

Austin Zimmerman, Jr. (1910-)

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The pages that follow constitute the transcript of an interview conducted as part of the Wilmette Public Library District's Oral History program, started in 1975 by a committee of the Friends of the Wilmette Public Library which has been chaired since its inception by Rhea Adler, a resident of the Village of Wilmette since 1932.

A copy of the tape on which this transcript is based is available for circulation, and may be obtained by checking with a Reference Librarian concerning circulation procedures.

This program would not have been possible without the cooperation of the many long-time residents of the Village interested in helping to preserve particulars of a fascinating east, and the patience, energy and effort of a small but dedicated group of interviewers, transcribers and typists who share the belief that the past is too important be forgotten.

Richard E. Thompson
Director

Interviewee: Austin Zimmerman, Jr.

Interviewer: Jean Young

Date of interview: Fall, 1975

Move to Wilmette, 1912 --Description and locale of homes

Raising squabs

Cooking methods

Population- Wilmette

Gross Point · truck gardens --So. Water Street Market

Milkmen, icemen and organ grinders, street lamp lighter and street lamps

Early Northwestern trains

Drug store · groceries · sports

School

Memorial Day

Houses in area

Tornado damage

Swimming · Gage's Pier --Gage mansion · Casino

Original Northwestern/North Shore Golf Course

Northwestern Stadium

Stolp School

Maxwell · auto's versus horse and carriage · 1920

Chick Sales+vs. indoor plumbing

New Trier - Carnegie Library

Neighbors - Packard 26 Roadster

Trips to dunes · Ravinia

World War I - Liberty Bond sales - Zeigfield Follies

Bowman Dairy, ice house, ice boxes

Schooling · sports - Chuck Lauer

Evanston Hospital

Austin Zimmerman, Jr.

AZ: When it was suggested that I try to record some of my early recollections of Wilmette, I went back to the first memory I have of moving to Wilmette. We lived at the corner of 10th and Linden on the south east corner. There are now three houses on that property, but the original house, I believe, is still there.

Grandfather and Grandmother Zimmerman lived with us, and Grandfather Zimmerman was the reader at the Christian Science Church at the corner of Central and 10th. And I went to kindergarten at the school at the corner of 10th and Central. The people next door to the east of us raised poodles, and I raised chickens. There was constant warfare between the two. Her poodles didn't like my chickens, and my chickens didn't like her poodles. And I hated both! The Catholic school and church were a block east of us at the corner of Linden and 9th. We lived at Linden and 10th for about two years.

Y: What year was it?

AZ: About 1912, I believe, is when we first moved to Wilmette. And it was early in 1914, the spring of 1914, that we moved to 219 6th Street, and at that time, my recollection of it is the entire yard was a garden. There are still remnants of the garden in front, a rock garden, and I'm sure I risked my neck, and broken legs, a thousand times a year trying to walk on those rocks, and jumping along them to pick lilies of the

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AZ: valley and violets., which soon took over the entire area. The back yard now is much diminished in size, because the barn used to run north to south, and on the north side of the house was the driveway. You entered through two wrought iron gates and went down the driveway into the barn where the carriage was kept. And to the south of the carriage was where the horses were kept, and the hay was kept in the loft above. There were mangers and two horse stalls in the barn. The barn was far enough from the north line so that we had an opportunity to build a chicken coop, and I kept chickens, and I kept pigeons and rabbits. I used to raise the chickens from the egg to the dinner table, and the pigeons from the egg to the dinner table. Because in those days you could get two dollars and a half for a brace, that is two dressed squab, and I made at least five dollars a week out of squabs, and I know that many men in those days weren't getting paid five dollars a week.

Y: Where did you keep the squabs? In the attic?

AZ: They were kept in the barn.

Y: In the loft of the barn?

AZ: Yes, I probably had a flock of a hundred pigeons and about thirty or forty chickens.

Y: How is it that gardens then were built by Mr. Wangle?

AZ: Oh, yes, they were, There were apple trees. I recall the most exquisite flowering - well it looked like a rose tree to me. Perhaps it was. There were at least a dozen kinds of lilacs, and more than a dozen different types of iris. There

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AZ: was an outhouse which was in use, because the house at that time did not have a bathroom. It had a cistern where the rainwater from the roof drained, and it was pumped into the kitchen with a hand pump. We did have city water as well, and had it coming out of a faucet in the kitchen only. The stove was a combination wood burning or coal burning, depending upon your mood, and a gas stove. Mother had a fire-less cooker. I can recall her heating soap stones on the gas stove and then putting them in the fireless cooker and putting an entire meal in the fireless cooker and going about her business for the rest of the day, and at dinner time she'd open it up and dinner was ready. And it used to give out the most delectable and heavenly odors when it was cooked.

We had a coal fire furnace which didn't require any electricity to operate, where there was no electricity in the house. The lights were all gas lights. Those gas pipes are still in the house. Some of them were used by my father and my uncle, who wired the house for electricity, and I can recall assisting them to the extent of calling out when I could hear the bit coming down the wall, and telling them that they should move to the right or to the left in order to continue on down in a more or less straight line.

In those days, Wilmette was a very small village. I would say perhaps 1,200 population. Gross Point, which is not part of Wilmette, was another little village, which as I recall, consisted of one blacksmith shop, three houses, which were

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AZ: farmers' houses, because west of Ridge Road or Gross Point Road was all truck farm, and I think there were about a dozen saloons. That was Gross Point. The truck farmers - they raised truck there and took it down to South Water Street to sell it. And I can recall going down many times with my father to see South Water Street early in the morning. It was a sea of complete chaos, with these huge horse-drawn trucks and those magnificent Belgian and Clydesdale horses, and Percherons, and everyone going about his business as if he knew what he was doing, but I was quite sure he didn't. No one could have known

what he was doing in that madhouse, and the streets were slippery with remnants of cabbage and carrot tops and beet tops and smashed potatoes, carrots, and everything else under the sun, and the horses going about their business.

