

## Gene Long: *Wheeling Island Corner Museum*

Gene Long: ... remember me not just through entertainment. I wanted them to remember me in this way with my history of what I did for the Island people and the city of Wheeling. Years ago it was called the town of Columbia. I'll wait till you get the ... down. Yeah, years ago it was called the town of Columbia here on the Island, and they didn't want nothing to do with Wheeling see. So then later Wheeling took them over when they see everything was progressing. And I got all kind of newspaper clippings and everything back through years from the genealogy society of how the Island started. And I wrote the stories on it. Now I'm writing the stories of the paving of the brick all over the Island and the city of Wheeling. And it's going in an international paper with the bricklayers local. And why we was called Bricklayers Local Number 1 was because of the great buildings they built here in Wheeling way back when. Some of the first buildings -- One of the first buildings was built on 12th Street. Was called the Gooding Building. Right there is where you see the Diamond Music Lounge, it was built right in there because it faced the river and was in

(016) 1812. And when they paved the, start paving the, the bricks in Wheeling, the first ones were paved were from 10th Street down over the bridge on Main Street.

Michael Nobel Kline: Can you hold it there a second?

GL: Yeah.

MNK: Can you switch your stool over there?

GL: Yeah.

MNK: I need, I want to be able to get light in your face instead of on the back of your head.

Carrie Nobel Kline: Do you want me to have the mike a little further back?

MNK: No.

CNK: Had to sit kind of easy on that stool huh?

GL: It's another giveaway.

MNK: ...

GL: And I'm glad you think it's interesting now.

CNK: Oh, we do.

MNK: You were saying.

CNK: You were talking about --

MNK: You were talking about the early downtown.

(025) GL: Downtown like the paving and the brick was done from 10th Street down over the bridge in Wheeling there. I think it was 1882. And the bricks -- How they found the paving bricks started in East Wheeling when they dug through the tunnels and that there they found the rich clay. And A. J. Long was the one that found the clay. And what they did -- That's how they started bricks. And then Goosetown, I remember when I lived out there when we was a kid on 1119 Elizabeth Street, across the street was the brick, the Brit Brick Company, and they made the brick for the paving and that of Wheeling. And there was all different other ones. Not only them, but there was Hobbs and different ones that built the bricks. But that's how they paved the streets. People don't realize. And as I'm writing this story on bricks, they just don't realize the history here in Wheeling that we got. And some of the -- I'm glad that up on the upper part of the Island they wouldn't leave them asphalt it. It's still up there, all the beautiful brick. You notice up there? And I want to take a tour through

(037) this, what they have now, the jogging trails. It would be great for me to take a tour with kids and show them how all this started. And it's -- As you look from the jogging trail in East Wheeling, you could look where all this history is. And as I explain it, you could see the whole thing where the bricks started, where the clay started, and where they got the stone. And that's how all the quarries, stone quarries were there. All these big stone quarries, and they were done by the Long brothers. And they come from Pennsylvania years ago. But then later my family, we went into tile setting. And we started with C. A. Glassco. Then later I went with Elby's. That was 35 years ago when George Boury asked me if I'd be a tile setter for them, they're going in the restaurant business. That's how I started with the tile. Then I ended up with all the storefronts in Wheeling. And plus other cities. I'm in Zanesville, Columbus, I've been all over the place. I spent years in Erie, PA,

Williamsport, all through Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia doing Elby restaurants.

Plus I did the Esquire Clubs for Ernie Panalis and different places like that. But I worked on these different places. I just -- My mind's slipping. There's so many

(054) I could tell you, I mean, you'd run out of cameras and run out of film. So we've just got this off right now? You might want something else. See this here. This is Madison School, and they had their 75th anniversary. And I says I got something for you. I told the teachers -- Was you here when I had this here?

???: No.

(059) GL: I said bring all the kids. They said there's too many of them. There're 300 so I went and got my camera, took pictures of all these kids, of all these kids here. And they come here, they said we're going to have a history lesson, the teachers told them. There was no history lesson. I had music going, rock and roll, ... they danced and everything. And all these kids - - A lot of these pictures they brought their cameras, and each one took pictures. I said you might find your grandfather's picture on the house. You might find this on the house, you know, on the wall. So here's what they sent me. They sent me this big card and thanksgiving. I had the kids for three days, 300 kids for three days. And outside, inside, downstairs. I set up pool tables and everything for them so they'd have a good time.

CNK: Can you read that for us?

(067) GL: Yeah. It says "At Madison School hats off, hats off to Gene Long." It's very touching the way they did this. "Thanks for such a neat time. We love looking at all the old pictures of the Island. You sing very nicely, especially *New York, New York*." I did that for the kids. "The popcorn and drinks were delicious." And each one of these children all signed their names. And even the little ones sent me cards and thanksgiving. And asked me how much do we owe you for having three days with the kids. I said that's on me. So I spent the whole three days just being baby sitters for the kids. But the kids will never forget it because I got all these pictures taken, see. And this way they can come back some day, and I got the picture, see.

CNK: Now what's this picture?

(079) GL: Now this is -- What'd I -- This is -- He's still a friend of mine, Paul Hankish and Bill Lias,

which they were involved in the racetrack here. This is Bill Lias when they had the racetrack there. Bill Lias, you can never knock him to me for this simple reason, during the Depression my father was a janitor down at his place on 24th Street. My sister died in 1931. And he -- We didn't have no money to, you know, bury my sister. So he says, told my dad, he said, "Gene, you just come down and work it out. And we'll see that she's buried," you know. So my dad, when the funeral was over, he went down, and he said, "I want to start," you know, "paying for the funeral." He said, "That's on me." Bill Lias buried my sister. Six hundred and some dollars. And everything was paid for. And he even give my dad extra money for us kids to eat on.

CNK: And this?

(092) GL: That's Paul Hankish, a friend of mine. I mean he was, later got into the rackets, you know. But Paul and I, we sold newspapers together on Market Street. Rode up and down Market Street. And he could run like a deer, you know. And Paul was really -- Until later on like some of these kids now -- They're getting on dope and everything. It's a shame. Like Paul even said, it's a shame. I worked at Paul's house building wheelchair ramps. And worked at George Boury's home and Ernie Panalis and the different ones in Wheeling here. I've worked in a lot of their homes. And the Schenks, Robert Schenk. How I really got my start was Robert Schenk. I was doing the tile work and the marble work in his house. It's up in Cloverfield Acres. It's on the right, a big green mansion. I don't know who owns it now. But what happened, he knew I had five kids. There's no way I could get up there, so he'd come and bring in the car and pick me up. I didn't have no car, you know, and I'm raising five kids. And he says, "Well, come on. We need a handyman." They moved back from Columbus, see. They owned a Columbus meat packing company. And he says, "Will you be our handyman?" So I was. I was cutting  
(106) the grass one day and all of a sudden I found a wristwatch. Little did I know it was hanging on a tree. They collected the, the money for it from the insurance. And I go in, I said, "Robert, here." I said, "Here's a wristwatch." I said, "I found --" He says -- I said to him -- He said, "You could have stuck it in your pocket." I said, "No, I'm too honest. It's your wristwatch, not mine." By being honest is how I made it. And how I made it, I didn't have a

dime. Robert, at Christmas time, when he give me -- He says, "I want you to buy a house." I says, "Well, I don't have no down payment." He says, "No, we're going to give you a down payment for being so honest giving that 35 hundred dollar wristwatch back." So he got it, and I bought on the back river. I worked on it. Mrs. Schenk says, "Every time you nail a nail and paint," she said, "you'll be sticking money in your pocket." I bought eight pieces of property on the Island through that! I'd buy it when the -- You see my flood

(118) marks now. The reason they're there, every time the flood would come up, I'd buy a house that nobody wanted. And I'd fix it up and ... it out. And that's how I started. And now how I bought this here, they was -- I ... bought the one Cress Studio in the back here. I bought it, and I seen there where they was going to, said they'd condemn the building. Then I said no. The history on the building was so great because all the kids hung out on the corners here and the drugstore was so great. Old Mr. McCallister and Mrs. Corell owned the cement company. She's the one when I got, she said, "What I want you to do," she says, "I'm going to sell it to you, but I want to tell you one thing," she says. "Don't you ever sell it to no racketeers. I'm not going to mention their names," she said, "but no racketeers." She says, "I want it as history." I says, "Right now, I don't know what I'm going --" I was going to put a tile place downstairs. So I kept the grocery store open for a while. And I started on it. And I started remodeling ... So this is all my whole things. This was the last building I bought. And the history of all my building. I bought two on the river front, two in the back river and four in the middle of the Island. With no education. Years ago they

(134) wrote a story on me in Bellaire. I couldn't read or write. Couldn't read or write. To this day, I can't divide. But you give me money, I'll divide it for you! But that's what I started. So you see some of these handicapped kids, and that's why I'm involved with the handicapped kids, the blind. Because they're more or less in my category. Because my spelling is very terrible. A lot of times my wife, I got a wife, Barbara, really well educated girl, but she tells me which is wrong. And this one I write my letters and that, she shows me what's wrong, you know. Don't paragraph it this way, don't do it. So that's how I write it like that there. But I went to St. Alphonses School. And a sister just not long ago send me a picture that taught me to read. And she's still living. Sister Mary Louise. So I'm

going to write her a letter and send her everything that I go, that I know what I did in my life. I

(146) couldn't read or write and everything, but now I can read or write and everything. But I can remember words to songs, and I led all the bands here in Wheeling, but I can't read notes! I can't read notes of music or anything! But I can remember words. But there's so many things I could tell you.

