

PIONEERS OF THE 20TH CENTURY: FRANK ORLAND

PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF FOREST PARK

I: (Time00:08)...Series of interviews, first in the series. So, why don't we go back and start at the beginning? Bob told me that you have an interest in sharing with folks about the Indian background of this area, the Village, before the Village was ever here. What kind of light can you shed on that angle?

FO: Well, we have cemeteries around here. In fact there are more people in the cemeteries than there are inhabitants in town as you may know, or may want to know. So the cemeteries were here before the town came, and before the cemeteries were started there was an Indian village in Forest Home Cemetery along the river, the Des Plaines River extending out to Des Plaines Ave. which is a current street and it was kind of a sand bar a bit high that was out of all the swamp that was around here and they had a village there. Well, they did many things. They collected artifacts and when things turned and the Indians were ushered out, politely or otherwise, they all left, except for one fella and that is his canoe over there, Leon Barosa, and he in quotes married one of the Indian ladies who wanted to stay behind and tend her friends graves. So she did. And, he rode a canoe and then he acquired land by simply applying for it, it was all open land, and surprisingly we have the document right over there. Lord Van Buren signed the document and gave him 160 acres of land just gratis because he was the first one here who asked for some land.

I: What would that be, immediately before the civil war?

FO: Oh yes, this would have been, well, in the 1800's, so way before the civil war.

I: Do you have any notion of what particular tribe the Indians that were in this area were?

FO: Yes, yes. The Indians changed tribes. The Omchawa? (Ochoa, Ochowa) were here first, a peaceful tribe. The Potawatami's moved in from Wisconsin and ushered them out politely or otherwise, and they were largely Potawatami's who occupied the land in the village that was here. Well, so they gradually grew and they, when somebody died they buried them in a mound and with a lot of artifacts, bones, artifacts, skeletons, everything and those remained for a long time until the next person who came, who was the next picture over here, Hazi, his name is Hazi, and he bought some of the farm land and he was plowing the field there and he looked out there to say, well, he's not making much money off of farming, how about starting a cemetery which he did. There were a lot of Chicagoans who died and wanted to be buried out here in the wide-open spaces. So, he sold lots and there were some mounds and he said what are these mounds here for? Let's bulldoze them over, flatten them out so we make more graves for the city folks, which he did. Surprisingly he found that these were Indian mounds and they dug up a lot of artifacts, which they kept in the office in a shelf much like we have over here and then

I was over there and he said we're going to have to move these out, what should we do with them? I said we had no historical society at that time, send them over to the library, which they did. We have 2 cases of them upstairs with all the relics, Indian heads, arrowheads, bits of clothes, silver, and all these things that pertained to Indian lore, and we had a good discussion on that last time at the Historical Society Meeting. We had one man who was an archeologist who was going to point all of this out now, of course, since we had difficulty in seeing things in the cabinets with 100 people around I got someone to take a video tape of everything and explained it all beforehand so it was on video tape and we played it back and it seemed much better in the lecture room down the hall.

I: Can you tell me in terms of contemporary Forest Park where these mounds were located?

FO: Sure, we went out to see them as a matter of fact because some of the people who went on cemetery walks weren't sure where they were. They were along the river, where they stuck up and it's not a very prominent mound but trees had already begun to grow on them and so they were leveled and we could see where they had been leveled, of course. Flat land, toward the river, sloped toward the river, the Des Plaines River.

I: Would this be south of the expressway, north of the expressway today?

FO: Yes, oh yes, south of the expressway-everything's south of the expressway.

I: Is that right?

FO: Yes. There was a whole cemetery and there was a large amusement park that was there also at one time and that lasted for a while, but it folded up after a while.

I: And how did the first white settlers come to this area? You talked about Hazi. Were there any main trails that came west from Chicago?

FO: Yes, all right, there were 2 main trails that you have to visualize everything was kind of a swamp around here. Only the high levels, which are dunes from the old lake Chicago, they were doing lake Chicago covered everything out here and that's retreated from the ice melt, the last glacier and there were certain high points. Well, Des Plaines Ave. right out here is a high point and that was a trail and that's why it curves around so much. And, the other one was Lake Street. And, why is it called Lake Street? Because it came out from the lake and they raised that up with boards, with boards so there was a road with boards and they drove their wagons out west past Forest Park. Everything else was still swampy especially around the Des Plaines River, but they certainly managed to keep the boardwalk clear enough so that they could run their horses and wagons out west through Oak Park.

I: What was the next largest settlement west of Chicago beyond Forest Park, were there any settlements west?

