be able to travel a certain amount. At home, you know, people don't expect to be able to travel! Expected, you know, expected to have computers. Expected to have--Just all, all kinds of things, I guess, that I didn't think of and didn't think twice about many things. Like going to get a new dress or having twelve or fifteen pairs of shoes. Things like that. That was different that way.

CNK: What was that like for you to be surrounded by people who expected so much more in that sense?

(087)

AD: I guess initially it was unpleasant. After a while it became more invisible, I think. I think--And, and it was, it was tempered by the fact, I think, that, that to, to a lot of people I seemed, I don't know, I must have seemed sort of strikingly undemanding, I guess, in a way that made them treat me, I think, particularly kindly. So I feel like I got a, a sort of special dose of people that, that was much more, maybe much more tolerable than, than other doses would have been.

CNK: In some sense you brought out the best in people, and they tried to be their best around you?

(097)

AD: Well, that would be a--I don't know. That would be a generous way of describing it! I don't know if that's what was happening.

CNK: I thought that's what you were saying.

(101)

AD: And it's true that after, you know, as, as school, and maybe even during school, I thought occasionally, and, and as school is drawing to a close it occurred to me that I've, you know, that I've become more demanding than I was when I arrived. And more sort of assuming of certain, assuming that I will have certain things or that I ought to have certain things, or that things ought to be a certain way. Not in an extreme way at all, but I, I feel, and it's hard to tell, that it's, that more of that has, has, some of that crept into me too while I was, while I was there. Just because--I suppose because one becomes a little lax in keeping perspective when, when they're so, you know, when there's so much always and so, so many, oh, so much of everything. So many books. So many things to do. So many opportunities. And--Well, to go back to writing, I guess the thing that I thought in connection with, in connection

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with the neighborhood where I live is that there is an awful, awful lot that, that someone could write down about it. I mean in terms of--Mostly I think of it in terms of stories, like short stories. And I don't think--And nobody has, of course, but I've never read anything and I rarely read things--I've never read anything that, that does that, except for, in fact, some, a couple of stories of one of my friends who doesn't live in our neighborhood but does write stories. I've never seen anything published anywhere. And every once in

a while something reminds me of it, like sometimes things by Flannery O'Connor or little bits of books by Toni Morrison when she's talking about the towns. Like when she's talking about a small town in Ohio, for example. And many times when I'm home I walk around and go places, especially when I go and visit people. And it seems--And, and, you know, things are turning themselves into stories in my head the way that, that things do sometimes.

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You know, you are narrating things in the, like a--You know, you're acting as a narrator even while things are happening to you. There's part of your mind that, that is putting it into phrases of the appropriate first story. But it's not, you know, it's--But it's not something that I've ever done or, you know, and maybe something that I could never be successful at doing because I don't really, I don't write stories. But there's a great--There's an awful, awful lot. And in that way, I guess, it seems a kind of, oh, it seems a kind of mutant place, I guess, in comparison. Especially with school, for example, where you get the idea that, that there is--Oh, I don't know, there's so much. People are so articulate and so inclined to, to observe things and to, and to express themselves that, that nothing you feel will remain, or very little will remain undrawn out or undepicted. But I think, you know, very much remains undepicted or undrawn out or unnoticed, I guess, about, about the, well, about home.

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CNK: Is that kind of a learning of yours to, to see it in print, to see it expressed somehow?

AD: I suppose that it is. It's not a, a very, not something that I--I guess it is, yeah. I really never phrased it that way, but it was very striking to see the, the one story that I did see of my friend's that, that was about very, was about here, yeah. That was very--It was very striking.

CNK: In what sense?

(165)

AD: Well, it was very, it was a very accurate description of the way that, well, the people in the, the--The people in the story were very accurate to me. Characters, I guess, the way that they acted and thought about things seemed right to me. I suppose that I ought to be pretty particular. I mean, I suppose there would be many kinds of, of, you know--I suppose there would be many stories that I would think were wrong! But--

CNK: And this was about South Wheeling?

(174)

AD: No, it was, it was more about--No, it wasn't about South Wheeling. It was about, oh, it was a little bit about--It was more in general about people around here. I think there was a, there was a downtown part in it, and there was a Bridgeport, Ohio, part. But all of it was, was very close to what I, I think of and the people in our neighborhood.

CNK: Is it possible for you to describe more about what, what is distinctive, either about Wheeling as a place or South Wheeling or the people, where, what you would like to see conveyed, and what's different about this place?