The milkman in Wilmette, long after I started grade school, came around with a horse--drawn vehicle to deliver the milk. The ice man always drove a wagon and it was great fun to hop up on the rear step and help yourself to ice. The scissors grinder came around with a horse drawn vehicle, and the bread man. The most entertaining thing that happened every now and then, someone would come around selling balloons, or an organ grinder with his monkey.

Y: In Wilmette?

AZ: In Wilmette. And of course, it was my delight every night to watch the man come down the street on his bicycle, with a

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AZ: ladder slung over his shoulder to light the gas street lights. And when they put in the automatic device to turn up the gas, I was disappointed because no longer did the man come to turn off the street lights. I can't remember the year, probably 1917, or 1918. It wasn't long after that that even the gas lights disappeared, and they tore up our front parkways to put in the wiring for the electric street lights.

Y: Did they use the same posts?

AZ: No, they did not use the same posts. They put in those iron monstrosities. Of course, the old gas lights were iron too, but they were lovely things, at least I liked them.

The Northwestern trains, as I recall them, had coal-burning stove at one end, acetylene lamps for illumination, and the conductor would come along with his little brass or iron torch with a wick on it, and turn the lamp up and light it with the little wick. And the fire extinguishers on the train always fascinated me because they consisted of four glass tubes that the druggist always had in his drugstore. I never knew what was in it, and I suppose no one else did either. But it was great fun to go round to the druggist in those days, because you could buy five or six pieces of candy of various kinds and shapes, wax containing sweet, sickening liquid, and various other things, for a penny. Sometimes it took ten minutes to pick out what you wanted.

Y: Who were the drugstores?

AZ: Well, at Linden Avenue and 4th Street there was Cazel's, I

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AZ: mean Winbergs, and down on Central Street just beyond . I can't remember the name of the cross street, Wilmette Avenue, yes, there was Cazel's drugstore on one side and Schneiders on the other side, and the grocer next to the bank, Van Deusen.

And they delivered groceries in those days, with a horse- drawn vehicle. And they had marvellous things like pickle barrels, cracker barrels, and peas that fitted well and were the correct caliber for pea shooters, which we also had.

There were two favorite sports. We had sun pictures, which consisted of a glass negative, which you could purchase for a price, and proof paper, which you would put in the glass negative and expose it to the sun for a few minutes, and then you had a picture. Our favorite subjects were things like the Alamo, and the Washington Monument, and what was the one where the Cubans blew up a battleship in the harbor there? The Maine, the battleship Maine.

Of course marbles were my favorite sport, so much so that mother put copper toes, literally, on my shoes, and leather pads on my knees. I didn't like it, but that's what I had to put up with.

Y: What did you wear on your knuckles?

AZ: Calluses! (*Laughter*) And in those days one could get a great deal of fun out of ordinary concrete sidewalk. It was a place where you could play hop scotch, sky blue, and a dozen other things. We played hide and seek, and run sheep run,

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AZ: we jumped rope. I can remember the pride with which I could jump double dutch any time. And we played jacks, boys and girls, as well as mumblety.- peg. Every new boy that came into the neighborhood had to find his station in the peck order because he had to fight everybody in the neighborhood until he found out he belonged. I suppose this happens now, but perhaps on a more sophisticated scale.

I do think that I loved going to school, and I think most of the children did. I can still remember what a great kick I got out of it when we would go down, mother and I, to buy my books and crayons and paints and rulers and pencils and erasers and sharpeners for the first day of school, and tablets of paper. Oh, and there was a store in Wilmette where we bought them and I cannot -- Lloyds, I think that was the name of the store, though I am not sure.

Y: A stationery store.

AZ: It was a stationery store, but we bought our school books there as well. And I loved those, books, because their illustrations were blue and orange, and I believe that the readers we used then are once more back in favor, and perhaps children will get up through the elementary schools and actually know how to read, both to themselves and out loud, and be able to understand what they read! I know for a fact that many of them get into college and still don't know how to read, really! And I know that in those days we had more discipline in the classrooms than they have today. It was a point of pride to try and get away with whatever .

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AZ: whatever you dared try to get away with as long as the teacher was in the room. But once she left, and put the class on its honor, anyone who violated that was ostracized. I mean it, they really were. You were on your good behavior when you were left to your own devices. You wouldn't dare do that today, because there isn't any pride in anything any more, either in what people do, create, dream up, write, or in the way they act. That's unfortunate, but it will come back because they had the same thing in early Greece, in early Rome, in early England, and in the United States At the time of the Civil War they had it. Speaking of the Civil War reminds me, there were a great number of veterans of the Civil War still living in Wilmette, and every Memorial Day they'd parade, put on their old uniforms and parade. And they'd march down those streets and the Boy Scouts marched by ~~em~~, and I know because I was one of them.

Y.: Do you remember Danny Glevit?

AZ: Oh, yes.

Y: He was one of the last ones to parade in it.

AZ: It's too bad they had to go, because they used to tell some of the most fascinating stories. I never believed any of them, but they were fascinating to listen to.

And across the street from me was a fellow named Gammeran, an old gentleman who knew how to whittle, and he taught most of us to whittle, so that we could whittle a willow whistle in the spring, or carve a wooden chain, or carve a cage with a ball inside of it on the end of a wooden chain. It was

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AZ: great fun.

Y: All from one piece?

AZ: All from one piece of wood. Good teaching, to be able to do it. He made it seem so easy. Each of us tried, and most of us succeeded.