MNK: How did Paul Hankish lose his legs?

GL: Through a bombing. They blowed his legs off.

MNK: Was he in the war, you mean?

GL: No, no. Racketeers blowed his legs off.

MNK: Where?

(153) GL: In north, in Warwood. In Warwood when they blowed his legs off.

MNK: Tell us about that.

GL: Well, it was, I forget how many years ago, but I know I was working out there for Julie Jupulski out there at the Stone House. Different ones told me, they says, you know that we even heard. They said they even heard the bomb even out there in Elm Grove when it went off in Warwood. Now, I don't know how that happened, whether it come through the, echoes through the tunnels or what happened here because there's a tunnel coming from Warwood over there where the peninsula is. But they heard it. And they said it blowed his legs off. I don't know what happened there. But Paul right now is in prison. But he had a lot of good ways about him.

MNK: Tell us some good things about him.

(162) GL: Well, like I told you, he was a newspaper boy and all ... the things in Wheeling here. And like Bill Lias, he'd knock all these different ones, and I got their pictures up. Because we were friends, you know, we were friends. But Paul just got off on a wrong foot later on in years. That's when I say these kids should never get on dope. And even Paul will tell them to get away from all that stuff. It will ruin your life, and you'll end up like Paul, you know.

MNK: That's an education in itself, that picture.

GL: Yeah.

MNK: Who's that with him, do you know?

(169) GL: I don't know who that is with him there.

CNK: It's his attorney.

MNK: Is it?

CNK: Uh huh.

GL: Oh, I think it is his attorney, yeah.

CNK: John L. Daugherty of Pittsburgh.

(171) GL: Yeah. But I collect pictures of the horses if you notice. I collect pictures of the horses.

MNK: Which was your favorite horse of all time?

GL: My Funny Valentine. And you know what it was? Us kids would go down there, you know, to make money like that there. I'd go down and --

MNK: You went where?

(175) GL: Down to the Wheeling Downs. And we walked the horses for 10 cents. And I'd walk the horses and that there. I always had money in my pocket, but when I was a kid, I was always ... and I says -- All these kids would say 'where do you get your money.' I says 'well, first of all I got a newspaper route.' A Mr. Clark from Wheeling, a great man that owned the newspaper, you know, he was the editor. What is it, the editor of the Wheeling newspaper. And he seen how I was. And he said, "I want to see you. You're always running selling newspapers, magazines." I won prizes for selling magazines and everything. He says, "How would you like to --" One day I went up there and cleaned his snow off of his porch because he was an old man. I thought, well, I'll clean his snow off. He says, "Well, sonny, I'm going to pay you." I says, "No, I'll just make a path for you." He says, "No, you're willing, I want you to do work for me." So I'd go up and scrub his porches and clean his porches off. He says -- Well, he says, "How'd you like to have a newspaper route?" And that's how I started a newspaper route. And we had it all through

(189) South Wheeling, and I ended up with two routes. And how we did it years ago, like in -- You get your routes, you had to go around and knock on people's doors. Said, "Do you want a newspaper?" And that's how I did it. I went around newspapers. And that's how I built my routes. So a lot of these were built like that. Then you got a prize. You know what I

got? A ball glove for, you know, getting the newspapers out. I was great for newspaper. Used to run up and down Market Street. And every time I see these newspaper boys over there, I remember these. I says I remember ... "Give them a big smile and thank you and shake hands with them." I always got a tip. There's one fellow over on Wheeling you got to see. His name's Bob, an old big, fat guy stands in front of Murphy's Five and Ten. And every time I come up with my car he says, "Hi pappy. Have a nice day. Drive carefully," and different things like that. And I always give him a tip. I said -- And he always got a smile, you know. I said -- But there's one guy they had to take a picture of because he -- Every car goes a past this guy does it. I don't know what his name is. And you know why I took a liking to him? He can't read or write he says. And he lives in the YMCA. And I says that's me, that's like I was years ago. But I could read and write, you know, later on in years and that there. But --

MNK: How did you learn to read finally?

(206) GL: There's a sister there. The -- I did more memory instead of like they had this syllables. You go like 'ah, ah, ah.' I did more looking at the letter, you know. Say like it said like mom, dad, all that. I did more like ... that went through -- A lot of times when I'd be reading I'd skip a couple lines, and the sister would say, "Geney, you skipped that line. You go back and read that over." I said, "Well, I don't know what that word is." And she explained to me now how it would go, how to read the words and that. Then I learned from there. But she's the one that taught me. I just got her picture.

CNK: How old were you?

(215) GL: Well, I'll tell you. I flunked two years, my brother caught up with me. And that was -- When I graduated, I think I forget what I was at St. Alphonses School there. But I forget how old I was. It was way back in the '30s, you know. Now we walked to school. I walked to school when I went to St. Marys on 29th Street. I walked out from 29th Street as you go up that hill there on the left hand ... like you're going up the Esquire Club. I started from there, walked clear down to 36th Street, you know, where St. Marys School was. And I walked that when I was a kid. I -- Maybe that's how I got in the infantry! They knew I was a walker. But they took all us hillbillies here, you know, that they figured that's all we

could do is walk. So I end up with a scout and all that. You heard about that with my war dogs and that. By not having no education, I got things that you didn't need an education on. And I graduated from schools, and we had our get together up in Cleveland in Ohio. I, I'm the one that started the get together of all of us guys. A friend of mine, Andrew Lanarsik, send me a card, 'write to me when you get home!' Well, years went by and I

(232) thought -- Well, I'd lost the card. So I says one day my mother, when my mother died here about 20 years ago. I decided to look through my mother's bible, and there's the card. It says 'call me when you get home.' I said, "Oh my god, there's that card that I was looking for years ago!" You ain't going to believe it. I gets on the phone and ask information and called Andrew Lanarsik in Waukegan, Illinois. I says, "Can I speak to Andrew." He says, "This is Andy." I says, "You know who this is? Gene Long, Wheeling, West Virginia, 25th War Dog Platoon." He says, "It's a little late ain't it to call me!" Well, we ended up -- This is how our Army get together got together! We goes up -- This is here 20 years ago. We goes up to Waukegan, Illinois. He took me to the Elks club, and he

(243) explained and all the Elks club give us a hand. So just last year, him and I decided to get together. I says we get together. We -- I'd made arrangements for, you know, the Quality Inns and that there where we're going to be and all of us. And I sent cards out to each one, you know, to be there. On the, on our anniversary like when we got together, 50 years we hadn't seen each other. So you know what I said, "Well, you're all here." I had it in a big box all wrapped. I says, "I want to give Andy his card that he sent me." So everybody got their cameras out, and they took pictures of me handing the card back. I said, "You can have your card back." So he puts it in the newspaper. I think he put it in the newspaper up there about me giving the card back after 50 years. But that's how we got our Army get together. Interesting! I can -- I just get started. Jesus criminy.

MNK: ... back and sit down here.

(256) GL: Did you, did you hear my life story on WWVA?

MNK: No.

GL: I got a recording of it.

MNK: Oh great.

GL: ... have a recording of it.

MNK: Maybe we can have a copy of that.

(259) GL: Yeah. But she says, "Would you come over Mr. Long?" She says, "We'd like to give a story on how you started on the radio and that there." I says, "Yeah," I says, "But what will I talk about?" You're on the radio, and it's a talk show on Sunday mornings over here. Mary Carras. And I says, "Mary, what will I talk about? I'll be nervous, you know." So I bring my camera over, and we took pictures. And it was so funny. People calling in and say 'I remember you, and I remember you, and how do I start in entertainment and that.' They played some of my recordings.

CNK: Recordings of?

(267) GL: Me singing.

MNK: This is what I want to get in on.

CNK: Kline wants to get in here.

MNK: I want to get in on this --

GL: Get my good --

MNK: Entertainment business.

GL: What's your name again?

CNK: Michael.

GL: Michael, get my good side! Because my hair, my hair messed up.

MNK: Oh, you look beautiful.

GL: Oh my god.