FO: Well, there weren't for some time because also you have to realize the railroad started coming in and that made a big difference. The Galena and Chicago Rail Road company started from Chicago and had a very primitive engine, you've seen pictures of it, or we can show you photographs of it, and it went only as far as the river because it wasn't just a river to cross, but the swamp land was about a mile on either side so it just stopped in Forest Park what is now Des Plaines Ave. intersecting Lake Street pretty much and they stopped there and they said that's far enough so they would be able to roundhouse, they brought men out to work and turn the engines around and send them back to Chicago. So for a number of years the only railroad there was Galena Chicago Railroad never got to Galena, it stopped in Forest Park. Well, that's when this town began, 1856 pretty much people moved in, workmen came to work on the engines, and much later of course, they did drain enough of the swamp to build a bridge over the Des Plaines River and then they went west and the two of them became the Chicago and Galena Railroad but the Galena part was a much more important part and why? Because there was lead out in Galena and they needed for lead for lead shot in the civil war. So, the Galena part was loaded with more traffic bringing it into central Illinois then Chicago ever was unlike now, whoever heard of Galena, not much.

I: Where was the railroad and the roundhouse located in terms of contemporary Forest Park?

FO: Well, it would be right at the north end of Des Plaines Avenue which this building is on Des Plaines Avenue and curves around as you know north of Madison and still curves a bit northeast and then it ends up where a lumber yard is built right over the end of the road but it used to go right up to Lake St. where the roundhouse was for the engines to turn around and go back to Chicago and get them repaired and get them refurnished by people who were brought out, workmen who stayed here and lived here. They liked this wooded place so they began to settle down. Forest Park began then in 1856.

I: Do we know where the rails ran? Did they run along Lake St.?

FO: Well, just south of Lake St. Still where the Northwestern is now which is a major line, as you know and it runs south of Lake St., yes.

I: OK, so we've got the Haz here, we've got the Indians here, now we've got the railroad. What's the next major development? And, also, the time frame was before the civil war at this point, right?

FO: Yes, yes it was. And when the civil war came, they did vote from around here and all 18 votes voted for Abraham Lincoln so there was no question that he got elected from up here. Well, all right the main thing was though that there was other people moving in and one fellow from Harlem, New York, Harlem was then a respectable small suburb of New York, came in the area just around where the railroad ended and he said well, I'm going to acquire all of this farmland. Whether you bought it or just marked your stakes where you wanted to be and it was a huge area and covered all of River Forest, all Forest

Park, and it was called Harlem because he liked his hometown of Harlem. And, so we were part of Harlem for a long time until the other towns broke away like Oak Park separated and called themselves Oak Park, River Forest did the same, and Forest Park was a little slow about these things so they finally did incorporate into what was Harlem. And, so we were Harlem, Illinois for a long time until a certain thing happened. We decided that we had to have a post office around here so they applied for a post office. Well, they weren't smart enough to know by writing to the state that there was already a Harlem town with a post office and you can't have a Harlem post office-you've got to rename the town. Well, the smart people in Forest Park said let's take a piece of Oak Park this way, and a piece off of River Forest there and call it Forest Park. So, in a sense we are part of the old Harlem farm but we are Forest Park and that's why we feature that because we think it's a nice name and we are part of Oak Park and part of River Forest instead of Harlem. And then we got a post office and a postmaster and then it began to grow as a town.

I: What were the town boundaries on the southern side? We know that to our north we had River Forest, to our East we had Oak Park, what happened to the south?

FO: That was always a bit nebulous because it was all farmland and just as much as the village had wanted to claim, but also cemeteries started growing up, and of course they took over a lot of acreage and so that was about the end of the town where Forest Park ends at about 22nd St. south. There's Woodlawn Cemetery and I mentioned Forest Home is the largest one, and there Concordia and there were several other large cemeteries with many stones and people there. It used to be active around here and we would go out there on a cemetery walk every fall and look up who's there, who's there.

I: Were there ever cemeteries located where there are residential sections now?

FO: No, cemeteries are very haughty in a sense, they didn't want to sell any of their land. Even now when the village of somebody asks for acreage for more housing or are interested or something, they fight back, have their cemetery land all sequestered and they hardly ever sell any-sometimes they do. And Forest Home is the biggest one and they've never sold any of their land.

I: Do we know at this point are there any projections about how long they will have area available as a cemetery? At some point they'll fill up I would assume.

FO: Well, you walk out there and there are a lot of empty spaces. My wife and I have an empty space out there, we're not there yet, you know, but we bought a lot and put a stone on it, it's a large stone that says a few things and importance about the history of Forest Park, but there's a lot of room yet out there.

I: I see. OK, we've got the town incorporated as Harlem now, and the two major events were the railroad and then the post office, what happened next that allowed the town to develop?

