

Robert D. and Alice Hall

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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 past, 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 to be forgotten.

Richard E. Thompson  
Director

## ABSTRACT

Interviewee: Robert D. and Alice Hall

Interviewer: Rhea Adler

Date of interview: Winter, 1977

- His childhood in Zion, Illinois - Description of the community founded for religious reasons by Mr. Dowie
- Wilbur Glenn Voliva and radio station WCBD
- Hall family from Vermont to Zion "to be. healed" in 1902 -Most went on to California later but his father and uncle stayed
- "Blue laws" - No sewers - No movies - Owned all industries -Zion Bakery - Lace factory - Power plant
- Uncle Charley moves family to Alamo, Michigan about 1920 -Family and household goods in two boxcars - Head of household drives team of horses from Zion to Alamo -Spends first night in Wilmette, horses spend night on Ridge in a lumberyard - Goes through Chicago via Western Avenue and horses spend second night in lumberyard and driver slept in wagon - Took two weeks to reach Alamo, Michigan - Had a celery farm ~ Strawberries
- Return to Wilmette - Lived in various areas - 4th Linden area
- "West of tracks" - Community attitudes toward different locale - Harms Woods trolley - Two years University of Alaska
- Alice Hall's description of Mrs. Freeman's (her mother's) grade school board tenure - Purchase of Harper school land - Mother's Quaker upbringing in Richmond, Indiana
- Graduated Earlham College - Volunteer year in Puerto Rico
- Discussion of philosophy of Wilmette/ Winnetka schools - PTA -Woman's Club - Arden Shore Girl Scouts - Park Ridge School for Girls - All activities of Elizabeth Freeman - Father on faculty of Armour Institute (forerunner of Illinois Institute of Technology) for 42 years
- Present activities of the Halls - She, New Trier High School teacher - He, in audio-visual school supplies – Avedex in Skokie

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RA: What is your full name? Where do you live?

RDH: I'm Robert D. Hall

RA: Have you always lived in Wilmette?

RDH: No, but I moved here a long time ago.

RA: How long?

RDH: In 1916. Our family moved here in 1916 from Zion, Illinois, where I was born. Zion is a community north of Waukegan. Maybe forty miles from here.

RA: In Lake County?

RDH: Yes, Lake County. We moved into a house at 913 Thirteenth Street, which at that time backed up against the North Shore Railroad and which is now gone and there is a fire station on the east side of the Northwestern tracks there now.

RA: I see. Do you remember much about the community of Zion as it was?

RDH: Not at that time, but I went back some years later and lived there for two or three years with my grandfather.

RA: Oh, yes.

RDH: So I got well acquainted with Zion and all my cousins and relatives who live up there. It was a town founded for religious purposes. The man who founded it and created Zion Industries which included a lace factory and a big bakery....

RA: And who was the man?

RDH: That was Dowie. Later, after he passed on, Wilbur Glenn

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Voliva ran the church and the town and during his years he had a radio station. I wonder if I can remember. WCBD.

RA: Oh, yes.

RDH: And, of course, he would come on the air Sundays and preach all afternoon as I remember.

RA: What was the name of the church?

RDH: Oh, that was the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church of Zion.

RA: Christian Catholic....

RDH: Christian Catholic Apostolic Church of Zion.

RA: How did it differ from....

RDH: I wouldn't know all the details of that. My grandparents came to Zion in the 1900's like in 1902 and 1901. My mother's family came from Canada down here, from Ontario, because the grandmother in the family was ill. The Hall side of the family came from Vermont to be healed and after several years, the Hall family had no healing so the grandmother and most of the Halls went to California where weather and everything was supposed to be much easier on them. And my father had fallen in love with the Graham girl. He stayed, married, of course, and his brother stayed. Uncle Henry stayed - Henry Hall. And he raised his family there while the rest of the family went to California. The rest of them are out there. It was interesting a

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couple of years ago I was on a committee with a woman from Glencoe who was raised in Zion also and who knew my mother and is one of the few people who I've met who knew my mother. Her name is Mary Ferry. I'll bet she could tell you a lot about that little town. I think what I remember about Zion can be related to the Blue Laws and secondly to what we might now know as "progress" because the church officials would not allow the state highway people to pave Sheridan Road when it went through Zion so when you drove from Waukegan north you came to a point where you got into six or ten inches of mud and poor streets and that's what you had through Zion until, oh, I suppose in the late 1918, 1920. No, it had to be even after that when they finally paved the state highway which was Sheridan Road.