MNK: You're the handsomest guy I every --

GL: Oh Jesus criminy.

MNK: ...

CNK: Get one of those wigs and --

GL: I'll be 70 years old.

CNK: Say that again.

(272) GL: I'll be 70 years old.

CNK: What's your date of birth?

GL: December the 29th. December the 29th, my date of birth.

CNK: Let's see. If I were any good at math, I'd be able to come up with a year.

GL: Yeah, I'm 69. Nineteen twenty-four I was born.

MNK: Sixty-nine. I don't believe it.

CNK: I don't believe it either!

(277) GL: But when I had all these things -- Every time I had a lot of operations. I got hurt during the war, never thinking I'd make it. Coming back on the hospital ship, the suicide plane went through the, went through the ship! And we drove 12 days into New Guinea from the Philippine Islands. And ... I'm crying. I'm laying in bed, and they think the ship's sinking. It's on a tilt like this here. I said, "If I ever get out of this thing alive," I says, "I'm going to go hog wild." And I ... hog wild. And we finally get to New Guinea. Then when we come to the United States, I kissed the ground. I kissed the ground and danced and everything. I said, "I made it." Coming back to Wheeling and that there, I missed the train. I missed the train to Chicago. Then I missed the train in Steubenville. So I ended up walking down the river road in the rain. And I said I got to get home, that's all there is to it. So I walked down, and people from Wellsburg picked me up and took me to the Island. Little did I think I'd be sitting here talking to you people that are interested. And I always thought I made this museum, and nobody's interested in it. Then I started seeing

(294) the people coming in with cameras and taking pictures. PBS knew it was on. And I'll tell you, I might try to get a copy of it. Yeah.

CNK: ...

(297) GL: Grover Shook's daughter called from Santa Monica, California, and said it was on the news. And my nephew called out in California or Santa Barbara, he called. And they said it's on in New York. Different people come in, the tourists come in. There's many pictures taken out front that you'd never believe. Motorcycle gangs and different -- And tourists coming in and take pictures. Just floods. I never realized. And this one guy from up in Pennsylvania said he's going to start too. I showed him how to start the floods and where to put down and how you start the floods. If you're in any area where it was a flood, the last flood, just measure up. Like you down at your house. Just measure up, and you'll see exactly where

the '36 flood hit. I got pictures of your, your street.

CNK: Really?

(307) GL: Yeah. I'll give you a picture.

CNK: In '36?

GL: No, it was in the '72 flood.

CNK: Oh.

(309) GL: I'm looking for any pictures.

CNK: Now you were, you were talking about when you were in the war. Now what were the kinds of things that you thought of about Wheeling? What did you want to do back home when you were over there?

(313) GL: Every, everybody knew me from being on the radio, WWVA, when I was on, you know, in Wheeling there. And they says, 'well, what did you do.' So I ended up singing on different shows in the Army there. And I sang on different shows and that. And that's how all the ones remember me from singing. They said, 'there's the guy that was on the radio.' And I'd sing songs and that, see. But WWVA, it started with local people. We started with -- Years ago, the Jamboree pulled away. They didn't want nothing to do with it. Then they come back, see, after ... But the Wheeling Steel broadcast is really the one that made it. It was like a Lawrence Welk hour. And it went hog wild. Everybody was coming to see the, you know -- And it had the symphony orchestra and everybody there, you know. It was great. But --

MNK: Tell us about entertainment in Wheeling during the big band era.

(326) GL: Oh, I got to tell you the one how I started too. And right now my favorite is the Victoria Theater. My brother and I sang on amateur hours. And that's where we were found, really in there. We sang on the amateur hours. But the first thing they had years ago was the kiddy program. And the old State Theater they had in Wheeling where Bank One is now, that's where they had -- Like it was a morning broadcast, but get off of there -- We started really at the Vic Theater when they had amateur hour. Friday nights. A lot of people remember Friday nights in Wheeling. The old amateur hour. People would pack in there just to see -- People would just get up, they didn't have no big microphones. And you know

how I sang? With a megaphone like this here. A megaphone. And my dad painted it up. And so they had a kiddie program at the Capital Theater like an amateur contest. And so I'm singing Bobby Bream's numbers. And you had, you had to be a Bobby Bream to sound like Bobby Bream. Well, I got up there with no microphone, and I got out on the stage and I sang *When There's a Rainbow on a River*. And I got a recording of it.

MNK: Let's hear a little.

(343) GL: I don't have it here with me.

CNK: Sing a little bit of it.

GL: I'm hoarse.

MNK: That's all right.

GL: It goes (*singing*) 'When there's a rainbow on the river, the skies are clearing. You still be hearing each other again. Happy in love.' It goes something like that. Well, anyhow --

CNK: Beautiful.

(349) GL: That's what I sang though with a voice like that, and I won first prize. Fifty dollars over 52 contestants. And when I come off the stage, the people were laughing. And I thought they was making fun of me the way I was dressed because I had a straw hat. And to this day I wear a straw hat when I'm out. And if you'd see me entertain, you'd see my straw hat. That's it. Straw hat ... one of these like they had back then. The straw hats. I had it on there, and I says -- And that's what won me the prize. And another thing that won me the prize, and the thing a lot of entertainers do, they hear all these applause like these rock and rollers here, but they never bow. Did you notice they never bow. And mine was like this. This is the way I did it. And when you're done, he says always make your bow, and you go like this. Like this here, see. Like that. And that's what won me the prize. And I say yeah! Like that there. When I did it, with the straw hat, I won. And I went off of the stage and they told you how to go off of the stage, see. And all the judges in the front were judging the way you sang and how you come on the stage and on the stage. Edna

(367) Armbruster, later on she went with Blackstone the magician. And she was the one that accompanied me and started me really singing. And my first place that I sang though was Madison School. Did you know Madison School? It was my first place. But going into the

Victoria Theater was great. It helped my brother and I, and my sisters and all of us ended up -- The Victoria Theater was everybody remembers the old amateur hour on Friday nights. I'm glad they never tore it down. When they tore the State Theater down, I was sick. I got a picture of the State Theater out there. But we was featured years ago with Wonder Bread Company. They had their program every Saturday morning at the State Theater. And at the State Theater was where I sang. My brother and I sang for Wonder Bread Company. And the song they started out was, we started out with -- We come out on the stage, and all the kids would clap. The place was packed. We sang *Happy Days are Here Again*. Go (*singing, clapping*) 'Happy days are here again, the skies above are clear.' And all the kids would clap. They knew my brother and I. Then we sang *Gold Mine in the Sky*.

(382)

CNK: How's that one go?

(386)

GL: (*Singing*) 'There's a gold mine in the sky far away. And you'll find that you and I some ... day.' It's a real touching song. Walter Patterson of WWVA is the one that taught my brother and I the song. Then we went on with like Hawk Shaw Hawkins, Big Slim and all them different ones. We go out on personal appearances with them, see. And years ago Gene Austin, a great entertainer years ago back in the '30s, came to Wheeling. And he invited my brother and I and my sister and us to sing on his show in Hopewell, Ohio. But he was a movie star, you know. You ran out of film!

MNK: Yeah.

GL: I'd like to --

CNK: ... We'll give Michael here a minute to catch up.

MNK: ...

(400)

GL: Michael, I ain't boring you is that -- ... in it. You know why? I always wanted to play pianist. I pretend I'm playing.

CNK: Start again what you were saying about your house.

MNK: Okay.

(403)

GL: Yeah. Hey, honey, I'll see you.

CNK: ...

GL: See you hon. Down at my house --

MNK: Wait just a second, Gene. Here we go.

GL: Wait till you get started there.

MNK: Down at your house.

(408) GL: Here's what I started down at my house. This wasn't enough for me. When I bought my house down there, the wife and I decided to make it like musical. And it is musical all over the place. And when she plays the piano, I made -- You know the registers in the floor. Well, I opened all the registers. You know what you get? You hear the piano all through the house. So if you ever want to talk to anybody in your house, just talk through the registers and you can hear them any place. You don't need no intercom. Try it sometime. So I got the player piano down. I make recordings and everything. I'm going to make a recording for you people for doing this for me. But down there, if you want to come down, I can show you how my house, I made it all in like music. And like, like I say, I was never a -- I made mine the honest way. Taking chances and that there. Having no education, you know. Not having no education is very -- If it wasn't for Mr. Schenk and Mrs. Schenk, I'd have never make it. But that's what she says, every time ... She says, "every time you're nail and painting," she said, "you don't need education for

(427) that, but you'll make money." And she was right. I just go and buy the neighbor's houses and the flood just come up. And that's why you see the flood marks on there. The guy says ask him how he put the flood marks there. I says, "Well, every time a flood come up, I'd buy their house." Which I'd go over the bank and see. And if you get your house real nice, what you can do is borrow on it and buy another house. And that's what I just kept buying and jumping around and buying. The people thought I all had money, but I never really had money. I had talent. And by singing, every time I sang, I'd always invest. That's the reason I bought this dance hall. And then when I bought it, the only people would come here is the deaf people. Now I says what am I going to do now. Nobody's coming around. They don't appreciate what I did, only people like you that like history and that. But the people

(443) didn't know. I says the deaf people know. They love it. And the only way you can get -- I

made a wash tub with, and I got it down home, with a string on it like this, with a G-string. Cost me 20 dollars for the G-string. And they can feel vibrations. So I bring it up on the stage. And so when the deaf people come in here and they want to get their attention, they go boom, boom, boom, boom. And see that drum. Where the heck's my drum at. There's the drum here. They used the drum too, the beat. And that's how they get attention. And they can hear that right away. So I buys a jukebox out here, you'll see the jukebox, that when you put it on and like you talk like this here. It's like a computer. It makes all kind  
(454) of lights go off and on. So they get in front, they go 'aaaaahhhh,' and it will go 'aaaaahhhh.' The thing -- They love the jukebox. So they turn it up complete bass, and they dance. And they watch that thing. And then I have, like I say, I have their VCR there of them doing the, the thing.