Y: This is Mrs. Gammeran's father, then, probably?

AZ: Grandfather, probably.

Y: Grandfather?

AZ: I think so.

Y: Were there many houses around the neighborhood?

AZ: Well, across the street there were no houses between 219 6th Street and the Jordan house at the corner of 5th and Hill, now Maple Street. And beyond that there were no houses until you got all the way to the lake. Of course, there was a railroad elevated, and the North Shore trains came down through the 4th Street area and went down Greenleaf Avenue. I remember when the tornado came through Wilmette, though I can't remember the year, probably 1917 or thereabouts. It was always said that the watchman in his little shanty, the gateman at the Central Street crossing of the Northwestern - - the North Shore. No, the Northwestern, -they weren't parallel - was lifted up in his shanty and dumped in front of a passing train. I know that the North Shore train that was going down Greenleaf Avenue and just coming to the curve down there at 12th Street never got past the curve, because it was crippled and brought to a halt by the tornado, which took the top off

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AZ: the new village hall. The bank, the Wilmette State Bank, was being rebuilt, and it damaged that considerably, and unroofed practically every church in town and went merrily up Wilmette Avenue and out into the lake at Gage's Pier. It really was a devastating - -

Y: Gage's Pier, is that - -?

AZ: Well, that was the beginning of No Man's Land. When you went swimming in the lake, which we used to do, we'd walk over to the lake and we usually got a basket and we used a dressing room and had a rubber circler that we'd put on an arm or a leg that identified the basket which we'd stored our clothes in, and we'd spend all day at the lake. But the favorite thing was to swim from there up to Gage's Pier, which was perhaps a mile.

Y: Did they have guards?

AZ: Yes, they had lifeguards.

Y: Did you have a family token or membership?

AZ: No, there was no admission or evidence that you lived in Wilmette in those days. You went swimming - anyone did.

Y: What was No Man's Land like then? Do you remember?

AZ: Yes, there was one magnificent house there. I think it had been old man Gage's mansion, and the rest of No Man's Land, there was no development in it then. But, later on, they built the Teatro del Lago, and so on. But that was in the late early twenties or middle twenties.

Y: There was a gambling casino or something started - -

AZ: Well - that was also much later. But the Wilmette Country

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AZ: Club was more or less the center of community life. It's now the Shawnee Country Club and mostly completely rebuilt. It's difficult to remember just where the golf course was, the Northwestern Golf Course. It had a club house which was located approximately where Sheridan Road comes up the hill to Ridge and then turns and goes north. It was just south of that intersection, and I learned to play golf there and caddied there, as did all the boys in my neighborhood. And one of the more remunerative efforts was to drag for golf balls where people attempted to drive the canal, and you could make quite a bit dragging for golf balls there. You'd take a wire basket and attach it to a rope and swing it over into the canal and drag it along the bottom and haul it up, and you usually got one or two golf balls and sometimes more in one drag.

Y; Do the kids still do that? Or are there better golfers now?

AZ: Some of the golfers used to attempt to defeat this by using floaters, but that was of no avail because it just floated down the canal for someone else to find it some day. And also, the golfer who got out his oldest golf ball when he was about to drive the canal had already condemned himself to driving it into the canal. He'd conceded that that was what he was going to do. And having caddied for a good many of them I could tell just what was going to happen, and it did!

Y: That's funny. Tell me about - - -

AZ: The Northwestern stadiums were wooden stands in those days, and in the summer it was great sport to climb up amongst those and find the %spatzies+, English sparrow nests, and destroy

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AZ: them. I don't know why little boys are so cruel, but I hated English Sparrows, and you know, I still? As they come out here to my feeder and eat up all the food and drive the other birds away, there is something about them that is just not quite right. I suppose that if they were rare, we'd get all excited about their occurrence. Anything that is common and ordinary is unexciting.

Y: School? Did you have favorite teachers?

AZ: Oh, yes, I had. My current teacher was usually my favorite teacher. But I do recall one in particular. She was our art teacher, and her son later was my biology teacher, no, general science teacher at New Trier. But she was our art teacher, and she was a mountain of a woman, but very comforting to be around, and she knew how to please us, especially at Christmas time with the things she taught us to do and make, and to use our hands. Because I thought in those days, they had grade school, everyone was taught to use his hands. I learned from my grandmother, of course, to crochet. I even learned how to crochet lace. And during World War I, I must have knitted miles of washcloths and socks and sweaters and everything else. But I had manual training, woodworking - -

Y: In fourth grade?

AZ: And I made those candle stands, those walnut candle stands you see up in the bedroom there then.

Y: At Stolp School?

AZ: No, we went over to the West Side School for our manual training. We walked over there for the manual training

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AZ: period. I can remember also being sent to see %Baldy+Harper on *some* occasions when doubtless I had incurred the wrath of the teacher beyond the point of her endurance. %Baldy+was an understanding sort of fellow. He was big and bald. He was the stationmaster at Wilmette as well as the principal of the High School - of the school, not the High School - the school, and I don't think he ever inflicted any corporal punishment on any of the boys that came in there, although he was supposed to, I guess. He just didn't do it. But the teachers were convinced that he did. So everyone was happy. (*Laughter*)

I think that we spent World War I digging trenches and making dugouts and playing war, when we weren't playing baseball. But we used to play in the middle of Hill Street, and resented any vehicle of any kind that came along - and very grudgingly got out of the way.