RA: For heaven's sake.

RDH: So we remember that.

RA: You didn't have any sewers either.

RDH: They had no underground sewers, but the effluence was picked up by wagons and carried off somewhere. The area of entertainment, of course, there was absolutely nothing that happened on a Sunday up there. We weren't allowed to, there were no movies. They did not have a movie in Zion for many, many years after everybody else had a movie theatre of some kind.

RA: What were the other activities or community, what

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economically supported the community?

RDH: Well, they had their own industries. The Zion Bakery became a very huge operation and Zion fig bars are known all over the world I understand. The lace factory was established and the local people worked in it. They had their own power plant. My grandfather in the early years, at the start of 1900, worked in the power plant. He never became what I recall as being a Zionist. In other words, he never joined the Dowie's church. He was an antagonist in a sense. He was quite against their goal of healing people. He didn't think it would work. It didn't work in his family so he was sure that it wouldn't, couldn't work. And uh, but he worked in the Zion industries.

RA: This is interesting. I thought everybody that lived in the town had to be....

RDH: There were many other churches in Zion - there were when I was a boy. I belonged to the Grace Missionary Church, if I remember.

RA: Oh.

RDH: I don't remember what denomination it was. Probably Methodist.

RA: I see.

RDH: I went to the Grace Missionary Sunday School and attended the local grade school. We liked to go down to the beach. Of course, you were not allowed on the beach on Sunday

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and the styles, of course, were rather behind the world in the styles of bathing suits. We didn't have a bathing suit that didn't have sleeves in it for instance.

RA: Long sleeves?

RDH: Long sleeves. [Laughter] Of course, that was a long time ago and I guess it didn't make that much difference.

RA: Well, I remember wearing long sleeved bathing suits. I'm slightly older than you two are. [Laughter] On Jackson Park Beach no less.

RDH: I moved out of Zion when I was two and came back, I suppose, when I was nine for a short while and then we went to live with some relatives in Michigan. Then came back to Zion later. I remember an interesting story. I had an uncle who had several acres north in Zion around 21st Street. Section, uh, the town had sections in it as I remember. I forget what the section, section 17, I guess it was. He had traded his property for a farm in Alamo, Michigan. And the interesting part of the story, and I didn't hear or know this until many years later when I went to Kalamazoo, Michigan, and we had a long talk with Uncle Charley and he told us this story, that he rented or hired or whatever you do to get two railroad cars. They were parked on the siding in Zion and he drove his whole family down with a team of horses. Now this had to be in about 1920. And, uh, he got down there and he loaded all his furniture on the train and

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when he went to put the horses on the train, they wouldn't let him do it. They were not allowed to have horses in a box-car, and they hadn't told him that. So he unloaded the wagon, hitched up his horses and took whatever he needed and he set off to drive his team of horses to Alamo, Michigan. And the first night out from Zion, his family went with the furniture on the train, and the first night out he arrived in Wilmette late. We lived at 1607 Lake Avenue and my father didn't quite know what to do with these horses. So they went up on The Ridge and there was a lumber yard and they got the owner up or out of wherever he lived and asked him if he couldn't put the horses in the lumberyard. So they put the horses in and threw out the hay and closed the gates. Of course, he was up early the next morning and he started out and he went down Western Avenue in Chicago and late the next night he found another lumberyard. It seemed to be a good place where you could close the gate and let the horses walk around on the dirt and if you put enough hay and water out, they were in good shape the next morning. I think he slept in the wagon that night. And so it went. It took him about two weeks to travel around the end of the lake over to Alamo which is nine miles sort of northwest of Kalamazoo, Michigan, where his farm was.