(185)

AD: Well, I don't think I could say much about Wheeling in general or about--I probably can't say very much. I took my friend at school a postcard that had a picture of, it had a picture of the Ohio River, and it was, well, and of Wheeling like from, from the air, I guess. And he was very surprised at how dark, how dark the river looked, I guess, and in general how dark, maybe dark not only in light, but in spirit the whole, the whole scene looked. It was very ... It was very frustrating to me, and we talked about it for quite a while. And since that time, I guess, I've been thinking about whether it's dark or not. I mean at first I thought, no, of course that it's, it's not. But in some ways maybe it is. I don't know. In, in my neighborhood, I guess, the things that I notice about people are, well, hmm, that they're--Of course--Well, it really depends. But sometimes I would spend time in this, this second-hand store that, that's a few  
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blocks away from my house because my friends, people in my friend's family worked there. And there would usually be a lot of people sitting around inside. These are mostly people who worked there and their family members because it wasn't such a busy store. And it was kind of--I mean I guess, I guess it was kind of a good place to sit around in, in that there was some room. It was sort of odd because you were surrounded by junk. But, but they would sit there and I, when I went to visit I would sit there too and listen to, you know. I wouldn't usually say very much, just listen to what they were talking about, which would be, I don't know, mostly just where they were going that day or what people in the family were doing. But they're--I--They were, they were awfully--They were sharp talkers in a way. I mean they were very direct, I guess that's part of it. Not pretentious, that's also part of it too. And, and certainly that's not true, certainly not possible to say that people here aren't pretentious, but that's the striking thing about, you know, to me it was the  
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striking thing about the people in that store. They learned. And not very--Oh, they didn't seem to be very self-conscious, at least not in a way that hindered them, yeah. And they're, they were quick, quick to judge, as many people in the neighborhood are. And, and slow to, you know, slow to change their minds once--One of our neighbors doesn't speak to us now because our cats dug up her flowers a couple of years ago. That's it. I mean she's made up her mind there's not, there's really no turning that around, I think. And things like that seem often to be true. People are--Well, maybe it has to do with age too, people are more, well, they're very patient in a way. And they--I don't know. They're content to do things again and again it seems. Like people--Well, I see a lot of people out taking walks in the morning, for example, and they seem to be--Well, I don't know, they seem to be very patient about their walks and not  
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too, I don't know, not too demanding. This is all very vague. I guess, I guess it occurred to me after I left home that I had gotten used to seeing, I don't know, the very small things had, had seemed beautiful to me in a way that, say, they didn't seem beautiful or didn't even seem noticeable to people who were around me at school. Like, like weeds in the parking lot, for example. Since it was--Well, it was such a concrete place, any kind of, of green thing was, you know, was sort of remarkable! And so--  
CNK: ...

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AD: No, at, at home. I mean the, the parking lot that was right across the street from our house. So I watched the weeds really carefully when I was growing up. I mean I--And I liked certain weeds better than others, and weeds have a sort of personality. I mean different flowery weeds had different senses attached to them. There were some pink flowers that were really small and kind of sad, I guess. And some yellow and white flowers that just made me feel, oh, they made me feel impatient and kind of cross. And so I wonder if--I don't know, I wonder if it's that way for a lot of the people who live around there. In a way, if, if they were to travel somewhere else, if they would find, or the people around them would find that they were seeing things that, you know, that, that other, other people were not seeing or recognizing. Yeah, maybe recognizing a kind of, recognizing beauty in things that other people did not, maybe so. And maybe that would be true of people from a lot of different

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places, I mean. Though what you notice depends on where you come from. But it does seem to me that, that in many ways that's true of people in our neighborhood. And it's just that it's not so detectable because they don't leave. But if they, the things that they remark on, and the things that they're concerned with, I guess, just are, are different from elsewhere. I mean it's kind of like, I don't know, I imagine it as sort of a different, a differently tilted plane, I guess, from other people's, from other people's planes! And it's nice to see at home too how, oh, people do things very carefully, and they, oh, take careful care of what would seem to be small things. Like little yards that are full of flowers, say, and the flowers are very carefully kept. Or, you know, people who put white stones out in this teeny little, maybe, you know, five foot by two foot patch in front of their house. They have it landscaped, so there are lots of white stones and three tiny little ... That kind of thing I like! And

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that--Oh, lots of people, you know, lots of people have, have pets that they take careful care of. And people painting the railings in front of their houses when maybe the houses themselves are not, really the houses themselves are not well painted and not very fancy. But there's no doubt to them that, that the railing should be well painted. That kind of thing is, is good. That's the kind of thing that I notice when I come home. And people doing things like Sweetwell, our neighbor across the alley, comes out and washes the alley. She sweeps it, and she washes it with soapy water. And, you know, you can't tell for looking at the alley that somebody washes it. It looks pretty much just the same, but she washes it anyway.