I remember when Mother and Dad went off on the American Bar Association trip. It seemed to me they were gone all summer and some friends of the family came over to stay with us. And I took Dad's 22 rifle out to the vacant lot along with Lawrence Church, and we set up a tin can and plunked away at the tin can. We had thoughtfully placed a rock behind it to stop the bullets, but I found out later that the bullets were hitting the rock all right, and then taking off for other parts! When I noticed that my companion had left without saying a word to me, and a lot of people had gathered out on Hill Street, I decided that it was time for me to leave too.

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AZ: So I came down the street, and some man had managed to get himself slumped over the wheel of his car, one of those 1912 Maxwell roadster jobs, and a lot of people gathered around making all sorts of remarks and exclamations, and someone detached herself from this multitude and pointed her finger at me accusingly and said, "There's the boy that did it!" "Did what?" "Shot this man!" Well, the next day was Sunday, and on the front page of the "Chicago Tribune" was a story, and I can remember to this day: "Boy Buffalo Bill aims at tin can and bags a plumber." My father then came home and was informed of my, well, perhaps we should say accuracy, and complimented me on at least the target I had selected. Said, "It's the only thing to do with a plumber - shoot him!"

Y: Plumbers drove Maxwells then? What were the other cars?

AZ: This was one of those very ancient ones. I don't remember, it sounded like a one lung-er going down the road. I had a one lung-er, which was a great thing for a boy to have because we spent hours and hours and hours getting it started, and knocking ourselves galley-west with shocks from the coil. Somebody would get a little careless now and then and get a 40,000 volt shock, you know, and it would knock you right off your pins. Somebody would turn over the wheel when you were fiddling with this, turn over the wheel and make contact, and whoooo!

Y: What was your first family car? When did you get rid of the carriage and the horses?

AZ: Well, my uncles all had cars, but my father didn't have any

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AZ: until about, oh, 1920. I know, after Dad died, I discovered why my uncles could afford automobiles and Dad couldn't. He was supporting them! But Grandmother Zimmerman would come out and visit us, and I had some chickens then called Houdans, a very exotic chicken, and poor grandmother could never remember the difference between a sedan and a Houdan. We used to go riding in the Houdan, and I'd have to go out and feed my sedans.

Y: So you had horses and carriages until 1920?

AZ: No. I think that the last time we had a horse was 1915, and the carriage went, too. The top of the barn was turned into a place for the hired man to live. When we first moved there we had a black man whose name was - uh, I'd think of it, perhaps, but he called me little Spike. And he taught me to eat watermelon. He would come home with a big watermelon, and he'd put it in ice cold water in a tub in the basement and we'd sit out on the back fence and eat watermelon, get it all over our ears and everything. And spit the seeds out. But he went and got himself (*unintelligible*) in a little altercation up at Fort Sheridan, where he'd gone to work because the wages were attractive, and that was the end of Jack. His successor was a mountain man called Willard, who was dirty, tall, and gaunt, bearded, disheveled, and shuffled around and did all the odd jobs for everybody around, and to this day my aversion to long-haired, bearded people extends from that. It really does. He was a true mountain man. The great unwashed. You could smell him coming a yard and a

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AZ: half away. Willard was quite an institution. And he kept that room of his, on the top of the barn, we had a coal burning stove up there, the same way I told you they do in Moose Jaw, about 95 to 100 degrees. And he kept a pot on top of the stove so it was humidifying the air, so it was not only hot but humid. And how in the world he ever stood it, I don't know. Perhaps that's why he used to drink Sterno. He melted sterno and drained it through bread, and why he didn't go blind I don't know, because sterno is made of wood alcohol and that's supposed to make you blind. Well, he got blind drunk, but that's all. And he was still using the privy out there in back of %Chick Sales.+It's still there.

Y: When did you put the plumbing in the house?

AZ: Oh, the plumbing went in the house, oh, back in about 1915, soon after we moved in. The bathtub was one of those big things that stands on four lion's paws, you know. I had one in here, but I boxed it in. Had one in the office out in the cottage boxed that in. But they were great, comfortable tubs. I used to have to oil the bathroom floor with linseed oil once a month - once a week, not once a month, once a week.

Y: Why?

AZ: Well, that's what one did then.

Y: Oh, because that's what you're supposed to do? No reason?

AZ: No reason, that's what I had to do.

Y: And brought in the coal for the coal stove?

AZ: Oh, yeah. And took the clinkers out and sifted them, yet.

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Y: Sifted them? For what?

AZ: Sure, for the unburned coal.

Y: And then you brought it back and burned it?

AZ: because everything was rationed then. One of the nicest things about that rationing in World War I was that every one made their own bread and kept a yeast culture in the kitchen and made it with potato flour. And I have never tasted any bread as good as that since. I suppose there was a soupçon of wheat flour in the bread, but the potato flour was marvellous.

Y: How did you get to New Trier?

AZ: Well, they had no such things as bus service then. We went on the tripper, which is the North Shore car. And if you were late coming home you took the regular North Shore trains. I was on the swimming team, so I was almost always late coming home, and the maid, people had maids in those days, would never take care of firing the furnace. I stoked it in the morning, and if it didn't last until I got home it was out, and I had to rebuild the furnace fire when I got home. I hated her for that though I loved her for everything else, cause she was with the family for many, many years, and after she left us she started in the catering business. Her name was Esther, and I guess if you mention Esther to a great many of the long-time residents she'd catered for them at one time or another. Esther was great.

Y: She's the one who made potato bread?

AZ: No, Mother did. We didn't have a maid then, during World War I - - no way, no way!

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Y: Tell me about the library.