FO: Well, all right, more railroads came in. The Northwestern developed, of course, the major line the Chicago and Galena originally and then the others came in from the north. There was a Wisconsin line that brought the Soo line in, runs right past my house, curves around and joins the Great Western which came in from the west largely a passenger train that went east now on the Eisenhower expressway. They're all down on the expressway. And there were other smaller railroads that never made it and, of course, there were trolley cars all over too and they didn't make it very long, then the buses came, the trolleys folded up their trolley and they were no more. But we collected things. For example, by the door I have a heavy-duty brick-it's not really a brick, it's a paving block from the railroad, Des Plaines Ave. streetcar line when they tore it up they got rid of all of the heavy building blocks and one of them is wrapped up there and keeps our door open. It makes a good door stop!

I: How about schools in the newly incorporated Harlem? Where were the schools located? Was there more than one? Was there one school?

FO: There was one main school, again, this was started when the town was Harlem so, what was it called? Harlem school. And when another one was built it was Harlem #1, and the 2nd was Harlem #2, which became Garfield school. The next one was named after Grant after the civil war so it was Grant school. And later on there were more built further south but none of them were named after generals, but after poets like Field Stevenson, after Field and Stevenson, and Betsy Ross was the last one named after the lady who supposedly sewed the flag for George Washington.

I: I'm really going to show my ignorance but who was Eugene Field?

FO: Well, all right he wrote many things, he was a writer, a poet, he wrote many things.

I: Is that right? OK,

FO: Robert Lewis Stevenson is well known in literature.

I: I have no problem with him.

FO: OK.

I: Eugene Field, I'd heard the name but I didn't know who he was. Another question I have and it seems to me that, and correct me if I'm wrong here, that this village has always had a very prevalent German ethnic background. Is that the case? And what was the reason for that or is that the way that it originally started out?

FO: Well, it just happened to start out that way. Since the first people came over from Europe and they liked to settle here, I suppose the word Harlem was kind of a Germanic name in fact there is a town named Harlem over there except it was "double a" for the spelling and I wrote them when we had our big celebration and the mayor wrote me back and was happy to know that we have a town named after Harlem originally. Also, when

people came from a certain ethnic group more came because their relatives were here and they settled, and they were hard working people and they cleared the land and claimed more towns and built houses and it got to be quite a development.

I: When did the last farm disappear from the area that was Harlem?

FO: Well, that would be a difficult thing to say. By farm, well you have to define what is a farm. The early ones, the Harlem farm one was a huge thing, many hundreds of acres. And then smaller farms were still around in my memory in the 1920's, people still had an acre or two behind their house and they certainly grew vegetables, corn, and so on, and they called it a farm but it was really just a large garden and the town eventually bought up all the land, built more houses, built more homes, land was expensive otherwise so they would buy up all the spaces they could. And it's still stuffed with apartment buildings, everything.

I: So we don't have any definite date or anything you would say. By the turn of the century had all of the farmland been cleared?

FO: Pretty much, pretty much by the turn of the century.

I: I see. Well, what happened next? I know there is a lot of development it seems like west of here, Des Plaines, the Eisenhower, the river where the expressway is today, there was a great deal of activity out west wasn't there? Just west of here.

FO: Yes. Well, one of the things that came in was before the Eisenhower expressway by many years there was a large amusement park that got the right from the village to build an amusement park and they had the usual contraptions meaning roller coasters, all kinds of rides just like River View did later. But, the one here didn't last that long, and it's exactly where the Eisenhower came through, so it was the width of the Eisenhower. That doesn't seem like a wide park but it went all the way to the river West, so it was quite a source of entertainment for Chicagoans to come out on the El train which also the metropolitan El was in and running and let people off for both the cemeteries and the amusement park.

I: When did the El, when was the El put in?

FO: Well, all right, the Aurora and Elgin that came in from the west, are you familiar with the Aurora and Elgin? The red train came in from Wheaton and from Aurora, from Elgin and it went all the way downtown. But then since Forest Parkers didn't want to pay the higher fare to go down on the Aurora and Elgin, so eventually the rapid transit, it was called, Chicago operated the line, and put out tracks up to Laramie Ave. first then eventually to Forest Park. It also had a turnaround place at the end of the line. And when the Eisenhower expressway was built the Aurora and Elgin could no longer compete with all the traffic so they stopped in Forest Park and transferred their passengers to the rapid transit, which it was called the smaller electric line.

I: I've heard, and correct me again if I'm wrong, that the El line actually went out further west then it goes now?

FO: Yes. Well, in the sense that Samuel Insal, Insal who was a great entrepreneur and enterprising fellow even though he lost all his money at the end, he acquired the stock and owned part of the El system and also he said lets make a model town much farther west called Westchester. And since he came from England, every street in Westchester is named after some town in England. Buckingham is one street that my daughter lives on and how many others are all named after English names. Westchester, but how do you get transportation otherwise he ran his El line all the way out to Mannheim Rd. and 22nd St., one car, and they collected people there, not many at first, and then later on as they came through another town Bellwood, then of course, through Maywood they picked up many more people and pretty much by the time they got to Forest Park it was a loaded train, they hung more cars on when they went into Chicago.