CNK: She doesn't own it personally?

(313)

AD: No.

CNK: Why do you suppose she does it?

AD: I guess--Oh, I don't know. I guess, it seems to me, it's because--Well, I guess that people like to be proprietary, and that, I guess, that she, you know, she really sees the alley quite a bit, and she sees it very well. I mean she doesn't have a lot of property certainly. That alley is right there in back of her house, and it's as if it's, it's as if she responsible for it. I mean I think that she feels responsible for it. And I think that

often happens. It seems to me it often happens that people begin to feel themselves responsible for what's, maybe for what's right in front of their eyes. And it's not a question, you know, it's not a question for our neighbor of making the alley look really beautiful, because she doesn't wash any other part of the alley.

It's just a

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question of fulfilling her responsibility to what's right there in front of her. And the neighbors can also, well, they also ... argue about silly things. The neighbor who washes the alley was really upset. I forget. She was really upset with something that our, that, that her next-door neighbor did to keep the birds away. I forget. It was something that she thought looked, looked junky, I guess, or, or trashy. And so the neighbor next door hung a--Maybe it was that he'd hung a couple of, of pie tins on his tree to reflect light and keep the birds away. And after she complained he hung lots of beer cans on his tree, which made her very angry. That was quite a feud. I'm not sure if it was ever resolved.

CNK: How do you resolve for yourself this question of whether Wheeling's dark?

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AD: Well, I guess--In the wintertime I thought--The time of year really makes a difference. In the wintertime I could see what my friend was talking about, I think. Or its--Especially down around, especially around our neighborhood where there's so many, so many bars and the one street with an awful lot of bars. It can seem pretty grim, I think. I mean lots of people coming and, coming in and going out. I spent--I was in one of those bars for some time because my friend works there. And it--Well, it's such a slow, tired place. I don't know if they're all like that, but this one was. It's just a slow, tired place where, oh, the people who came in were coming in, I guess, for a, you know, it was for some kind of companionship. But it also seemed sort of slow, tired companionship! In, in that way it seems, it seems dark in the sense that there isn't, I feel, a lot of times a lot of--I don't know, that there isn't somehow very much communication going on. Like people seem sort of, they just seem not

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able to express themselves. That, yeah, that seems dark. But when it's, like when you--I don't know, when you loosen up that kind of--I don't know, if you loosen up that kind of view of it is, of, of the place and of the bar, for example, as a sort of inarticulate place, then it, it can, and then it changes a little. And that's that--Well, as far as the bar goes, it's a warm, you know, it's a warm bar. And you can have sort of silly conversations there about whether you would rather win a giant can of black olives or a car that you can put together for your grandson. And that way it's good in the sense that the people there know one another so well, at least from observation if not from, from talking. In that sense it's, it's not dark. And this time of year it's nice, you know, it's a very nice time because people are outside so much. And--I mean there are, there are baseball games everywhere down in our neighborhood and people out walking and pulling one another in wagons. And the kids are out swinging on the rope swings. Then it doesn't seem dark at all. So I guess it's not really a question that I can resolve!

(415)

CNK: Do you have any questions, Pat?

Pat ??: I was just thinking about the fence, the fence behind your house and the woman who lived across the alley who ... running into the fence. I guess it's just a funny story, but it's--I wonder if you would tell Carrie a little bit about that.

(424)

AD: The neighbor who washes the alley and who's scared of thunderstorms has a brown car. And it's parked in her garage, which is right across the alley from our house. The garage door's painted a red. And she doesn't go places too often, but she goes to the store, I guess, and she takes her dog to the vet. She doesn't really go places for fun; she goes places for duties. Like the vet and the grocer. And sometimes her nephew comes to visit, and he knows us because he was my softball coach. And when he comes to visit then he, he stands in the alley and helps direct her as she backs her car out of the garage. But no matter how, no matter how well directed you are you can't back that brown car out of that garage without hitting our fence because there's just not enough room, the car's too long. And we used to have a tall brown fence that you couldn't see through. And Violet always hit that fence when she backed