AZ: Well, so far as I know, the library was one of those original Carnegie libraries, which I think was carved out of solid granite and just about as beautiful, the ugliest rock you could think of. But it had some delightful books in it, and they had a branch of it over in - when they built the Laurel School, they had a branch of the library over in the Laurel School. I know, because I supposed I purloined a few books from it inadvertently, which I discovered years later, one of which stands out in my mind, The Wonderful Adventures of Nils. Nils was bedevilled by the family cat, and he bedevilled the family cat. Some wicked little elf changed him into a tiny, tiny thing that could sit on the back of a wild goose, and be flown away. The cat pretty near had him. They flew all over, and it was a marvellous way of teaching geography, and the economic history of Sweden.

Y: Do you still have this book?

AZ: No. No, I would give anything to find it again because it was a wonderful story, and then there was a further adventures of. Nils. It was full of Norse and Swedish legend, as well as the geography of the country.

Y: And those books you got at the Laurel School?

AZ: Oh, yes, I got them from the Laurel School branch of the library. The public library was within striking distance, but more than a mile and a half away, and to get about in those days you either walked, I had no bicycle. Other boys

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AZ: had bicycles but I didn't. I either went on skates, roller skates, or, occasionally I would convert a pair of skates into two scooters, which were marvellous. You took a wooden box and two-by-four, and divided the skate into front and rear section of it, and you fastened them to the two-by-four and nailed the box on and put a handle on and you were in business. And boy, could you go!

Y: Let's see - - what haven't we covered? I love to hear all about that early childhood and early Wilmette.

AZ: You know, it's surprising that I can remember the names of most of the neighbors.

Y: Can you? Who were they?

AZ: Well, across the street was Eddia Ryerson and older sister, Betty, and Jack Ryerson and older brother Rock, who died in his early twenties. Next door was my cousin, Jay, and his sister, my Aunt Mary, and my Uncle Austin. To the north of us Virgeen Smith. I don't remember her married name

Y: Jordan.

AZ: Yes, Jordan. The Spanuths lived there, but long before the [Hans] Spanuth [family] came there was a succession of people. The earliest people I remember. I remember the car but not the name of the people because he had a Packard 26 roadster, and a black chauffeur who kept that thing polished to the eyes, and he took great pride in that car. They were beautiful things in those days, they had lovely handy things on them like petcocks, so you could prime the engine when it didn't want to start. And it had a hand choke on it so you could start

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AZ: and it had running boards on it, and it had marvelous acetylene lamps, beautiful, beautiful things, and I can remember the dreadful, dreadful job it was to change the tire. Because if one went on a trip of any length one had to change three or four tires. You didn't just change the wheel, you changed the blinking tire. You repaired it, If one got 4,000 miles out of an automobile tire, that was news!

We used to go down to the dunes, where my Uncle George had a place now known as Burns Ditch. And it was an all day drive from Wilmette to Gary, and on down to the dunes. We went down Indianapolis Blvd., which wasn't a boulevard at all, but one chuck hole after another. And I remember one memorable trip we - Dad had borrowed a Buick from one of his partners, a Buick touring car, and about half-way down between Chicago and Gary we broke an axle. I can remember the rear wheel passing us up and going off into a field somewhere. And, lo and behold, we were towed into a garage and housed in the same building above the garage, and there was a trap door where we could look down and see what they were doing in the car. And they'd discovered the hamper of picnic edibles and were eating it all up, especially the devil's food cake, which was my chief concern, for pity sake. But Dad had to take the South Shore back to Chicago, get a new axle, and come back with that thing, and it was an all-night trip for him to do this and it took us three days to get down to Burns Ditch. Porter, I guess, was the name of the place, Porter.

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Y: You could just go out and buy an axle?

AZ: I don't know whether they had to make it, or what. But, oh my. But an automobile trip was an adventure then. I can recall going to Ravinia back in the earliest days when they had grand opera there. I can even remember my first opera there, which was Manon, which is hardly an opera for a small boy, but I went everywhere with my family then, and when Dad was a four minute man selling Liberty Bonds during World War I, I went, Mother and I went with him, and this resulted in my seeing the Follies and many other things like that.

Y: Did your sisters go, too?

AZ: There weren't any sisters then. At least, Isabel was five years younger, and so she was too small to go.

Y: Lucky for you.

AZ: Yes, I got to see W. C. Field, the Stones, Fred Stone and Dorothea and Mrs. Stone. Ziegfeld's Follies, and going to Ravinia was quite a thing. Sometimes you would go early in the morning and take a picnic. The men would play baseball, and picnic, and then the opera in the evening. And those were, in those days, it was in a beautiful wooden structure with magnificent Japanese lanterns that used to charm me, and I suppose everyone. And when they revived Ravinia, it was still in the same place with the same Japanese lanterns until it burned. I suppose in many ways that was great to have it burn, because they they got the new structure, which houses a considerably larger audience, and

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AZ: protects them more or less from the elements, and the acoustics are probably far superior. But, some of the charm is gone. Sometimes we went up on the North Shore electric, and sometimes we got to ride. We had some friends in Kenilworth who had an electric automobile, and they would come down to Wilmette, pick us up there in the electric automobile which was more or less like riding in a fish bowl, but very elegant. And one of the prizes that I had was a 1912 [Ford] Model T, which I was stupid enough to take the body off of it and put a frame in. And on the engine, souped it up a bit, but I never had any body on it. What's more, it didn't have any tires, it just had some old casings I put on the rims so we couldn't go over about ten to twelve miles an hour. And then someone abandoned an electric automobile, which we appropriated, and we had it behind the house and we used to shove it up and down the streets and sit in it and steer. You know, if you pulled down one of these handles and steered, and you could do it from the back seat or from the front seat, they had two. And someone swiped it one night and pushed it into the canal. Wasn't that a dirty trick?

Y: That was a long way to push it, too.

AZ: Yes, it was. And slightly up hill.

Y: From your house to the canal was up hill?

AZ: Slightly.

Y: If you're pushing a car it'd be pretty much up hill.