I: OK and that same line, those same vehicles would run all the way into Chicago, or would they stop here and there would be a change over?

FO: No, the so-called Westchester train ran all the way in and it had many cars on it and the cars were so long you couldn't get in on the platform and I would have to walk in the train and walk back beyond the platform and get in the last car where my friends were and they went all the way downtown and it circled the Loop and then it came back again.

I: At what point was the extension discontinued?

FO: The extension of what?

I: Up to Westchester?

FO: Well, the depression came and there weren't many people who bought homes out there as Samuel Insal had hoped. The streets were paved, the water was in and so on and they would take their wives as I did mine out to learn how to drive the car in Westchester because everything was laid out, all the streets were there, but no traffic! It was a wide-open place. They assumed it was going to build up fast but it didn't until after the war, much later, and then it really built up fast and they couldn't keep the housing restrictions down to a certain kind of house and they had all varieties in Westchester now too.

I: So it was the depression that took out the extension of that line?

FO: It certainly did!

I: That's interesting, very interesting. I guess one of the things I've skipped over, probably plenty of things, let's go back and talk about Harlem before it becomes Forest Park and let's talk about some of the prominent businesses that were in town even before the turn of the century. Are you well versed in the businesses that were here at that point?

FO: Yes, we have pictures of many of them in the room here, but the banks were first that's how people earned money and put their money in a bank somewhere so there was the Harlem States Savings Bank and it was named after the town and it was on Madison Street and it's been renamed The Forest Park National Bank. Now, it's still the same bank but there are younger people operating it of course. And so there were banks but during the depression 2 of them went under by not having quite enough capital to keep it open, when the bank holiday occurred.

I: Do you want to take a break and grab a drink there?

FO: Well, I could just take a gulp of water, that's fine.

I: All right-we've talked about the bank that was one of the prominent businesses here. What else took root in Harlem?

FO: Well, all right, River Forest and Oak Park did not want taverns in their place and so where did the taverns come to open up new business in Forest Park, but all the other people from River Forest and Oak Park came here to partake of the liquid refreshments. So, we always had taverns, and now there are many more up and down the street and, as you know, many of them have eating establishments with them so Madison St. and other streets too are mostly populated with taverns. They used to call them saloons, of course, now that's no longer acceptable words and they are all taverns now.

I: And do, are there any of them that stand out among the many taverns that were here?

FO: Well, there's none that has maintained itself all the way through so I don't think we have any one family that operated them all the way through though some were here for a generation or two but in time they all moved out west, retired. Etc. So, no, we don't have any one family that pursued it through his lifetime.

I: Ok. Let's see, we've got banks, we've got taverns,...

FO: Grocery Stores.

I: How about grocery stores.

FO: All right, everyone had to eat too so they had many small grocery stores and they were, every block had a small grocery store. Well now, as you know, the large conglomerates have all the vegetables, all the foods, so you go there. But also drug stores were important. Every corner almost had a drug store which was important because people had aches and pains, and they went to drug stores to get usual help, there weren't that many doctors around so they would go.. Recently we had a meeting actually about all of the old drug stores. We have pictures from some of the grandchildren of the operators of those drug stores and we had a meeting on that and almost every corner had a drug store and more than that they all had a soda fountain that was part of the going

game. You went in not just for drugs, but for soda fountain and some even sold stamps and some had other medicaments of all sorts.

I: All right, do you know the names off the top of your head of any of the prominent pharmacies that were on Madison St. during the Harlem era?

FO: Yeah, all right, so again, we had a list, we had that one meeting in fact those are some of the pictures you can't quite see them, but there was, well one of the oldest ones was the one in the middle of Madison St., most of them were on the corners, but this was in the middle of Madison St. and was the, originally a man started it and his son carried on, and his son carried on, so it was 3 generations affair in fact the secretary of our historical society is one of the offspring of that and so she doesn't carry that name because she got married, but we had that and then we had across the street there were other.

I: What was the name of the family that ran that pharmacy?

FO: All right, it will come to me later, but across the street there was Semper who started a drug store in competition right across the street, and down the street there was Andro which was another person that came to our meeting and talked and a lady came and she said she used to take care of the soda fountain and that's why she got so fat. Well, she's still plump and she's is the manager of the local Liberty Bank right now.

I: How about, was Ryerson a very latecomer to all of that?