CNK: Well, tell us more about the --

MNK: *Wheeling Steel Hour*.

(461) GL: Oh, the *Wheeling Steel Hour* was great. It was great. On the Capitol Theater. Now Earl Summer's father was the director of it, you know. And I forget who the, the other -- Mr. Lemmon. I forget the different names years ago that was our directors and everything. But we'd practice. Like I say, they had practice on, say Saturday mornings, we'd practice. So if we was going on the air Sunday -- See Sunday was the big thing of the Wheeling Steel broadcast. And how I got on the Wheeling Steel broadcast, you had to have a relative. So you know who the relative was? My grandfather. He was the one with the nail factory down there. And they lived on 29th Street. And Jim Long, that's his picture up there, was the one that helped to make the nails.

CNK: LaBelle?

(476) GL: LaBelle nail factory. LaBelle nail factory. That's how that started. And all my uncles and that worked in there. And the other thing was Blaw-Knox. All my uncles and that on the Pack side were all molders. And all they did -- And machinists and everything. Our whole family worked in the nail factories and in Blaw-Knox and everything. Then I went into the trades. I stopped at Blaw-Knox and I went into the trades and learned -- So if you ever want to take some pictures, go and see West Virginia's -- You see the West Virginia College

across the street from Imperial Display? That's one of the last ones I did. And I did Freibenhausers. Then you'll see the gas -- Oh, did I bring that up. Wait a minute, I might have that. Oh, here's the one, here's the ones of some of the gas company. And here's pictures of me doing the, the gas company. If you can get that there. That's me working on the gas company doing the mural.

CNK: Which one's you?

(496) GL: I'm the one right here.

CNK: Straw hat?

GL: I was the foreman on it. Yeah, with the red hat. Here's another one here shows an old car. Does it show the old car on there too?

CNK: What year was this?

(503) GL: Oh, I forget what year that was. Here we are here with our helpers.

CNK: Sixties maybe or --

(506) GL: Yeah, I think it was in the '60s. I forget when they built the gas company here, but here's a real good shot of it here. This fellow, Bill Stone, he's the one next to me. He's, he's dead.

MNK: Did you design things as well?

GL: No. It was designed, I think Harry Holbert designed it. I think he's the one that designed it. And we put that in. It was all over the place. People would take a picture of that, you know. But I got the pictures, maybe in the foreman. They guy was from here, Dan Coffey from Wheeling High School was the photographer from Pittsburgh. And he told me, he says that, "I'm going to send you pictures of it." So I want to put all these pictures in the library. See, all this stuff that I'm going to do, I'm going to give it to the library because people -- Some of the people won't be interested in it, you know. But any people like you guys that are interested in it, bring your cameras, take your pictures. That way if the thing burns down, somebody's got the pictures. Somebody's got the pictures on it. What are you doing? I ain't that good.

CNK: You're so handsome.

MNK: ... handsome.

(526) GL: Handsome!

CNK: He can't help himself.

GL: Seventy years old. Geeze.

MNK: Did you sing with -- Did you --

GL: My sisters and us, we were the Long Family. My brother --

MNK: Tell us about, who your sisters were. Tell us all about the family.

(530) GL: Oh, Virginia and Eleanor. Now -- Well, Virginia is still living. She had her, she had an operation on her breast. She had cancer. And she's still living 15 years it's been now. And I hadn't -- Three operations. I had a heart operation. I had a hernia operation. Now I had cancer operation. And I says I want to do this so it goes out. Then picks my tombstone and everything. Well, it's -- But you want to hear Wheeling Steel broadcast. It was so great, it was so great that when you get on there it was like family. All the visitors. Lewis May Nolte and all the Steel Sisters and everything. The Millmen were on there. And it was just so great. We was just like one big family, you know. Well, I got the pictures. Did any of you come out and take the pictures of when we was at Stifel Center. They had the get together of the Wheeling Steel broadcast. And they took pictures of all the ones that are still living, see. But people -- You know, I think something like that come back. What I want to do before I die, I want to get an amateur contest at the Vic Theater and have kids. Well, I see my daughter and them, I mean my granddaughter dancing on the Capitol stage with some of these reviews, you know, these kids around here. I just feel there I am. And I says, "Now," I says, "the Victoria Theater --" I think if they would a contest with no rock and roll, just singing old songs back then, you know. How they started years ago too,

(559) they got different kids. They had amateur contests, and that's how they got a lot of them on the Wheeling Steel broadcast. Hearing them and then putting them on the radio and that. And that's how we got it, see. But -- What else do you want to know?

MNK: So how did you get started singing with your sisters?

(565) GL: Well, first it was me. And then my brother, see. And we was first ones to go on a broadcast. We was the first ones. Then my sisters come on. They became Virginia and Eleanor, the Long Sisters. And they was on for Universal Products, and they sang for different places. Then they go down and sing on Fairmont station. And Jack and I was the same way. We

put on -- What we did too, what they used us too is say like dedicating playgrounds. You know, like Pulaski Playground where the basketball court and that is. We dedicated that. And they'd bring us out, and the dedication, Jack and I would sing and the Long Family would sing. And we'd all put on a show. But we all learned to tap dance. I thought there didn't take no skill there, so I became a tap dancer. And to this day, I'm on with the Opals.

CNK: The what?

(581) GL: The Opals. The old people of the Ohio Valley, Ohio Valley Hospital. I'm their drummer, and I do the songs too. I sing with them. But it's great just to see those people too, the Opals. But I still think that Victoria Theater, I think, is great the way he did and painted that thing up. Because it brings back the -- What they ought to do, we ought to do is put some of the pictures in the windows, some of the pictures in the window of some of the ones that were on there. I got all the pictures here, he can remember us. Just put the pictures in the window say, 'Remember the Long Family? This is where they started, Victoria Theater.' Put it over the Capitol Theater. This is where they sang too, you know. It's all out of towners coming now. They're taking and just throwing the red carpet out for them. I said wouldn't it have been great, they got all them gold stars out there, but nothing of the Wheeling Steel broadcast. No gold stars. And that is sad because the Wheeling Steel broadcast -- And the only way you could be on the Wheeling Steel is like my grandfather was a foreman down there at the nail factory. And my uncles all worked there. And Wheeling Steel. That's the only way you could get on the broadcast. You had to have a  
(608) relative with Wheeling Steel. And that's how we got on there, see, was through my grandfather and my uncles and that, see, at the nail factory, at LaBelle Nail. But --

MNK: You had to be related?

GL: You had to be related. And that's why they called it the family, the *Wheeling Steel Family Hour*. And most of the ones on there were all relatives. You know they had the relatives. It didn't care if you worked in the office or what, you know.

MNK: So it was a whole range of music, right? Anybody associated with Wheeling Steel.

GL: Yeah, yeah.

MNK: Must have been a whole range of music then.

(617) GL: Yeah, all different things though. They had terrific -- When we sang in groups and that there, you know, it was great. I'm starting to think of some of the songs we sang. I got -- Oh, I got the picture out there on the wall --

MNK: Do you have any recordings from that period?

(622) GL: No, but I -- On this thing that WWVA did for me over there, it's one of the songs we sang on the radio, my sisters and I, but it was a -- Here's the record. You ain't going to believe this. Here's my first recording. My first recording. Look back here. This was the Long Family. And the record plays backwards. And you know who made it for me? Freddy Gardeni. Freddy Gardeni has, his son's with one of the other stations now, I think with WKWK or one of them like that there. But his dad, he says this is a memory of me. You kids can sing. Well then Blaine Heck played there, and he played the accordion. He'd sit there upstairs in the, and it was upstairs of the Hawley Building. That's where we played, up there. And we was on the radio up there. And he'd tape it, and when, it would be on the radio up there. And he would go make our records for us. This is a record he made for me. ...