AZ: You would notice the hill much more.

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Y: If it were level it would be . -

AZ: But then, let's see, there was Lawrence Church, and the Churches had a Cadillac, and they went on long trips. Well, they lived over on Hill between 6th and 7th about - it was the second house from the corner of 6th and Hill, now Maple, on the north side of the street. And next to them were the Buddingers, and next to them were the Dennings, the Coolidges, and back of 219 there was a vacant lot and the next house was occupied by a family called Osie. Next to them, let's see, I can't think of - - but you know, right there, just west of the alley, back of 219 6th Street the pavement changed from gravel, which was what the Hill St. was, to brick, which went all around that circle and went down Gregory and the brick pavement used to get icy in the rain when the temperature was not freezing, it wasn't a freezing rain, but it would freeze on the brick surface. I can recall one day when the milkman's horse slipped and fell and broke a leg, and they had to shoot him - on the brick pavement there, at Gregory. Poor horse.

Y: Right there? Did they shoot him right there in the street?

AZ: Um hum.

Y: In front of all the children?

AZ: Um hum

Y: Then what did the man with the wagon do, get another horse?

AZ: He had to get another horse.

Y: Right then, to pull the wagon.

AZ: All; the milk wagons came from down on Ridge: Bowman Dairy

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AZ had a big plant on Ridge in Evanston almost where Ridge goes under the railroad track. Well, and that's where they had the stables with the horses. Dispatched them from there.

Y: Where was your ice house?

AZ: Down by, between the Northwestern and the North Shore tracks, just north of Central, there was a lumber yard, coal yard, and ice plant.

Y: Was that Hoffman's?

AZ: I don't know what the name of it was, but I can remember those doggone iceboxes that we had in those days. You know, you'd put a sign in your window how much you wanted, 25 pounds, 75 pounds, 50 pounds, depending on how you adjusted the card, and the ice man had a big leather thing there and his hooks, you know, come in with this, kick open the back door, deftly swing that ice into the - he'd open the box at one end, sling that ice in there, never get any on the floor. But cleaning the drain from that icebox was something I hated more than anything else, because it got all icky and moldy and slimy - ugh!

Y: Ran over the pans under the - box?

AZ: Well, we got around that by running a pipe all the way down to the drain thing in the basement. But it still got all clogged up and we had to take up all the pipes, dismantle them, oh, I hated that, you know.

Y: You were a busy boy. You had a lot of chores.

AZ: Oh, I had to mop the kitchen floor once a day, too.

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Y: Once a day!

AZ: Once a day.

Y: Well, you were too busy to play marbles or hop scotch, or read books.

AZ: No, of course I was the smallest one in the whole blooming place, and apt to be teased about that, so my temper was none too good. But Dad had long before told me, he said, %Don't ever try to fight fair when a feller is bigger than you are, and get it in first - to use any method you could think of.+So I would utterly destroy someone who wasn't aware of the way I fought. Because the first thing he knew, he got my head right here, and he'd go, full tilt. And if he was still alive and kicking after that, I didn't have much trouble with him. Once they got on to that, it was a little difficult to handle!

Y: Then you made friends, or else. You went all the way through New Trier. You went to the Stolp School then.

AZ: Yes.

Y: Eighth grade, wasn't it? Or ninth grade?

AZ; Well, then you moved up into the next building, for seventh and eighth grade. And, I didn't get too much of seventh grade because I broke my leg, the first day of school, seventh grade, so I missed the first three months of it and spent the next two months of it going around on crutches and, getting people to carry my books for me. Fell down the stairs.

Y: Oh, those were long stairs under a big skylight, as I remember.

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AZ: It took a while to go up and down stairs on *crutches*.

Y: And, but, you did go to New Trier?

AZ: Yes, I did. I went there for two and a half years. Then I went to Kemper Military School down at Boonville, Missouri. But I had two letters in swimming in one year. One from New Trier, and one from Kemper. Ah, old Jackson was a great swimming coach. But one of the most interesting coaches they had at New Trier was a fellow named Scottie, who was probably one of the world's best soccer players. And he had two boys in there in my class named Puletti, George and Wasi Puletti, and I saw one of the Pulleti boys not too many years ago and he was golf pro at some golf place around here. Those two boys were great soccer players. And I wanted to play soccer. And I can remember one time playing soccer, and I was appropriately protected in the more vulnerable spots, as you are supposed to be. But Hosea came one way and Wadi came from the other side, and they kicked simultaneously and I was here and the ball was there and I went right up in the air and I lit running! Whew, in circles. They threw me, down and pried the aluminum guard loose from me, and, oh, I was sure I'd been killed. Yes, God. I was hurt. That was the end of my desire to play soccer. Scottie said, %ou should swim. No soccer.+I used to help Scottie out, because he always was the time keeper which he let me do over at the basketball games. But they had light and heavy weight basketball at New Trier. Maybe they still do. But Chuck Lauer, who married Sylvia

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AZ: cousin, was in my class, and he was a fabulous basketball, football, baseball, you name it, he did it, and he taught Phys Ed at New Trier until he retired, and he was in my Scout Troop along with Bob Burroughs, who also went to law school with me and whom I see still today. Those are the only two that I see or know of at all. The rest have all disappeared and I don't know what's become of them.

Y: And your Boy Scout Troop. These were neighbors?