FO: That was a little later-and that was on the corner of Circle and Madison on the SW corner and proved to be a larger drug store. He actually joined 2 stores together and he was there and then he had other people take over when he died and so now it's a real estate office because all of the drug stores are gone. There were some on Roosevelt Road too; there were some small ones there because obviously they had people on the south side growing up along Roosevelt Rd. which was the other secondary business area so they needed drug stores and they had a few of them there.

I: Can you, we asked earlier about the German heritage on this part of town, it seems to me as though the south side of town was predominately Italian. Did that happen before the turn of the century or do you know when that happened?

FO: Well, I would say after the turn of the century a few moved in and then more moved in and there were also Irish who moved in. Well, we had all kind of ethnic groups for a while but the German name still predominated in terms of the offspring who carried the German names but they obviously don't speak German anymore.

I: How about something that we don't have anymore. How about blacksmith shops?

FO: Well again, when there were horses they sure had to make shoes for them and there were 2 or 3 on Madison St. and there was 1 on the south side of Roosevelt Rd. where

they had blacksmith shops and they lasted at least as long as the horses were around. If you didn't need horseshoes so, you were out of business but they made other iron trinkets and other things that they could fashion, iron things quite well.

I: As a youth were any of them still around when you were young?

FO: Sure, sure. Oh yes, many of us went to see and hammer the horseshoes, and sparks were flying-it was a very fascinating thing. I'm talking about the 1920's and some of us that are very old were around in the 1920's as small fellows and we wandered around the streets and we were amazed by all the unusual entrepreneurs.

I: How about, wasn't a fellow I went to school with him and I think your daughter did too, Kreiger's. Didn't their, was it their grandfather had a smith shop up on Thomas and Madison somewhere?

FO: Yeah, that's right-Kreiger's, um hm. It was sold to other people so the name was not with him so long, but he was one of the important smithies.

I: And when did we begin to see gasoline stations?

FO: Hm... Well, all right, we once had a meeting on the earliest cars in Forest Park and there were some early Stanley Steamers around before the turn of the century, of course, most of them came in gasoline buggies came in after the turn of the century so once they came in they had to have fuel so they sure started putting up gas stations, almost on every corner. Now they have shrunk down to just a few in town, larger ones. And with the price of gas, well they're not doing that well.

I: Can you think of things that I've skipped over that you think would be important to mention about the early days of Harlem? And what about Fire Department, Police Department, I see you have many mementos, many photos, a lot of memorabilia about the early.

FO: Well we have several fireman who were interested in history so when they retired they gave us many of their bits of equipment, fire extinguishers that are all antiquated because they have all modern high pressure devices to put out the fires and huge fire trucks, of course, and several so they can get around and put out fires before they start to be major conflagrations.

I: Where was the original Harlem Fire Department.

FO: All right, now the whole one building started on the North side, therefore, on Circle and Randolph on the southeast corner was pretty much village property, still is, but they had a village hall there, and then they built the fire station behind it, and I guess the police department was in the basement where they keep the lock up quarters, so that was all on the north side where the town kind of began anyway and it filtered further south.

I: So a lot of the official buildings for the village were actually north of Madison St.

FO: Yes they were, on Circle and Randolph on the northeast corner. And that was just a small building, I have pictures of it of course, but then the larger building was built on Des Plaines Ave. and Wilcox which was quite a move but they were able to get enough money together from taxes and build a very substantial city hall.

I: So you've got the school right in that vicinity too don't you? The original school is sort of ...

FO: Yes, it's on the north side, it's still called Grant school although one of the nice teachers named White, Elizabeth White, had an addition put on on her retirement so they mostly called it the White school-Grant White. Now the 2nd large village hall was built, the man whose chair this was, Howard Mohr was mayor, and there was a lot of money available, federal grants and on so they decided to demolish the old village hall which was old on Des Plaines and Wilcox on the northwest corner and put up this new modern-looking thing which he was able to get federal grants approved for all the parts of it. I guess it was rather old, the plumbing and everything was old, but the firehouse they kept so that's still in the same place on Wilcox and Des Plaines.

I: And what about medical care in Harlem? Were there any prominent physicians that were here and what about hospital facilities?

FO: All right, there was never any hospital here, we all went to Oak Park as we still do, Oak Park Hospital and West Suburban is another hospital, but they're all in Oak Park or other places. Forest Park never had a hospital but they did have many physicians some of the early ones that operated out of Oak Park and Dr. Hemingway, who was the father of Ernest Hemingway, was a doctor but he had an office in Forest Park but he did some of his own surgery on the kitchen table at home, so he did operate between the two places, but he lived in Oak Park. Hemingway, of course, was born in Oak Park and all of us know about Ernest Hemingway.

I: How about any other prominent physicians other than Dr. Hemingway?