RA: For heaven's sake.

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### Track 3

RDH: And, of course, when he got there his family was there and all the furniture had been unloaded and he had to then use his wagon to cart it from the railroad station over to the farm. I know that farm because after my mother died in 1923 I went back and lived in Zion a bit and then I went over to the farm with three members of my family. So I lived over there for a couple of years and pumped the water and milked cows. My job, I was the youngest, I think, at the time and I had to go get the cattle.

AH: They raised celery.

RDH: Oh, I remember the celery deal. We had some bottomland where the celery was raised.

RA: Sandy soil?

RDH: Mucky soil.

RA: Mucky soil.

RDH; The celery was bleached in those days. You didn't have pascal celery. So the celery stayed green and hard until you put the boards up around it and heaped the muck all around that for two weeks while it bleached. Then it became tender.

RA: Oh, yes.

RDH: And those were awfully long rows of celery cause we had to tend them. I remember the strawberry patch across the road from us. There was a lot of work to do raising

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strawberries, a lot of them to eat. I have always been a strawberry fan [Laughter] But that isn't Wilmette. Wilmette comes back into play in my life when I moved back here when the rest of the family came back. Some of them had not left. There were five children to our family. So when we got re-established we lived in various places in Wilmette. Recently I kind of jotted down. There was eleven different places in Wilmette that I've lived.

RA: Interesting.

RHD: Remember the old Winberg Drug Store over here on Fourth and Linden?

RA: That's before my time. I've heard of the Drug Store.

RHD: There's a furrier in the downstairs area now. There were two floors of apartments upstairs and we lived on the top floor.

RA: Oh, yes.

RHD: I can remember dismantling an upright piano once and trying to get it down out of that building. My brother and I had quite a time with it.

RA: Now is that the building that the drugstore is now in, that Lyman's....

RHD: No. No. Across the street and down toward the new apartment house.

RA: Oh, on Fourth?

RDH: It would be west of Linden Hardware, Terminal Hardware.

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RA: I see.

AH: (Indistinct) had the corner drugstore for a long time, but he put up the money, as I understand. Of course, I'm not sure of this, but this is my recollection that he built that building where O'Kean Furrier is in now.

RA: Oh, yes.

AH: And that was the drugstore, but, you see, it did not succeed and the comment was always made, "Well, you know he gave up the corner location. The drugstore was always on the corner" and [Laughter] I think that Lyman came in, Lyman-Richie came in....

RDH: Not Lyman-Richie, just Lyman Drugs.

AH: Well, Lyman Drugs. Right. Lyman came in to the corner. I think the competition, it was a corner store and it just, he just didn't make it.

RA: But that's the one across, north on the northwest corner.

AH: Yes, where the drugstore is now. That was Drugstore.

RA: I see.

RDH: You know where Ace Hardware is, well I lived upstairs in one of those apartments for a while.

RA: Those were once owned by the Marshall Field Company or Marshall Field.

RDH: That building?

RA: Wasn't that whole building owned by Field's?

RDH: I don't think I would know who owned it. I know we

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lived there a couple of years.

RA: So it's always been well occupied?

#### **Track 4**

RDH; I would think that the location would always assure that. We lived over here on the three hundred block on Maple. No, it would have to be the two hundred block on Maple and I remember coming back to Wilmette one time and I think I took Alice by there and the house was gone. And I told Alice I used to live upstairs above that vacant lot. [giggling] And, of course, now there is a house there.

RA: Oh, yes.

RDH; But not the house I lived in.

RA: There were many early houses weren't there. Bob, in that block?

RDH: Oh, yes, these were two story wood and brick.

AH: They were all taken down, except the one on the corner.

RA: The one on the corner.

AH: The old one is still there.

RA: That's right. And at one time, I believe, Mr. McDaniels lived up in there somewhere.

AH: I don't believe I knew him.

RA: Well, he was Mr. Dingee's representative in early Wilmette.