AZ: Yeah. Well, they were classmates and neighbors and scouts together. I was delighted to get into Scouts because I didn't have to go to the Martine Dancing School any more, because it came on the same night. How I loathed dancing school! You had to wear white gloves and ask the girls to dance. They were always taller than I was, and they were fat and clumsy with you. And the good dancers among the girls, I didn't have a chance of getting to them, way too small. There was one boy in our group, that when we got old enough so we were dancing, singing, and what not, Bobbie Robinson, who became a chemist for the DuPont Company- he used to play the piano for us. Poor Bobbie had to play the piano while the rest of us danced or sang and had great fun. And the girls were all divine, and good dancers, and lots of fun, and we were always together at somebody's house. I remember one party over at Mary Jane Elder house at the corner of 4th and Lake - a big house, and it had a ball room which was forty feet long and about twenty feet wide, up and down one side of the top floor. A beautifully polished

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AZ: floor, and it was great sport to take some of the pillows they had there, you know, and just run and flop onto the pillow, and you'd slide all the way. Well, Ernie Cazel, the druggist's son, did that, and he hit his chin on the floor and broke a front tooth off up there. Whack! I can still see him. Well, that ended that.

Y: That's a lovely ballroom, but it's not on the top floor. It's not on the third floor but the second floor. It's on the west side with all the windows. That's a beautiful room.

AZ: That's right. Yes it is. Oh, you don't know what fun it was to go cruising down there. Marvellous. And I could do it perfectly, being smaller than everyone else. And we learned to Charleston, and all the rest of it.

Y: How long did your parents live in that house?

AZ: I can't remember - it must have been 1945 - we left for Barrington, so that would have been, what, 1950 -

Y: Oh, when Isabel was -

AZ: Maybe 22 or 23 years. Long time.

Y: I thought 26 or 27 years. That's a long time. In those days not many people - you've been here for 29 -

AZ: Yes, going on 30 years. Well, that's what I told Sweeney, I said, "You have to have stability."

Y: It takes at least 30 years.

AZ: It reminds me, when we went out to Block Island, to see what it was like. That's off the coast of - it was part of Connecticut, we had a woman who must have been in her late

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AZ: seventies driving us around the island and telling us about it all. She said, "Well, you know I came over here when I was six months old. I'm still an outlander." I don't know how long you have to live someplace before you're accepted.

Y: Right after you move away.

AZ: You know, that's probably true.

Y: If, our house is known as the Zimmerman house for you -

AZ: It was?

Y: Oh, yeah.

AZ: How's Mildred?

Y: Oh, fine. Marvelous spirit.

AZ: Oh, yes. That was a vacant lot. We had a cat, it was a very tough character, because every time a new dog came along you could just see him going, another victim. Because sooner or later he would see this cat coming tearing down the street, just staying out of reach of the dog who was hot in pursuit in full cry. After, the cat would disappear into the woods. Very shortly, the dog's baying would change into a 'ki-yiii' and a scream and yelp, you know, and he could come tearing out of there with the cat perched on his back with every claw sunk to the hilt, riding the dog down the street. A tiger! Oh, that cat, she looked like Ben Hur in the chariot race, you know. And the dog, he never came back. He would stay away from that cat, believe me.

Y: Was that a vacant lot in the woods, you say?

AZ: Yeah, it was a heavily wooded vacant lot.

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Y: Were all vacant lots

AZ: Oh, we played baseball in the street.

Y: Everything was wooded.

AZ: If it was vacant, it was wooded, heavily wooded. The only place you could get out in the open was over at the football field or the practice field, ~or out on the golf course. Oh, there was a boy next door between the Katzesq [Katz] and the Spanuths, I guess, names Sturtevant, and he and I collected butterflies. We learned their Latin names, and I~e still got the collection to this day. And we used to go over to the Northwestern, where they park now for the games, right across from the stadium, that's where we hunted butterflies. We hunted them in our own garden, but that was the best place. Mother's old lace curtains came in very handy for making butterfly nets. She didn't know what to do with them, but that's what I used them for.

Y: And for covering strawberries, I mean, strawberry plants.

AZ: You want to move that antimicassar there? Sadie sewed the upholstery of that chair. *(his wife)

Y: She did?

AZ: Yes.

Y: Herself?

AZ: Yes, she can do anything. Besides making all the drapery in the house.

Y: Well, she grew up in Wilmette, too, then?

AZ: Oh, no, she was born and raised in Colorado Springs.

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Y: But she knows our house as well as .

AZ: Oh, sure. You know, when we decided to build our house out in Inverness back in 1939, our lease expired October first, she said, %Well, the house will be done in a couple more months.: %Well,+I said, %what\$ your idea?+%Move in with your family ~~til~~ it\$ finished.+%That\$ the dumbest idea you ever had!+So, we did! And three days before Christmas we get kicked out of the house! Because Sue had come home with Anna Marie von Krustenschern, a Swedish baroness yet, and so we had to move out. We had no place to stay at Christmastime, ~~til~~ we went out to see my other partner, Harold Norman, and I said, %What are we going to do?+And he said this school teacher lived down in this tea house down the road here in Deerfield, and why don\$ you see if they could do anything. We went down there and they were having a family discussion and they were about to close up the place, and most of them were going off to Florida and the son was going to stay with some friends in Kenilworth and they were going to put the two dogs in some kennel some- where and the houseboy was going to go off with someone else. And I said, %Do you know what happens to a house when you turn off the heat and you drain all the water and the plaster comes off the walls? I\$ stay here and take care of it for forty dollars a month! Yeah, I\$ pay you forty dollars.+Well, we were there until March, and here we had this tremendous big house. When the wind blew from the north, we slept on the south side of the house, and vice versa-, we.