CNK: Now was there some kind of a theme song that the Wheeling Steel Hour had?

(650) GL: Yeah. I have it out there. I'm going to -- Let's see --

CNK: Could you sing that?

GL: I got the feeling that Wheeling's back in old West Virginia, something like -- I forget how --

CNK: Isn't that I got a feeling I'll be stealing back to Wheeling?

(654) GL: That's the one! That's the one!

CNK: How does that go?

GL: Oh, I forget how it goes.

MNK: Just a little of it.

GL: I forget how it goes though. My mind just went blank there.

CNK: Give us the -- What's it called again?

(659) GL: I got the -- Let's see -- You said it there! I got it on the wall out there. There's so many things going through my mind right now.

CNK: That's okay.

GL: I got a feeling we'll be wheeling back to --

CNK: Stealing back to Wheeling, was that it?

MNK: Wheeling back to Wheeling.

(667) GL: The, the name of the song's on the wall out there.

CNK: Well, we'll check it on the way out.

MNK: Tell us more about the, the Long Family. What do you remember about -- First of all, how, what was the order of the sisters and brothers. And tell us about growing up. Tell us about home, your mother, your ...

(673) GL: Well, see, when I was a child my mother -- When we lived out 29th Street there, and I was an asthmatic and I'd have these seizures, asthmatic seizures. And they couldn't figure out, you know, what was wrong with me. That's why I lost a lot of school, see. And my brother could go to school, and I couldn't go to school because I'd have these seizures. So my mother would sit there and sing to me. She'd sing to me, and I'd look out the window and I'd sing these different songs. And you know one of the first songs I sang? *Shanty in Old Shanty Town*.

CNK: What's that?

(687) GL: (*singing*) 'Only a shanty in old shanty town. The roof is so slanty, it touches the ground. There's a tumble down shack by an old railroad track. Like a millionaire's mansion, it's calling me back. I'd give up a palace if I were a king. It's more than a palace, it's my everything. There's a queen waiting there with a silvery crown. Just a shanty in old shanty town.' And old shanty town, you know where it was? Goosetown. That's where I was born. And they called it shantytown because people wanted to dump and everything. And that's what it was out in Goosetown years ago. There was all like making bricks and making everything. And my grandfather, he was a glass designer for the Central Glass Company in, you know, out in East Wheeling where they had the Central Glass Company. Well, that's what he did. He was designer, and all my uncles worked on a kiln. They was all glass blowers and that in Central Glass out in, you know, there. But getting back

(714) to my singing. I started there --

MNK: What would your mother, what did --

CNK: ...

MNK: Your mother sing to you?

(717) GL: She'd sing like these songs here or -- One of the first songs too when I was a little kid I can remember was a black man standing on the corner in East Wheeling down in Goosetown on 11th Street there. And he played this song I guess. And he'd play a ukulele. And he sang, he sang this here *I'm in the Jail House Now*. And I was just a little kid there, three or four years old, and I'd go down. My dad would take me down on the corner. He says, "I want you hear him sing now." And he's sing (*singing*) 'I'm in the jail house now.' And he'd pucker his lips, see.

(side 2) GL: ...

MNK: So you were down the corner with your father.

GL: Down with my father on the corner of 11th and Elizabeth Street. But this one, this old colored -- That was the first song I ever sang really, was this old man singing that song. But he was a troubadour, and everybody'd come around to see this old colored man sit there and sing. And he says -- And every time he'd come down on the corner, I'd run up there to see him, see. And he'd say, "Come on Geney, you're going to sing." And my dad would stick the straw hat on me, and I'd sing. And I found out that he would shuffle his feet, you know, shuffle his feet and dance around. And I learned that shuffle. He said, "This is what you call the old man shuffle." The old colored man would dance. So I started dancing. So he says, "Now, sonny, when you get on the stage, you don't want to stand there like a dead man." He said, "You get out there," he said, "move around." So I got there, and I'd shuffle my feet and that's how I won all the prizes. With him and different ones that my mother, like I say, taught me different songs. And then I went to St. Marys School.

(011) The sister found out that I love singing, and she'd take me up in the choir. And then she started singing. I learned the *Ava Maria*. And they used different songs and that there. And later my brother and I ended up as we went through years like that and my sisters and all of us singing -- And we would all harmonize around at the table. We was always singing. My sisters and us all had beautiful voices. And they went -- And we would harmonize. My mother, she said -- Now here's the way she taught us to harmonize. She'd sing the harmony, just the harmony. Then put you in the room there. Then you come back,

and I'd sing like the harmony. Like I say, *Gold Mine in the Skies*. He'd be singing (*singing*) 'The gold mine in the sky.' I said, (*singing*) 'Gold mine in the sky far away.' I'd learned the harmony, see. But I couldn't read notes. And when I went in the all boys choir at St. Alphonses, my brother and I was in the all boys choir. My sisters and them was singing in the choir down at St. Marys, which was great. The sisters taught us a lot

(022) about singing. How to hold your voice and how to do everything, you know. So the sisters, ... she put me down as a soloist. I said, "Oh, sister, don't put me soloist. I can't read notes!" She said, "But you sing like an angel." So she put me up there, and I sang in the St. Alphonses Church. I forget what song I sang. *Mother at Your Feet We're Kneeling*, I sang all by myself and the organist and then the choir boys. There was 20 or 30 choir boys, and we sang. It was all boys, you know, the choir boys from St. Alphonses. But I'm trying to look for pictures. If you find any pictures of the choir boys or anything of the Vic Theater, I'm looking for pictures of the old amateur contest. If anything where we was on. Dedication of the playgrounds and when we dedicated playgrounds. I'll tell you another

(032) place where we went. Oglebay Park. They had us on the radio up there, my brother and I. You know what we was on for? Arbor Day. Arbor Day was planting the trees in Oglebay Park. And my brother and I sang up there.

MNK: What did you sing?

(035) GL: I forget. I know one thing we sang *Trees*. (*Singing*) 'I think --' Let's see. (*Singing*) 'I think that I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree.' And we'd go like that. We'd sing like that there. And what they did, each kid, they give each kid a -- And you know behind the Ohio Valley Hospital -- The playgrounds, there was no trees there. It was all nothing but brush up in there. And they was always said they getting on fire, you know, like during the -- Back then the wires or something -- And they was always afraid of fire, so they decided to take all the kids ... old Suicide Hill, you went up old Suicide Hill and down 26th Street playground, every kid that wanted to plant a tree, they took them up there. And we planted the trees. Now there's so many trees up there, I'd ... She said remember the, the playground instructor was Pete Rich from South Wheeling. And Pete Rich and Jack Malone, a great man for, he was all for the around here. Jack Malone was the head of all

(050) recreation from the county building. Jack Malone. And he'd give all us kids a tree. And I said, "Just think, some day I'll have two trees up there." Now I see all the trees. And the same way they did at Oglebay, they planted the trees at Oglebay. It was the kids from the playgrounds that they had this Arbor Day, which it was a big thing, see. But -- See they don't have nothing like that for the kids now, you know. But you look back there, just like that singing. Everything went to singing like they used to do like everybody had like dance studios and that years ago. But we never learned like that there. We had an old milkman named Joe Gouse that came to our house. He was the milkman. And he'd come back, and he'd roll back the carpet. He said, "Come here, I'm going to show you some steps." And he'd shuffle. I says you can't believe it. He said, "I was a tap dancer." He said, "But I'm working on a milk truck. And he was working for Fisher's Dairy up in Bethlehem, up in Mozart.

MNK: ... his steps too?

(059) GL: Yeah. And he taught me to, to tap dance. And all of us would go down, we'd roll the rug back, and all of kids would tap dance. But Ed Arbruster's daughter ... some other steps.

CNK: Who?

(062) GL: Edna Arbruster. Like I told you, she later went with Blackstone the magician. And she died in Florida. But she was the one at the Capitol Theater. When Blackstone the magician was at the Capitol Theater, you'd see the organ come out of the floor like this. I don't whether it's still over there and that. But this is before that. And as it come out of the floor like that, there was a skeleton playing the organ, you know, da, da. And all us kids was like this here. Blackstone the magician come out with his coat and he'd like bang! He shot the gun, and there was Edna Arbruster there, a beautiful blonde woman from South Wheeling. And that's -- She went with Blackstone the magician. I'm just starting! I got so many things to tell you, you'd never believe it!

CNK: You're not supposed to laugh into the tape, Michael!