RDH: I'll tell you something that I remember as a kid. We lived west of the tracks. You see I've lived on both sides of the tracks.

RA: So did I.

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RDH: You know, if you lived west of the tracks you didn't have it, you know, but if you lived east of the tracks, that was supposed to be something real, very fine in Wilmette and I don't think that that exists any more. There's some mighty fine areas west of the tracks.

RA: That's right.

RDH: And there were then, but I think this must have grown out of the way the children looked at things.

RA: Well, I have had Esther Hoffman who lives on West Lake Avenue, east of The Ridge tell me that she had a very unhappy childhood because she lived west of the tracks.

RDH: West of the tracks. [Laughter]

RA: So you were going to tell a story about living west....

RDH: Well, it was just that that fact was a fact of life when I was in school here.

RA: Well, it was very noticeable when I came as late as 1932.

RDH: I don't think I've heard of that in the past ten or fifteen years, but I don't think the kids would even know about it today.

RA: Well, the kids....

RDH: Perhaps no one else would.

RA: ....perhaps were less conscious of it than the adults were when I came.

AH: I think it's more of....

RA: Because I had a friend whose husband bought the farm upon which Indian Hill Estates was built and we used to go to

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the League of Women Voters and she would be introduced and they would say, "And where do you live, Mrs. Drucker?" and she would say, "Oh, out on, off of West Lake Avenue." And they'd say, "Oh," and their voices would drop and she would giggle and poke me [laughter] and she always had a great laugh over this and, of course, it is true that the west side has become really....

AH: Well, my mother was on the school board. This would be back in the twenties, I guess.

RDH: Elementary school board.

AH: Yes, and maybe late twenties. And I can remember that the school board, I think this is the time that Mr. Cutler was on the board, urn, and somebody else.

RA: The Howards?

AH: Not Howard, but somebody else that was very outstanding here in the village. I can't remember the name, but I'll think of it in a minute. He, uh, she, I'll go back to the school board. And had bought a piece of property which was adjacent to the Indian Hills Estates, since you mentioned Indian Hill Estates, and the Indian Hill Estates had not really been, I think it had been sub-divided by that time, and looked as if, I guess, it was going to be a going concern that they would be able to develop that, but, of course, this happened, I think, in the very late twenties and then, of course, with '29 and the crash and all, building stopped. Well, it was just about at that

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time that the board had bought up this piece of property for a school. If this Indian Hill Estates was going to be developed, there was no school out there. So the board was forward looking and this property came up for sale. I think it was a piece of farm property and, of course, it was very reasonable. And then they had, of course, a referendum to enable them to raise money for this thing and I can remember mother calling and calling and calling on the phone to get people out for the referendum. And I can remember her, you know, she was running up against all this opposition of, "Well, who would ever live out there? It was way to heck and gone and nobody would live out there."

RDH: West of The Ridge?

AH: Well, certainly. You were talking about west Wilmette or the other side of the tracks and this whole attitude....

### **Track 5**

RA: Was that the property that Harper School was....

AH: Yes, that was the property on which Harper School was later built.

RA: I see.

AH: But you see it was held by the school board for many, many years by the school board, but that's when it was acquired.

RA: Well, this is a most interesting part of the school history, I think, because they also had the property for a long time that Locust Junior High....

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AH: Yes.

RA: ....is now built on and that was at that time, was all farm land.

AH: All farm land. Well, I can remember the truck farms that were all along there. Beautiful farms. And that beautiful black soil. It's all gone now. [rueful laughter]

RA: That's right. Well, when we first came to Wilmette we used to drive out to the edge of the village and we were in the country. Now we drive well beyond the Fox River before we reach....

RDH: I remember when Harms Road was really far west.

RA: That's right.

RDH: We used to drive out to a farm on Harms Road and Wilmette Avenue out in there and get cottage cheese and I can almost still smell the sliced green peppers and put it on the cottage cheese.

RA: For heaven's sake.