AZ: moved to. the other side, because it just went through the house, phew! And it got to forty below that winter. Oh, such a winter. And they decided they'd leave the two dogs, the son decided to stay, the houseboy decided he'd stay. The two dogs were both bitches, one a German shepherd, and the other a cocker. And the cocker, he put it outside and she wouldn't go, no matter how long you left her out there, and that German shepherd would look at her, felt the same way about her I did, I wanted to murder her! I got so tired of cleaning up after that dog that when some friends came out with a dachshund, a very masculine dachshund, and the cocker was in heat, he took off after her, and, boy, I encouraged him! Can you imagine a cocker that long? I don't know what the result was, but I bet it was interesting.

Y: Yes, I can imagine the combination.

AZ: It would be dreadful, wouldn't it?

Y: Zimmerman got his revenge.

AZ: I don't know what they'd do with this tape - *(discussion regarding use of tape difficult to hear)* Like that time Dad was pruning one of the - we had four or five apple trees left over from Mr. Weinholder's gardens. One was a magnificent crab apple, a huge old crabapple tree, and another one was a magnificent horse chestnut. People came from miles around just to steal a blossom or two off it. And, one of the apple trees, I think it was the red astrakan, he was trimming the tree, it was spring, and fell out of the tree onto the frozen ground, and my Aunt Mary happened to be

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AZ: looking out the window and saw this happen. I didn't know my Aunt Mary could hurdle a five foot fence! She put her hand on the post, and whew! Right over! Dad had fractured his skull, and we thought we were going to lose him for a while.

Y: Did you get him to Evanston Hospital?

AZ: Oh, no. Right into the house, and Dr. Mott came out and said, "Don't move him!" He stayed right there.

Y: In the first place, you can't get a doctor to come to the house.

AZ: He did. Dr. Barry came to the house. Dr. Mott came to the house.

Y: First thing they do now is get you to the hospital.

AZ: Yes, that's what I wanted them to do when I broke my leg. This was again the Sturtevant boy and myself, and they were building a new house over there on Hill Street on the north side between 5th and 6th east of the Bullsquhouse. The Bullsquhouse was the big corner lot. It was a big house which had three or four lots there. Virginia Bull committed suicide in that house, I remember. And, we were walking on the scaffolding around the chimney, three stories up. He stepped off the plank I was standing on onto a ladder, and it pushed the plank off the support. Well, the next thing I remember was landing, and it knocked the wind out of me. Well, I landed on a slope, so I rolled over, just in time to see the plank had been standing on headed right straight for me, end on, and it hit me right there, broke my leg. I didn't realize it had, I thought it had cut my leg right off! Oh,

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AZ: God! So I rolled over, you see, and this leg was laying right *across* there like that, and the bone almost came out through the side here. You could see it when they cut my trousers off. But the ambulance went to Maple Street, Evanston, instead of Maple Street, Wilmette, so it was two hours before they got here.

A Wilmette ambulance?

AZ: No, from the Evanston Hospital. But when they got me down to the hospital and let me out in the hall while they settled ~~%~~Whose going to pay for this?+, and some nurse came along and hit this leg which was bent there. I cursed her. She came over and slapped me. I thought my Mother was going to destroy her! Mother was a little bit of a red-head, you know. But she was going to clean out the hospital with her. She took that nurse and just manhandled her all over the place, and when she got through that nurse wasn't worth a darn. She had to go home.

Y: oh?

AZ: ~~%~~Id teach you to abuse my son!+Oh, well! She made me scream. Can you imagine that? And then slapping me. I'm afraid Mother would have killed her if they hadn't dragged her off.

Y: Then did you get to stay in the hospital?

AZ: For three days. And when they brought me home I had a cast from here - you could just see the top of my big toe. Mother picked me up, cast and all, and carried me up and down stairs. My own Mother! She complained she didn't

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AZ: have any strength in her hands, you know, but when she sealed a jar with her hands it took two men and a horse to open one of them.

I suppose that that house was, the remodelling was all Mother's creation, because it did have the best parlor. I can remember when grandmother Chave died, in the bedroom next to mine, the back bedroom, the north one looking out that window, cause I used to have a wire to the porch over there between John Sturtevant and myself, we had string, it was with tin cans on the end. But the coffin was in the best parlor. I remember all the shades drawn, everything all -- that fireplace that's now in the living room was on the wall, the inside wall, just beside those -- you see there were also sliding glass doors there where the French doors used to be. But that fireplace is now on the south wall of the living room. And where that chimney went up through and it also went down into the basement, they had to patch the floor there. And I remember Mrs. Spanuth one time was standing where this floor had been, and her heel went phoom! right down through the floor. She did.

Y: Well, your Mother had good taste. Everything she did do to that house was just perfect

AZ: She certainly did.

Y: She raised the whole roof.

AZ: Oh, yes. In the back, not the front.

Y: Oh, I thought everything was raised.

AZ: Only the back roof. As a matter of fact, it wasn't really

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AZ: raised, some of it's still there, you can see it..

Y: So that made room for the back bedroom.

AZ: That's right.

Y: The bathroom?

AZ: And the roof line for the addition took the place of the ground porch. And so we could have a bathroom, and because the bathroom was parallel to the back wall on the south side, and there the stairs came down into the kitchen.

Y: In the kitchen where the stove is.

AZ: Yeah, right next to the door which goes down to the cellar.

Y: How in the world could they work like that?

AZ: They bent around like this.

Y: Oh, I see, and -

AZ: And then they closed up that back door on the north side back of the house and put in a little bathroom there.

Y: And a back closet.

AZ: Oh, the telephone that they had. Was a wooden one hung on the wall and you cranked, cranked to get the operator.

Y: Did you call her ~~central~~?

AZ: No, we called her an operator. You cranked it and picked it up and she'd answer, maybe. But you didn't use it during a storm, oh no

1: Because the lightning would come through?

AZ: That's right. Because it sometimes did.

Y: Oh, really did?

AZ: Oh yes, there was nothing fake about that. It's true.