(072) GL: That's all right. We'll cut that out, Mike. But I'll tell you, I think that the kids are getting carried away with this rap and that. It's no good for them. But they're not really telling a story. The greatest story when you tell a story, it's something like -- How I remember -- This is a little trick I learned in learning the song. Before you do it, if you can read, you

read the song like this here. And if you can't read, you listen. Close your eyes, get in a room all by yourself, and listen to the whole story. Did you ever get your ... you're listening to the story on TV, the whole thing? You'll almost tell it word for word. Now if you're learning the song, and I can't stand there and read the words, I'll read the story, what it means. Then I'll go -- A lot of times my wife says, "You're talking again." I'll be singing the song, you know. They say sing yourself to sleep. There was a song *Sing Yourself to Sleep* years ago. If you're worried and you can't sleep, just count your blessings instead, instead of sheep, you know. You learn these words to this song, and you'll sing them word for word. ... a place for Dinah Shore, was my accordion player. And the ... Brando played for Bobby Vinton and different one. Eddie Yahns played for

(087) Gene Krupa and all the different ones back many years ago, you know. Different ... But that's ... I learned words. A guy's going ... "How come you don't need the notes or nothing?" I said, "I can't tell you what key. It could be whiskey, I don't know. Or door key." I said, "I don't know what I'm singing." But I'd go and sing the songs. I'd get out and I sang. The worse thing that ever happened to me in my life was up at Oglebay. George Thomas had and it was like a teenage Miss America they had up there. Well anyhow, I get out, and I was supposed to sing this song *There She Is* like this here. Dressed in tuxedo, and they had, you know, like a, you know how that used to be like a little aisle out there where they walked out on the stage there. A bug flew down my throat. A ... bug flew down my throat. I said -- Flew down my throat. I thought someone threw a dart and it went into my throat. I almost went unconscious. And Cecil Pearson with the bass come off the stage. I ran off of the stage, and when I get there when the music was over they was shaking me. And the doctors were there beating me on the back. One doctor, don't know who it was, up at Oglebay stuck a spoon down my throat like this here, and the bug, I guess, finally -- But it scratched my lungs, and I couldn't sing for two months. But I was so embarrassed. I said, "I practiced all week long. A bug flew down my throat." The same

(013) thing happened to a great singer this day, and I heard it on television here about two years ago. Barbara Mandrell. A bug flew down. So if you're ever out on the stage, watch the bugs flying around. Because I don't know what happened, but the lights were there. I seen him

flying around, you know. At that time, see, Oglebay, the Pine Room was open. And it flew down my throat.

MNK: Now if the bug hadn't flown down your throat, what would it have sounded like? Give us a little bit of it.

(018) GL: Oh, geeze. I forget the song, the song that I was singing at that time.

MNK: This is your big chance to make up for it.

GL: Oh my god, I forget what song --

CNK: You're in your tuxedo now!

GL: Yeah. It was something about -- I don't know if it was *Oh, You Beautiful Doll*. Oh, yeah, I think it was (*singing*) 'Oh, you beautiful doll, you great big beautiful doll.' Whomp! Down my throat it went! The girls come out, I says, "What happened?" Oh, I remember me going in an ambulance to Ohio Valley Hospital. I cried and cried and cried. And here --

(117) I've had so much trouble with my throat, but I'm still singing. But here I was working on the Wheeling Tunnels and I fell over there at the Wheeling Tunnel, but I had a -- Something happened to my esophagus, and they took me to Pittsburgh Hospital. And they took my esophagus out. And they told me I'd never sing again. And I says, "Give me the needle, I want to die." I says -- But I went for two years, I couldn't sing. And you know what brought me back? Prayers. Novenas and everything. And I'm singing to this day going on 70 years old, and that happened 25 years ago. But they took part of my esophagus out. I got the scar. I don't want to show you, it's all the way down here! But I -- Like I say, that's my life. Singing and history, something that I don't really -- It's just common sense that you don't need no reading books or getting a college degree. I have no degree or nothing. But it's something. And when you go like that there, you say what am I going

(128) to do if I don't have -- Training dogs! To this day I'll be singing on a stage, "Oh, he trained my dog." I says, "Shhh." Like that. "You put my bathroom in." I says, "Don't tell them ... I'm a professional entertainer," you know. Then I'd kid with them ... But Mrs. Mellman, you know her at Mellman's out here? I trained her dog Junker. And when I

(133) had all these newspaper clippings and bring it up. And the newspaper come up, they took all kind of -- And you know who interviewed me, and every time I see her on national

television, was Faith Daniels. Faith brings me in, brings a cameraman up there to the kennels. And I had the kennels and I had my training center and everything. I'm training on Sundays and that for people. And I opened my own kennels and that. Well, Faith brings me in there when they first opened up down there on 16th Street. So here she's interviewing me, and I forgot about the dogs, you know. They're supposed to be on down -- Well, she had some perfume on, the dogs are going like that, and he actually got up on Faith Daniels like this. She went like this. A big German shepherd. I had two great big German shepherds. And she backed from the camera. Well, they cut it out, see. She said, "I was petrified of those dogs." I said, "Well, he's just smelling. He wanted you to pet him or something," I don't know, you know. But they got up, I was talking to the cameraman like we're talking here. Faith is over here asking questions, and the dogs went over to her, you know. But ... I remember Faith Daniels. Every time I see it, she's scared of dogs.

(146)

MNK: Tell us more about Goosetown. Who, who --

GL: Oh, Goosetown.

MNK: Who the families were and see if you can sort of --

(149)

GL: Oh, I can remember almost all the families on -- There were the West, the Kanabee. Was a blind man, Butch Kanabee, and he sang out there. He was great for singing too. And I remember years ago out in Goosetown was a great thing for the semi-pro football teams. They had the Orioles come in there. And another thing I can remember too out there at, out there in Goosetown, was the Yankees. The Yankees were from Goosetown. And the different ones that played on the Yankees there. Sparky Barton was a relative of mine. He married my cousin. And he was quite a football player. But I can remember they had big pots of hotdogs on Sunday afternoons. And the Orioles would play there. And the different ones. The Yankees would playing. They come from different places, you know, to play football like that there. And then they had boxing ring. I remember there's a boxing ring. They had a boxing ring, and they boxed with bare fists. I can remember that too. But I can remember too the little swimming pool there is what they used for the stage. And us little kids would sing in the swimming pools. And they would sit all around the swimming pool like this, and I'd sing. And I'd just sing. I sang in swimming pools. I sang in about

everything there was. I sang in every theater in Wheeling. Plus I sang in  
(166) California, Florida, just about every place. On troop ships. I even sang on the troop ships. Even when I was in bed, and I was sick and, you know, on the troop ship, they said there's the guy's a singer. A guy come over with a banjo, a sailor did, and I sang with him, you know. But Goosetown, getting back to Goosetown, that was quite a place out there years ago. That's where all your brick layers years ago -- That's where they was making the bricks and that's how they -- What they did, they'd make all the bricks out there, and they'd come here. And that's where the stone quarry -- From the railroad tracks all around the ... street is where the stone quarry is. That's what I got all that all out for you is over there if you want to look at the stone quarries. And A. J. Long was the one that come from Pennsylvania years ago, was the Long brothers. And they were the stone masons and the brick layers. And this is some of the most beautiful buildings that they built in Wheeling, and they cut the stone. And they cut the stone in the mouth of the creek. And they did it with steam. I got all those things if you want to copy some of them down. Xerox  
(179) them and give them back to me, you know. But I collected all them for you too, you know. But the brick -- It was called Brick City. This -- The Island was called the town of Columbia. But, like I say, the stone quarry is some of the finest stone came from Shawnee Hill in, down in Goosetown. You know where the peninsula was? That was the Long's farm. And the Long's farm, that's where they got all the -- You see some of the most beautiful sandstones that you see on the buildings in Wheeling came from there. They came from the quarry. From 20th Street where -- And then later they built the Corrugating back in there. Later they built the Corrugating. But that's where all the stone came from. And they'd get it in the creek, and they'd bring it across -- You know how they -- A guy says, 'well, how did they move the stones?' They saved all like the trees. That's why you could hardly see any trees. They said make big logs like this, and they would roll them. They'd roll the stones. Some of them weighed tons. But you can imagine. One of the  
(193) things that people don't realize, the animals that were involved in building the city of Wheeling. The horses, the mules and everything. They had to haul these things that built the bridges and that. They said about the horses and that. How they used these teams of

horses to pull these big stones up like on the bridge here. They didn't have all these cranes and everything like we -- Scaffolds and everything. They built their scaffolds, they built their scaffolds out of the forest. They cut down the trees, and they built their own scaffolds like that there. And how they dug. You imagine they didn't have the things that dig. They dug by hands. And it says how they dug. I just pictured them laying all these bricks all through Wheeling. And people walk through, and they just don't think nothing of it. And these kids don't think nothing of it. But I do because this is my museum, and I -- That's all I ... before I die. Like you people, you're interested in it. No other people was interested in it. Then I see the out-of-town people were more interested than the people in Wheeling.