RDH: I guess I must connect that with my mother in those days when I was little because that was a very favorite dish. [laughter]

AH: There was a trolley on Central Street in Evanston that used to go as far as Harms Woods. Although it went out there, that was way, way out in the boondocks.

RDH: Remember the trolley out along Old Orchard Road? Out to the Harms Woods?

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RA: No. I don't.

RDH: Oh, sure, it went up Central Street, jogged south and went out Old Orchard there to the left of the highway and on the right is the golf course as you go out.

RA: Yes.

RDH: To the left is a fence way back. There's a lot of room in there and there was....

AH: Right along the cemetery.

RDH: ....a trolley line right to the Woods.

AH: Went clear out there and ended at Harms Woods.

RA: Beyond where Field's Old Orchard is?

AH: Oh, yes. Clear to the Woods.

RDH: Oh, yes, clear across what is now the highway.

AH: Yes, Harms Road.

RDH: There was a high trestle over the railroad. I remember that when we were kids we'd sometimes walk across the trestle and it was pretty scary because, you know, it was as high as the train, I suppose.

AH: You would have to go up and over.

RDH: I remember it was a very high trestle. [female giggling] As a child you probably remember it that way.

AH: I remember going on picnics, school picnics. We'd get on that train, trolley, and go out there.

RA: Oh? Well, of course, by '32 it must have been gone.

AH: Oh, yes. I don't know how long....

RDH: Sure. I went up to Alaska in 1935. Left Wilmette for a

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year or two. I'm sure it wasn't there then. At least it wasn't used.

RA: Well, I remember your articles that you sent back to the....

RDH: From Alaska?

RA: From....

RDH: Oh, my goodness.

RA: Because I read them all in the Wilmette Life. And I never knew who Robert Hall was at that time.

RDH: Well, my sister and I were up there and attended the University of Alaska at Fairbanks.

RA: I see

RDH: 1935 and 1936.

RA: Oh.

RDH: It was kind of interesting.

RA: It must have been very interesting. Well, do you, you say you remember the tornado which almost everyone who lived in Wilmette at that....

RDH: Wasn't that 1921?

RA: I believe it was. It was Palm Sunday and I believe it was 1921.

RDH: Our back door at 1607 Lake backed what is now Harper School.

AH: No. Logan School.

RA: Logan School.

RDH: It was all fields out there and the storm totally missed us, came down through there and turned black and you could see everything in the air flying around. We stood in the

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back door and watched it and we were probably a block or two blocks from it. And then, of course, it went downtown and took the roof off the city hall. I guess that's one thing it's famous for. And I remember driving around in the quiet afterward that Sunday afternoon and pieces of wood, straw, for instance, was driven right into telephone poles. The magic power of a storm likthat is something to behold. I remember that. I must have been six or seven years old.

RA: Do you remember the trees that were felled on Wilmette Avenue?

RDH: Oh, yes.

RA: Because there was a story someone told about these beautiful trees that this man treasured and the storm came along and just leveled them.

RDH: Well, we had a tornado, didn't we?

RA: That's right.

Track 6

RDH: It was a tornado.

AH: Oh, we had one just recently that knocked down a few trees.

RA: Well, since we....

RDH: It was a sort of a touch of one in comparison.

RA: I was away, but Harry could not use the front door because it blew trees down....

AH: Um, hum.

RA: ....into our front yard so that this, we do get wind.

AH: Yes.

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RA: But I learned that back in fourth grade in geography [laughter] that we're in the trade winds and the passage of the trade winds, so we are bound to get it so if you don't like it.... You both went to school here then for most of your schooling? You both were graduated?

RDH: From high school, sure.

AH: Well, I started at the Laurel School. My brother was three years older. He started school at the Central School kindergarten because Laurel was not built, but by the time I came along, um, the....

RDH: Laurel and Seventh?

AH: Yes. Seventh and Laurel. The school had been built and I went to kindergarten through third grade there and then went to Central School through fourth, fifth, and then sixth grade was departmentalized and that was in a different building.

RA: But still in the area?