FO: Well, yes, there was a Dr. Maso who was around when I was a youngster and needed some help, and a Dr. MacNeal they all had offices above drug stores. It was a natural thing to have drug store below and dr. office above. They had the usual general practice. If there was any serious case, off to the hospital they'd go. When I had my tonsils taken out, sure Oak Park Hospital, go there and took out my tonsils which I didn't need to have them taken out but it was customary in those days to have tonsils removed when they were large.

I: How about water and electricity? When was water first made available in the town and what about electricity?

FO: Water is more interesting and more vital really. The water they got from a well. They drilled a well right where the community center is now, down below is still the old well piped up and closed up and then, of course, they got less and less water coming out of it and we lived near it and we used to get sand in the water instead of the water so they quickly hooked up to Chicago water. They put in a heavy duty line up to Austin Blvd. And that was expensive, but they got Chicago water and they had a large reservoir filled up here it was a million gallons and that kept us in good shape ever since. No water shortage any time.

I: And, do you know when that happened, about what the timing was?

FO: Well, I was around. It was about 1924-25 in that period of time. It took them a while to put this large 24" main all the way along Harrison St. to Austin Blvd. was how they were able to connect to Chicago's water and they supplied us at a price for all the water we needed and ever since.

I: Just out of curiosity, which street is actually Harrison because we seem to have Harrison on one side of the expressway and Oak Park seems to have Harrison on the other and Garfield on one side.

FO: Well Oak Park is strange. They often changed names and ours is the true Harrison St. south of the expressway and yes, it crosses over the expressway and it's on the north it's not on the expressway in Oak Park. Oak Park is a quaint people and we think they change names on a whim for no good reason, and it confuses people no end, you're on Harrison and all of a sudden you're not on Harrison. And other streets too, they re-named and they were all part of Cicero in the early days too, east of Ridgeland Ave., was all part of Cicero Township and when they broke away from them and then they were still part of this Harlem large farm track and then they changed the name to Oak Park.

I: And what about the electric facilities, when did those come in and what use were they actually, I mean did electricity and phone lines go hand in hand?

FO: Well, pretty much since they both came in on wires, electricity I think came in first and that would have been in the early teens of the year, and they lit up the streets, that was the important thing to have street lights that would glare and Madison St. had some big bright lights which they modernized now and put in some very dull lights to make it picturesque on Main Street they call it, but they had some good lights. Everybody used to call it a white way street, it's wide to they widened on the street. All in the 1920's before the depression. Once the depression came, everything stood still.

I: How about trolley cars? Did we have trolley cars running down Madison?

FO: Yes, they were early. They came out from Chicago, but at Harlem Ave. where the Oak Park line ended you had to pay an extra fare to get on the trolley that went west there through Forest Park into Maywood. An extra fare, nobody liked that but that's the way it was. And, one line went south On Des Plaines Ave. all the way down to Roosevelt Rd.

and east on Roosevelt so it was a very handy thing and they lasted for some time and kind of rumbled and made noises but they certainly came around and were very efficient and didn't pollute the atmosphere as the buses all do now.

I: Were these electric driven?

FO: Oh, yes, a trolley, and the wire above and they would get their electricity from there and when they reversed it and two of them people on them first, of course the motorman and he came out and pulled the one trolley down and lifted the one trolley in the front up when they had to go backwards or to go on the siding. They were quite an efficient system. It was high voltage, but then, people were not supposed to touch the rail and the high-tension wires above and they usually didn't. And the horses went out of course, when the automobiles came in. We used to have horses in quantities and that's when the horseshoes were being made that we related to earlier.

I: And the trolleys at first were horse drawn.

FO: Yes, a few were, but they got electricity in and it was so much more efficient to have a motor in them instead of horses that weren't always predictable if they wanted to run along the tracks or go off to the side somewhere.

I: You know that's something we never hear about today. We hear about the old, that there were horse drawn but nobody ever talks about the difficulties in managing an animal. I mean, I wonder were there difficulties?

FO: Well, I don't know of any but surely the driver of the car had to take care of the horse and it was usually just one, but I suppose they had two also and they had to get them to stay on the tracks. They knew where the tracks were, the horses were kind of smart and they weren't supposed to get on the side, but if something disturbed them I'm sure they ran off to the side and maybe pulled the car off of the tracks. But horses were held in great esteem and they certainly kept the town running in many ways.

I: When did the change from Harlem to Forest Park actually take place?

FO: Well, all right, 1907 because as I alluded to before it was Harlem and they wanted to apply for a post office because they didn't have a post office so they were not smart enough but they wrote we want a post office in Harlem. They said you can't have a post office in Harlem because there is already a post office already named Harlem near Rockford and I actually went up to see it later and it's been joined to Rockford now, but it was a separate town, so they had to change the name as I may have said before, so what did they do, they picked the neighboring towns—took the park from Oak Park, and forest from River Forest and had the new name Forest Park, since 1907.