(206) I wanted to have tours here. Nobody come. I had a few tours, but then nobody came, you know. And it was sickening. I said no, they don't want to -- I'm probably goofy doing all of this stuff. But then I seen Larry Roders and all, Washington, DC. I'm on television in New York, and I'm on in a magazine in New York. And I'm in -- I'll tell you another place I'm in, Philippine Islands. I write the people in the Philippines, send them newspaper clippings and that. And Canada. The people from Canada are very interested in some of the things that's happening in Wheeling.

CNK: What else do you remember about growing up in Goosetown?

MNK: Yeah.

(215) GL: See, I didn't live out in Goosetown too long. I lived there until I was about five years old. Then we moved out 29th Street, see. The flood come up and more or less wiped us out too, see. The flood out there in Goosetown. Where we lived, the flood come up, see. That wiped a lot out years ago. But down in Goosetown, the people was always so neighborly and that, you know. Like the different ones and there. And you'd always hear somebody singing on the corners. They'd go on the corners, and they got out and harmonized. And my uncles and all them were the Pack family. They were great for harmony and that there. George Pack, Albert Pack, Herman Pack, and all the Packs, you know. There's still some Packs around here, but some of them are moved away, you know. But they'd get out there and sing. My mother was a Pack. And they was all great for singing. And the Longs were the same way, but some of the Longs weren't like -- The Steins is the ones, was

(226) our relatives. See, my grandmother was a Stein, and they were banjo players and singers too, see.

MNK: What kinds of songs?

(228) GL: Like -- Oh, let's see, *Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue*, you know, like stuff like that there. Now some of my recording -- I'm going to make a recording for you guys for doing this for me. Some of my latest that I made, but I take you down home and show you what I got down there. It's really -- There's so much down there too. But the view of the river -- I cut all of the trees down the river. When I bought the property the guy says, "What are you cutting all the trees down for?" I said, "I want tourists to come in here and take pictures of Wheeling." The neighbors got all upset. So I cut all the trees down. Now what the tourists do? Did you see behind there, on television you see WTRF, the background? Taken from my house. They come -- The photographers come out there. It's the only place you can get a picture of Wheeling without everything in the way, you know. So if you want a good  
(241) picture with your camera, there's a good one. Now what I did too, my flood mark. I made a big flood mark like this here and put it on the tree. I got that huge tree there. And the tourists come down on the *Voyager*, they take movies of it. They take pictures of it. It shows where the '36 flood -- As you see the *Voyager* go past, they all point up like that there, you know. You can see it real plain.

MNK: Where does this feeling for history that you want to help people understand what's happened in the past -- Where does that come from anyway?

(247) GL: Well, I think -- They don't tell you in school. I didn't think too much of it. But I was always myself, but I wasn't that good at reading, you know, history. And I thought -- Well, I didn't want to know about Balboa and all that, you know, but I loved stuff like that was happening. And even when I was a kid, I was always saying -- Like the marbles. I wanted to hold a marble contest here before I die. A marble contest for the kids and stuff like that. You see these little kids when they come from that Madison School. They went wild in here. '... have another one Mr. Long. When we going to have some more.' 'We're going to have some more, just give me time' I'm in and out of the hospital too much, you know. But the kids like that. They love -- I -- The Salvation Army did great for me too. I had -- They had

some used carpet out there, and the major out there said, "If you want it, Gene, you're always doing -- Take the carpet." I says, "Well, haul it over." When they hauled it over, they brought it in. And I put a little studio down there and made out of the  
(260) freezer, you got to see this, a little stage and everything for handicapped children. So the handicapped children can come in there, and they don't need to go up no steps or anything, see. Then on the other side I got for my blind people or anything like that, I got a music where I have music in that same area. But on the other side I got for like retarded children. When I had the retarded children over here, I got a pool table and a ping pong table. Salvation Army donated it to me. You'd be surprised the people who donate stuff to me, you know. But I, I said, "How much for the carpet that I brought in there?" "You know it's nothing. You're always doing something." ... out to the home of the Good Shepherd and all that, you know.

CNK: Why do you think it's important to teach kids about this, about the old times?

(272) GL: I think it's great. See, they got to have a tour for these kids. All right, I see the jogging trails and that. I know a lot of people knocking it, but the kids it's going to be very important when they see the history. And you know the one going out there by the hospital? That's another quarry. As you walk through there, that's another quarry that they got the stone out of. These little kids, they're not teaching them about going to the moon and that. These kids don't want to hear that. They want to hear what grandpap and grandma did or what your sister did, your father did and everything else. That's what they want to do, see. They want to hear stuff like that there. These little kids, they say, "Hey Mr. Long, show us where the bricks are." I said, "Go up on the upper part of the Island here, and you'll see where these bricks are still there." Imagine these men got down. So I got these little kids one day down there. I says, "Now kneel down on the ground, and take this brick and try to put it down like that." ... so heavy. I said, "Imagine, these kids years ago took them bricks, and they were young guys too and paved brick." They said too, I think it was in the library, that it said that paving the brick in Wheeling were done by some of the colored  
(288) people, the black people. ... like slaves and that that they had. They ... But you look at -- You, you just can't imagine how many brick were made in Wheeling. And the first ones on

the Island, the first ones in Wheeling, were made in Wheeling here, see. That's how they built the city. That's why they called it Brick City. You go in the library, they'll tell you about Brick City and the where it all come from, see. But Goosetown was the place where the Germans settled, see. All them ones with trade like my grandfather with the trades, with the, with the, with his glass and that there. My other uncles were molders and that. As they started that -- At that time was Wheeling Mold and Foundry, see, before Blaw-Knox come in in Wheeling. And I worked out there too. All of us relatives worked in there.

CNK: Do you remember anything about your grandfather and the glass business?

(300) GL: All I knew that some of the glass things that he made that they're -- Well, some of the relatives went and took it, you know, took some of the pictures of that stuff that he made and that there. But like I, I remember working out the foundry. My uncles and that were molders, and they was making the largest water wheels in the world and all that there. Well, they were molders molding that, see. You just don't realize the people around here with the trades. I see my hands, how crooked they are from my trade. Then I had a stroke. And I said I'll never be able to set tile. I had my arm like this. I couldn't move my arm anymore. That's the reason I dropped out of the trade too. But now I'm back singing, doing tile work around the house and that there. I'm still doing stuff like that.

CNK: Tell us more about how you got into, into the trades and into tile and brick work.

(314) GL: Well, they needed the labor, and they had a strike out at the foundry there, see, when I was working at Blaw-Knox. So Pete Savage, a friend of mine, told me, he says, "We're ... the trade, we need some labors." So I went in as a laborer. Then later he seen the ones they got me on as apprenticeship. Little did I think I'd go down history as a Bricklayers Local Number One. The first tile setter or marble, I was tiling marble and stone mason that ever became the vice president of the Bricklayers Local Number One. And I was the one. And they never had banquets or anything. You see that picture on the wall. They never had a big picture, so they make me vice president. 'Gene Long wants to run the whole show. He's going to run it like a, like he's running a show or something.' I said, "No." I says, "Let's just have a banquet. We'll have a banquet." And I got photographers, bands and everything. Now we're having it every -- In fact, next month we're having it out Wheeling Park, the

fifth out at Wheeling Park there. But they never had them. Now

(329) everybody says 'yeah, we have banquets all the time.' Said who started -- They -- I started them. And that's what you got to do. You got to get something going, you know. Oh, if I could work with kids, I could show them so many things, you know. I think -- One of my things too is, is an artist, you know. I was always doing artwork until my hand went bad. I say one picture -- This is funny, I got to show you this. I thought no skill, don't have no skills so -- House is burning down on the Island so what I did -- That's me at the window looking out the window! Nineteen forty-seven. I drawn it like that.

CNK: You made that.

(340) GL: Yeah.

CNK: Pull it around here so we can look at it.

GL: I said there's a house burning down across the street from me.

MNK: Raise it up a little bit.

GL: Yeah. And I thought there's a picture on the wall. And I thought, well I'm going to just sketch it how it is like that there, you know.

CNK: Nineteen forty-seven.

(345) GL: Yeah. So I was taking like an engineering course, but you had to be able to draw too. And the guy says, "Where'd you learn to draw at?" I says, "Oh, in school." I said, "I was always drawing. I didn't have nothing to do." I was an asthmatic. I'd draw and make pictures and make stories. There's another ... I'm always messing around. Look at here. Right there. I'm making a show card to send around for, to -- That my picture will be in here, see. I'm going to send it around to different ones, you know. Like the homes and that. They want me at Christmas time and that there. I made things like that there. Fliers. ... look like that.

CNK: Well, you were just starting to tell us about what it was like being a laborer when you first started out.

GL: Oh, yeah I started out --

CNK: I wondered what year.