AH: Yes. Still up there at the Central School.

RA: That was Stolp and Central.

AH: Right, but I didn't go to Stolp. Stolp was seventh grade. Seventh and eighth grade and that was like what we called like junior high. It was also departmentalized and, but it was a separate building.

RA: I see.

AH: And Central School had an opening on Central Avenue and I'm not quite sure....

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RA: And Stolp School was the building that they left on Ninth Street?

AH: Separate. Yes. It opened on Ninth Street.

RA: Or Tenth Street?

RDH: Tenth Street.

AH: Tenth. I beg your pardon. Tenth.

RDH: I went to Stolp for seventh grade.

AH: That was just seventh and eighth.

RA: And the gym was in that building?

AH: Yes. And then just north of that was an old house which they used as a Board of Education offices.

RA: At that time, did they?

RDH: Remember the School on Prairie Avenue? Was that Prairie Avenue School?

RA: Is that what it's called?

AH: Where?

RA: West of Park Avenue, west of the library a block.

AH: That's Logan.

RDH: That's Logan School?

RA: The old Logan School.

AH: That's where you went.

RDH: I went to kindergarten, first and second grade there, I guess. We lived on Lake Avenue.

RA: That was at one time, I am told, a manual training school, kind of, for the upper grades?

RDH: Maybe later, but when I was in first and second grade, it

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was just a regular school.

AH: Just a regular school. Just like Laurel was.

RA: Oh, yes. That was a three story building, wasn't it?

AH: Um, hum. I think it must have been built about the same time as Laurel. As I recall, it had the same look to it. Red brick. Built just like Laurel is.

RA: Although it seemed like an older building to me. My children went to summer school there in, when they had the Kellogg Foundation summer school for seven years.

AH: Well, we had that junior high or what do you call it, sixth, seventh and eighth grade at Stolp, and then, you see because west Wilmette was building and increasing out west, they then built Howard School.

RA: Yes. And that was an eight graded school.

AH: But it had the junior high part, too.

RA: Yes.

AH: Just the same as Central did.

RA: And that was in the late twenties.

AH: In the late twenties because there were kids, I remember, in high school who had come from Howard. And we came from Stolp School. There was a lot of that school building going on. Carleton Washburne, you know, was very active in Winnetka and Skokie and, well, he got himself in every educational book in the world. [laughter]

RA: Oh, yes, as a freshman in college I studied The Winnetka System by Washburne.

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AH: And I know that we used to see them. And my father would have a running battle with Carleton Washburne because/ well, I mean, my father just wasn't that far out, you see, and that, Mr. Washburne was always trying to get my father to move to Winnetka. [much laughter by the ladies] And he was very satisfied with Mr. Harper who was then superintendent of the schools and who seemed to be a forward looking man and, but he wasn't quite as radical as Carleton Washburne. And I always felt that we got a marvelous education in the Wilmette schools.

RA: Mr. Harper was here over much of his education. My children and, um...

AH: Because I can remember sitting in the freshman class in Latin, bored as could be because the kids from Winnetka didn't know the parts of speech. They didn't know a noun from a pronoun and here was the Latin teacher having to teach English grammar because he couldn't teach Latin until you understood English grammar and cases and waiting for those dumb kids from Winnetka to get caught up. [laughter] Oh, it was boring. The kids from Glencoe were fine. They understood English grammar. [more laughter] Not those from Winnetka. But the feeling was in Winnetka was that you just did what you liked to do. If you didn't like grammar, then you didn't do grammar and, as a result, you didn't know grammar.

### **Track 7**

RA: The progressive education movement had a great....

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AH: Oh, yes.

RA: ....flourished in Winnetka at that time. It had its influence on the North Shore.

AH: Yes, it certainly did.

RA: Tell me, Alice, your mother made a great impact on the community and her background has always interested me. She did so many interesting things and was so far ahead of her time, it seemed to me, in the girlhood things that she did. Wouldn't you like to tell a little bit about her?