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out of her garage. And sometimes she hit it harder than others. And sometimes it was sort of a stained kind of hitting because she would have to turn the steering wheel, say, while the car was, the weight of the car was against the, the fence. And sometime we would play in the back, playing in the backyard. We would see the fence tilt towards us, and then when Violet drove away it would straighten back up. But eventually it, you know, it weakened considerably, and it became very wobbly. And we tried different ways to fix it. It became very very wobbly, and there wasn't really a way to fix it. And then one winter it just fell over, that whole length of the fence. And our neighbor didn't like, she didn't, well, she was sorry to have done it, and she also didn't like it because it didn't look very nice. And she wanted us to get another fence. And we did get another, get another fence. It was the idea of my friend that we get a group of people together and put up a fence in the backyard. And Pat came too, and it was, and helped put up-- My mother chose

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the fence. And we put it up and painted it. And then that was the spring and the summer. It was finished by the end of summer. We just, we did it off and on with big spaces in between. And then that very winter our neighbor lost control of her car when she was backing it out of the garage and just backed right up, right up over the curb that separates our house from the alley and right through the section of fence that she had always knocked down before. And there were gigantic tire tracks in our yard from her car. And she was really badly shaken of course. I mean she, she backed into our yard because she couldn't--She'd hurt her knee, and she just couldn't control the car. And, you know, we were lucky she said that she hadn't really backed into our, into house or into our basement door! So she offered to help, you know, she offered to help get the fence fixed again, but we didn't really know who to ask. And there were people in our neighborhood who will do things like that, you know,

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fix things if you will maybe give them, if you pay them. Or we had an old car so we thought we might just

trade the old car to get someone to come and fix the fence or fix the fence and do something else too. And now--But eventually, yes, eventually my mother got another section of fence and got it put up. So it's there now, but it's not painted, it's brown. The rest of the fence is yellow. And I don't think that the neighbors liked very well that the fence was yellow, but I think they like even less its alternating section of yellow and brown! Though our neighbor across the alley doesn't really mention it because she just, she feels pretty responsible for it. And she still, you know, she hits the fence still when she backs out of her garage. But she doesn't, she hasn't run over a section of it again.

CNK: What makes you think they don't appreciate the yellow?

(509)

AD: Well, my mother, that my mother had some comment about it when she painted it when it was yellow. Mostly it's not, you know, everything, it's not, it's not very low-key. And definitely, I think, people try to keep their fences low-key, white, brown. I think it seems a little garish!

CNK: Anything else you wanted to ask? Did you bring a poem?

(521)

AD: Not a poem, that is--No. Yeah, I did, but I can't do anything with it.

CNK: Well, what was this experience like being interviewed? ... you didn't think you had much to say. Maybe I misunderstood that.

(528)

AD: Well, I didn't have very much to say that was particularly enlightening! But it's fine to be interviewed.

CNK: Did you find that things came to you, that, that your thoughts organized themselves in a way you didn't expect?

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AD: No. I didn't find that. But maybe it's because I'm at home. I mean I think about home a lot when I'm home.

CNK: It seems like you have a lot of loyalty towards this place.

(542)

AD: In a way, yeah. I guess maybe--Well, I guess I always imagine that people do have pretty much loyalty to, to where they come from, I mean to their homes in one way or another. If they don't we've, you know, not, not a flag-waving loyalty, but loyalty.

CNK: Maybe some ambivalence for you?

(551)

AD: Probably.

CNK: Is this a place you expect to settle?

AD: No.

CNK: Why do you say that with such certainty?

(556)

AD: Well, partly--Well, maybe largely because--Oh, sometimes--Well, because I think you often, one

often assumes that the place one grows up is not where one will settle, precisely because one grew up there. I mean it doesn't seem special enough for one thing. At least other places seem special because they're different even if they're not, even if they're not inherently special. But it wouldn't be--And also I, I think I, I know it too well here now. It wouldn't be so interesting.

CNK: What about most of your friends? Will they be staying?

(573)

AD: Well, I, most of my friends from high school are already gone. And a lot of people in my neighborhood are still in my neighborhood.

CNK: And for them maybe the place that they've grown up is the place that they expect to stay because they've grown up here?

(580)

AD: Probably. Yeah, it seems that way.

CNK: Anything else you want to say?

AD: I don't think there is a Lithuanian church. I think it must be the Lebanese church. I think I've must have confused my L's. That's all.