I: Was that something that the governing, that the village fathers just decided? That wasn't put up for a referendum?

FO: Well, they had various suggestions, but the suggestions came through in quantity that should be Forest Park and they didn't have much of a to-do about discussing it. They said, that's fine, Forest Park matches Oak Park and River Forest our neighbors and it's going to be Forest Park, and they got a post office named Forest Park.

I: Was that located where it is presently or was it also north by the...

FO: No, it was just a storefront at first. And the first postmaster surprisingly lived in the house that I live in right now. And so he got to be an older man and he wasn't so well so he died and he died in the same bedroom that I sleep in every night because he had cancer of the stomach. They took out the, they took him up to Mayo's and they looked at him in those days and just said, sew him up, send him home to die. So, he stayed in his house, apartment, and died in the bedroom that I sleep in every night. I don't think about him.

I: I often wondered, the building, your wife was my pediatrician. And I often wondered if your family had built that building.

FO: No, we bought it at a good price and now it's worth much more and it's kind of an apartment building, but we used it for many things, my wife had her office in it in one area you know, and I used another part and so we rent it out to a few medical students now for 3 other apartments, it's a 6 apartment building, so we're carrying it on the best we can, it needs some repairs but as long as the roof doesn't leak and the snow gets shoveled we manage pretty well in that corner.

I: It's been an interesting place. Well, I think I've run about as far as I want to run tonight again. I would like to if you'd be willing, I'd like to sit down and do a series of these where we could talk in more detail, you know, about as I think we move forward in time with the history we'll be able to talk in a lot more detail than we could in the early days, if you'd be interested.

FO: Yes. If there's some way we can show pictures, I don't know whether this video camera is taking photographs, we have so many things around here to show that that could amplify the discussion the ? (41:58), and also I would suggest there are other people, after all I'm just the president, but we have the lady who comes in and sits at the desk all day Wednesday is the curator and so she tells the visitors all about things who come in from the library, children mostly, and so she could be on and discuss things in more detail if there are items that I wouldn't know about.

I: Sure, and I'd welcome any recommendations you have for other people we should talk to. I'm sure Bob can take care of that with you. That's what we would like to do is talk to a lot of the old timers from Forest Park to chronicle the best we can, you know, orally.

FO: You do know we have a history of Forest Park and I think we were smart in the early days unlike other towns including Oak Park who put out 1 book on the history of Oak Park. Well, so the book's out of date, and who's going to read it, an old book and they're not putting out another book. We put out chronicles, a series of them, every few

years we put out an additional one and it adds on-addition 1, addition 1 addition 3.. Right now on our last one ending with the year 2000 which we're still working on and it will be chronicled up through here. It includes all the things about mayors, elections, all the things with many photographs in it. In fact did you ever get any of our chronicles? We've got several here. We can give them away. We used to sell them. The new one coming out is going to be rather expensive so we're going to sell that so it will be up for sale we hope at the next meeting which will be on May 21-May 21.

I: Well I keep, I've got I think the first 3 volumes, I keep it at home in my box of mementoes so.

FO: All right, we have extra ones here any time you need more or are missing one. That's right there are 3.

I: You know the one thing that I see missing that I remember from my childhood here, it doesn't seem that anyone has a pass to the swimming pool. That was a big part of our summer because it was a day or two before school would let out for the summer they'd hand out swimming passes. Mine never survived the entire summer because we used them so hard, but it seemed like one year it was light blue, the next year it was pink.

FO: NO, not at the present swimming pool that's in the park now, is that the one you're talking about?

I: It was the old one. You know, it's been through a couple of changes since I was swimming.

FO: I know, but I'm sure you're just talking about the one in the park right here. It's been improved several times. But the one I used to swim in was when the old amusement park was where the Eisenhower expressway is now, there was a shoot to shoot ? (44:33), boats that went into a large cement enclosure and when they tore it down the park, they left that swimming pool and that's where I learned how to swim. The village put water in it, it was probably polluted and all, but we survived and it was there for many years on Des Plaines and the Eisenhower now which would be on the northeast corner where the big parking lot is. It was a good size pool. I don't think they changed the water. The fire department came and pumped out the water about once or twice a summer but it was always so dark like river water so you didn't know what was in it, but none of us that I know of caught polio or anything that was water borne.

I: That was going to be my question. Because wasn't after the turn of the century when the polio epidemics would sweep every summer wouldn't they at public beaches and stuff.

FO: That's right. Keep out of the water. But we went swimming anyway, we didn't know about that. My wife was one of the people that went to all of the schools and gave them the first anti-polio medication. We would have a drop of the vaccine on a sugar

cube, I don't know if you had that or not. It's all passed now, you get an injection and supposedly it cures one.