AH: Well, she grew up in a Quaker community. And you kind of have to understand what a Quaker community is. It's a very closed group in a sense. I'm sure there are many such kinds of things. I think many of the Jewish communities are the same, have the same kind of feeling in that they have a great sense of care for the total community and of all of the individuals in it. And, of course, this is the kind of thing that grows up in small communities where the church is a kind of a center and of a community center and the minister looking after his flock. These are concepts which no longer exist, but I think they have been prevalent in the past. Well, the Quaker community was one such, like that.

RA: And where was this?

AH: In Richmond, Indiana. Richmond was a, really quite a cultural center and the Quakers were one of the strong

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points. They were very strong for education and in 1840 they established a school, an academy, there in Richmond. And it was a rather primitive community at that time, but it was a school they felt was needed and it is now Earlham College. Well, mother attended Earlham College and the government at that time, the United States government, had sort of, you know, the equivalent of what we call the Peace Corps.

RA: Oh, really?

AH: They had recently acquired Puerto Rico, for one thing, and the Philippines. Mother graduated in 1904 from college, so you see in 1898 was then they had acquired these territories. And they were at government stations, or whatever you want to call these sponsored programs, to teach the natives English. They were now going to be territories of the United States. They would have to learn English. So mother and a friend of hers went down to Puerto Rico and were in a little town and they were to be....

RA: Have you told us about your mother's service on the high school board as well as the grade school board?

### **Track 8**

AH: No. Mother came here in 1916. I was born in 1916. And she subsequently got into the community activities. With her background in a Quaker community, one of the big things is service to the community. This was one of the concepts that they promote, that everybody contributes to the general

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welfare. So I guess you'd say she became a professional volunteer in all kinds of things, in the school's affairs, the PTA. The PTA now, I don't think, compares to what it was at that time. It was a tremendously strong program and they did a great many things to augment the facilities of the school. They had sales. They had bake sales. I remember cakes that we couldn't eat because they were being made for the PTA. [laughter] So she was very active in that and she was on the school board and she worked with the Girl Scouts. She was also very active in the Wilmette Women's Club. And her particular bent was the philanthropy area and that lead her into, she served on the board at Park Ridge School for Girls. She was on, uh, oh, what's the one up on the shore? Arden Shore. She was on the Arden Shore board. That was also a part of the Women's Club. The Women's Club had strings out to all of these philanthropic organizations.

RA: They were responsible for a great deal that was started in the community. Just as Rotary was.

AH: They were promoting a lot of these things. And there were some other things she was on, too. Well, of course, her own church, the Christian Science Church here, she became a member of that and there again with the committees she was active in that. She was also a lifelong supporter of Earlham College as an alumni of that and there were organizations in the city that helped promote Earlham

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College and she was always interested in that.

RA: You mentioned her going to Puerto Rico. Did she go anywhere else in her girlhood? Did she participate in similar activities?

AH: No. That was really....

RDH: She taught school in Indianapolis.

AH: Yes, but she didn't do it, that was a job.

RDH: Oh.

AH: But she went to, this was, yes, a volunteer kind of thing when she went down there to Puerto Rico. She was there a year.

RA: I see.

AH: And it was, she always felt it was a very interesting kind of experience. It was a very primitive area that she was in and they had a lot of fun, you know, down there.

RA: Very interesting. So similar to today's Peace Corps.

AH: Yes. I'm not sure I gave my mother's name. She was Elizabeth Freeman. My father was at the Armour Institute which was then a fairly new school.

RA: And Armour Institute is today?

AH: Illinois Institute of Technology. It combined with Lewis Institute some years ago and became....

RA: Oh, yes.

RDH: He taught there for forty-two years.

AH: Yes.

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RA: I hadn't realized he did.

RDH: That was the electrical department.

Track 9

AH: Yes, and he was head of the Graduate School in later years.

RA: Oh, yes. I never knew what your father had done, but you didn't mention....

RDH: He commuted from Wilmette all those years on the EI.

RA: For heaven's sake.