(358) GL: Main part of the trade is laboring. You see of all these buildings and that being built, the

labor is the main part. You got to have the labor because he's the one that brings all the material and sees that it's there, helps you out, mixes the mud. And that's what I was. So they had all these power plants that's going all through the valley and that, and they needed labor. I ended up there. I went into my apprenticeship back in 1948, 1948. And I became a tile setter then. But traveling then, like I say, Bourys there, Glassco, ... with Glassco. I did all these different homes and everything. Working. I can imagine all the places I worked.

CNK: Tell us about, tell us about your hardest day on the job that you can remember.

(371) GL: Well, the hardest day on the job, I think, was -- The hardest day on my job was when I was laying brick down, not brick, but these big things down at Mountaineer Carbon. I might have a picture of it here if I can show you. Mountaineer Carbon. It shows me building a silo before the power plants were built. And it was so cold, you'd never believe it. We had to put wood grain alcohol in the barrels to keep it from freezing. And these guys came from Mississippi, most of them were Indians. And they needed a tile. So they needed a bricklayer, but none of the guys ever built the silos. I says I'll go down, I'll build them. So I built them. I ended up a foreman on it, but I fell down there 35 feet. Never got hurt. Come up here, change a light bulb in my dance hall, fell, fell off the ladder and was laid up six months with a broken leg and a separated shoulder. I never got hurt. The scaffold gave away, and I just slid down there and fell on the trash pile. Never got hurt. You're going to get tired of me, I'll tell you.

CNK: Never.

(390) GL: Never. Oh, gosh. Oh Jesus crimony. You said you was going to come up ... I told Barbara, I says, "They'll just come up and just probably want to see my clippings. That's the reason I had these made for you.

CNK: Oh.

(393) GL: I had them all made for you.

CNK: Oh, thanks. Well, we didn't know how much you'd have to say.

(395) GL: Oh, boy. But do you want entertainment? What do you want, the tile now. You're on tile.

CNK: Well, which, which do we want? We want it all. Which do we want first, Michael!

GL: Michael.

MNK: Well, let's, let's figure this out.

(399) GL: I want to tell you this story. It was called Mercantile Hall years ago. And back in the 1800s, the baseball teams, they come from Steubenville. Pros come down to play the, the Wheeling pros up here in the stadium. On the upper part of the Island there was a stadium there. So they come in to play up there. The score was 72 to 12. And it was getting dark. And they was playing Wheeling, and they had to catch a train over there. The Steubenville pros was beating them that bad, and it started getting dark so they went over in Bridgeport. They said 'well, we have to leave anyhow, we have to leave no matter what.' They said, 'no you have to stay here and play no matter what time,' you know as much as they could or continue the next day. So they got on a train in Bridgeport so they wouldn't miss the train and went back to Steubenville. The Wheeling pros came to Mercantile  
(414) Hall, which is right where you're standing now, and celebrated and forfeited the game and won the game because they left. That's a pro sport, and it was in one of these -- It's on one of these walls.

CNK: I wonder when that was.

(419) GL: Back in the 1800s. Baseball. Yeah I told that -- That fellow who wrote the story on baseball, I gave him that too. Did you hear what I told about the pros? ... about the pros?

MNK: Amazing.

GL: Two pros! The pro team in Steubenville played Wheeling and was 76 to 12. So they didn't want to miss their train. They said 'well, we won the game.' 'No, no, you got to finish the game out.' It was only in the sixth inning. So what they did, they went back to Steubenville. When they went back to Steubenville it says "The Wheeling team celebrated in their Mercantile Hall." Was up here, right here where the Mercantile Hall was. Celebrated because according to the law, it was a forfeited game, and they won the game because Steubenville went back. They didn't want to miss their train! It was going to get dark!

CNK: Can we just --

(430) GL: It's in the library about that.

CNK: Can we look at these sports pictures for a minute?

GL: Yeah, yeah. This is all -- Johnny Reager from Pittsburgh Steel sent me this. He was just in Wheeling ... The Wheeling pro, they just had him at that banquet there, see. There's Johnny Reager, he sent me them pictures. This is -- Right here, Bob Hoffman, he's the world's -- All about weight lifting and everything. This man here was one of the George brothers in the Olympic. He was here. He's on this list here.

CNK: Lebanese man?

(438) GL: Yeah, George was his name. He was an Olympic weight lifter. He was here, and he was the one that seen that I got this picture here, see. And believe it or not, see the guy up there in the middle? That's me.

CNK: Which one?

GL: The one in the middle up there!

CNK: All the way at the top?

GL: Right here.

CNK: Oh, up --

(444) GL: The musclemen. I won a weight lifting contest.

MNK: Which year was this picture, Gene?

GL: That's Wheeling Steel broadcast.

MNK: Isn't that an amazing picture.

CNK: Oh.

MNK: And which is -- Tell me --

GL: That's me at the Holiday Inn years ago with Freddy Kratz when we was traveling the Holiday Inns.

CNK: With who?

(449) GL: Freddy Kratz. He played for Judy Garland. This is Don Orlando here. He played for Dinah Shore. Bobby Varnet sends me a picture, he says Wheeling didn't want me. You know what he does? He's one that does all the shows in Las Vegas. And you would hear this guy sing. He's the one that got me on the background tapes. How I started background tape, Bobby Varnet.

MNK: Uh huh.

(455) GL: He's from up in Pennsylvania, up there around right outside of Pittsburgh.

MNK: Well, tell me which is, which sister ...

GL: This is Virginia here. That's Jack my brother. And that's Virginia over there. This is Eleanor here. Here they are. Here's when they were dancers. They went with Al Baker's Revue in New York when they went up to New York that time. Here they were here. They were tap dancers. This is them on WWVA. That's Jack and I when we was on WWVA. And that's me up there when I, believe it or not, that's me when I first got out of the Army, went back on the radio. That was a theatrical picture taken.

CNK: This one right here?

(466) GL: Yeah.

CNK: You look so young.

GL: Well, I was young!

CNK: When you got out of the Army?

GL: Yeah!

CNK: How old were you?

(468) GL: I was only 21 years old, something like that. This is my sons. I produced my sons, and later I put them on the *Mike Douglass Show*, *Dick Clark Show* and that. That's ... brothers. I was always doing something, producing and -- I guess I'm wacky. You know my doctor told me he'd give me a pill to slow me down. He says -- He calls me the great creator. He says, "You're always creating." I says, "Christ, I don't want to sit around and do nothing. I want to, you know, get things going." If somebody don't do something like this, it's a dead world. Like you guys, what great things you're doing. I'd like ... photography. My wife says I'm camera happy. I'm always taking -- You know what I take pictures of? Boats. And I got a thing down there that they give me of an old man, a young boy years was an invalid, and he set down in Benwood. And as they went up the river, this boy marked down all the boats that went up the river. He was just sitting there. And when he died, you know who got the things? Mary Ellen, Mary Lou Henderson give me the thing of all the boats. And I collect all my boats and put my boats on there. Back in the 1800s when this

(487)                   guy would mark down all the boats that went up and down the river. So she give them to me. She said your collection. So I take pictures of boats. I got the *Delta Queen*, any one you want. I take them on the river. That's the reason I cut my trees down. You got to take the pictures ... Here's, here's the one here I got here. This guy, see him at the musician's thing. He's a fantastic musician, this guy here. I just had these made. That's with my band.

CNK: What year?

(495)                   GL: This was taken at the festival. It was taken at the Italian Festival. We was at the Italian Festival. This is Don Orlando who played for Dinah Shore. And that's Harry Greensburg and different ones like that. But I had this made for him. I'm going to send it away.

MNK: And you were playing drums?

(500)                   GL: No, I was singing.

CNK: Not this year.

                          GL: Huh?

CNK: Not this year though.

                          GL: No, not this year, no. No, this was taken years ago.

CNK: Oh.

                          GL: It was taken years ago.

MNK: Well, I heard you mention German and Italian and what --

(505)                   GL: We're mixture of everything. My grandfather and them was -- My grandmother was, her name was Halter, Louise Halter. She's French. My grandfather was a German, and he met her on a ship coming over. That was Nicholas Packs, see. And on my other side is German and Irish. McNalley is my great grandmother from Pittsburgh. Jean McNalley. And you know what I do too? I collect family trees. And every time there's a funeral, I make all Xerox copies and hand it to all my relatives. They said 'how'd you do it?' I says, "In my spare time!" This is where I sit here. I just -- When I sit here and it's so exciting just to sit here looking at all the pictures and I get -- ... how many people sit here. Newspaper reporters and everybody and all these ones come from out of town. They sit at this window, they says 'this is nice.' I sit -- There's an old house over there. You know what the -- My wife says, "It is driving you nuts." I says, "Barbara, you think I want to watch that idiot

thing that you watch them, them talk shows is driving me --”