I: Well, as Bob knows, I actually contracted polio about 6 months before the vaccine became available. So, I was in the hospital I think for about 3-4 months and I was very lucky I have a deformed foot, but I was always able to run and do sports but it's just sort of ironic that there it was.

FO: You were right at the brink of when you came in and it was effective vaccine, the Salk vaccine and others that came in which were really quite effective, but you had to get the vaccine, and then still stay out of the contaminated water and wherever people still take up lars? (46:21).

I: I think I remember them and I think was it Jonas Salk that did it? Who was the other person that was in competition with him?

FO: Albert Sabin. They were both good vaccines. My PHD's in microbiology and I used to go to these meetings and would hear both men discuss what their merits were way before their vaccines were effective. And, they used to argue against one another and now they find that they are both effective under different circumstances.

I: Sabin, I remember. Wasn't one a live virus, and the other one, wasn't it attenuated? Isn't that what they call it?

FO: That's right-half killed-attenuated.

I: And the idea is to spark the immune system without inflicting the disease, right?

FO: That's exactly right.

I: That was real interesting, but I remember them saying that prior to them coming up with the vaccine that parents would whisk their kids away from the public beaches and send them to the country for the summer, you know during the peak months of polio.

FO: Oh sure. Everything away from the water and FDR, of course, didn't get away from the water and he sure contracted a bad case of it and they always covered it up. Almost none of the political pictures showed that he had braces on his legs and he had real problems with his legs getting around.

I: Well, I remember in this book, the thing that I thought was the most ironic was the fact that prior to the turn of the century when sanitation was really dubious, everybody was exposed to it and so there was actually very little polio they say, but the moment they cleaned up that sanitation came in everybody stopped being exposed to it and then all of a sudden the epidemics started.

FO: I'm sure there was some natural immunity to it and some people got polio, mild cases in your case, but never complained about it and some died of course, and some were completely paralyzed. And there was the matter just the virus that came in that hadn't been around before in my best judgment, and now if they vaccinated everyone it will be one of the viruses that is eliminated just like small pox. Who gets small pox anymore? Well, the virus is just gone. No more children, no more hosts to latch onto it so it dies out. It's a very strange thing these viruses. I'm being a microbiologist, I like the big things a bacteria like anthrax. I can see that under a microscope. But, the viruses are so dam small. You can't see them! You have to use an electron microscope and even there they're so illusive they're not always the same-they change!

I: What was the thing and I-what do you call the person that worked with horses? They had to be vaccinated against, was it tetanus that they?

FO: Tetanus, we all still get tetanus injections because you never know what you are going to step in that rusty nail, or there may be a tetanus spore, which are in the ground and horses used to carry them in their GI tract. But, now there are less horses, so there are less tetanus spores around. Anytime anyone has an accident, right away give them a tetanus shot.

I: But that was what horses carried you say in their digestive tract? Interesting.

FO: That's right.

I: I heard this through blues records and I never realized that that was one of the occupational hazards of working with horses.

FO: Well sure. Horses are nice creatures, but they have no control over the tetanus bassilus, the spores which they carry in their GI tract, in their bowel.

I: Well, Dr. Orland, thank you very much for taking the time out on this and I hope we didn't bore you. (Laughter)

FO: No, no, my pleasure.

I: And again, If the village says so, I would really like to sit down and talk with you in more detail about a number of different projects here in the village, you know.

FO: All right. If I had all my chronicles here, it's all written down in there in three volumes and so we easily could show you the pictures. I don't know when you want to photograph anything, but we've got oodles of stuff and Mrs. Salle who's our curator is in charge of all these things and all the files you've got loaded with and the historical things like the race track used to be. The large picture is back in-There used to be a huge racetrack on Roosevelt Rd. and when it didn't work anymore well they made a big golf course out of it. And the son was caddy in the golf course in the early days, and then the war came in and they said we need to make torpedoes and the Navy

took it over and so, torpedo plant!

I: Well, if we do this we can write up a little agenda and maybe hit 4 or 5 different specific things if you are agreeable.

FO: Well, it's a pleasure to be here as long as I sat in a comfortable chair. And, I didn't talk about Mike Mohr, but he's the man who runs the oil company we buy oil. It was cheaper than gas, now it's up higher again. He delivers his oil and we cooperate with him in many ways and he's donated his chair, which he had around in his office in a dilapidated state and he got it upholstered and they got a plaque on the back so his father was both the mayor and the senator which was quite an effort to be politically involved in that way.

I: Well, I'll let Bob chase you down when we do this again, and I guess he's got to run it back to the village and get their OK, so. But, thank you for taking the time out. It's a real pleasure to talk to you.

FO: Yes, all right, very good, very good.