RDH: He came out to the end of the EI to get into a nice area for his family and then every day for forty-two years went down to the South side.

AH: They were married in 1912 and they lived on the South side, of course, close to the school and they looked at property in Oak Park and Hinsdale and Beverly and all around and then they came out to the Shore here and they looked all through Wilmette, Kenilworth and Winnetka and finally decided on a piece of property here in Wilmette because he was still connected with Armour Institute and expected to be and needed the transportation and the elevated provided direct transportation. The Northwestern did not, so to move any further north on the Shore, even the North Shore line at that time which went south of the Loop, didn't facilitate him at all. I mean which did not go south of the Loop. So he decided on Wilmette and he looked all around Wilmette and the particular piece of property on the corner of Sixth and Laurel that they bought. There was a great big elm tree out in the front of the lot.

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And they decided, that really was what sold them the lot. [laughter] It's a corner lot and this was a large tree. It was a beautiful tree. It's gone now.

RA: How sad.

RDH: It was just in the last few years, too.

AH: But there was only one other house on the block when they started building.

RA: That was the early custom. It seemed that the different plats of the village, a lot would take up the better part of a block, what is now a block and sub-divided into many lots. But there were many re-sub-divisions from the original property.

AH: Oh, is that so?

RA: Yes. It was very interesting when you read the abstracts. Now I thought of something that I wanted to raise the question about. Oh, it was, you said your father had direct transportation, but was he able to take the EI? Did the EI come here at that time?

AH: It went straight through. It didn't go around the Loop, those early morning trains. It went straight through to Jackson Park and he got off at the school which was located at Thirty-third and Federal. And there's an EI station right there and he got off.

RA: I see.

AH: And it was very convenient. It took him an hour and a half each way.

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RA: Oh, yes.

RDH: For forty-two years. [laughter]

RA: There were no Evanston Expresses then?

AH: Well, yes. Sure.

RDH: There was an express from here downtown, but it was local on the South side.

RA: Oh, yes.

RDH: It still wasn't as fast as probably a car would be today. It seems like a lot of commuting time, doesn't it?

RA: Well, a great many people spend a lot of time commuting.

AH: But I don't think he ever found it arduous because he found things to do and getting on where he got on at either end, you see, he always had a seat so that he was not having to stand, so that made it convenient and he could always do something on the train, read the paper, or [laughter]

RDH: He'd be well read with three hours a day [laughter]

RA: Well, now we've talked about the past but let's come up to the present. What do each one of you do?

Track 10

AH: Well, I'm back at New Trier High School. After the, we were living in Cincinnati and were transferred back here and by that time the children were in school away from home, and I, uh, just found I didn't have enough to do. And I had followed, I guess, the pattern of the role model of my mother and had done all kinds of volunteer sorts of things in Cincinnati and really enjoyed it, but

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then coming back to break in again to the volunteer area, I somehow didn't pick it up. Oh, I became a member of the League of Women Voters here which was always interesting, but it just, uh, I just thought, well, I really want something kind of different as I'm making this break and I couldn't stand it at home without the kids. There weren't any young people around. It was just a, you know, real void. So I got my certificate up to date and they had an opening at New Trier and so I took it and that was at New Trier East. There was no New Trier West at that time, but they were in the process of building the West school, so as soon as the West school was built, in a year or two, I was out there. I was transferred out there and I've been there, well, this is now my twelfth year.

RA: Really? The school has been....

Track 11

AH: No. The school's been there about ten. I taught a couple of years at New Trier East before.

RA: Because I was on the committee to survey the need for a New Trier West, and that the League of Women Voters of New Trier Township had drawn together from all the villages and I didn't realize it was that long ago.

AH: It's surprising how time goes.

RA: And, Bob, what exactly is your field?

RDH: Well, the audio-visual school supplies. I started with Bell and Howell in 1935. Sold equipment from the manufacturer's standpoint in the educational market. And we

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have a small company called Avedex in Skokie now that manufactures language laboratory equipment and supplies tape recorders and the hardware and the audio-visual material.  
[end of tape]