

## **INTERVIEWS WITH JOSEPH THOMAS AND ANNA TIMKO THOMAS**

**Scalp Level, PA**

**By Mildred Allen Beik**

**February 24 and March 8, 1984**

MB = Mildred Allen Beik

JT = Joseph Thomas (November 30, 1898 – March 2, 1991?)

AT = Anna Timko Thomas (October 1, 1902 – November 1992?)

**Beginning of the Interview (February 24, 1984)**

**Beginning of Tape 1 Side A (February 24, 1984)**

AT = 35 people all lived in these double houses. And they were one of those families that if one stood out at the gate, one would know what the other one was doing, so I'm glad they're talking and all that. I used to go through there lots of times because see I was working for the church, and I had to sell tickets...and I had to work for the church for the...selling the tickets because we had a lot of debts on our church, so that's the reason I had to go there, so I knew everyone out there.

MB: Why don't you tell me your full name, Mr. Thomas, so that I have that for sure?

JT: Joseph

MB: Could you tell me your birth date?

JT: I was born in the old century, 1898, November 30. My brother was born at Eureka 34, that's what those mines were called.

MB: Could you tell me something about your parents before we get to your brothers. Could you tell me where your mother was born?

JT: She was born in Europe.

MB: Where in Europe?

JT: [INAUDIBLE]

MB: Can you spell that for me?

JT: It's pretty hard to spell.

MB: And was your father born in the same place?

JT: No he was born a little distance away. He worked for postmaster mistress. He was a deliveryman for the post office service.

MB: In what town would that be, about?

JT: Place is called Seine.

MB: Did your mother work when she lived in Hungary?

JT: Yeah, she did housework.

MB: Do you know for whom? What do you know about that?

JT: Oh that's beyond me, I was too young to know that.

MB: Do you know how old she was when she was working?

JT: She was in her twenties, I guess. I couldn't tell you an exact date.

MB: That's alright. Just so you can tell me what you remember.

JT: Do you want to know how we came here, so I'm a dead king here?

MB: Sure.

JT: About a year or two before we did, my mother and I, he worked for the railroad in New Jersey when he came to this country, and he had a penny left from the money he started off with in Europe. He had one cent left, so he got a job on the railroad. And so that was his start. I think he made twelve cents an hour at that time.

MB: Did he have any relatives who had come to America before? How did he decide to come to America?

JT: No, he knew somebody out here so he corresponded, but I don't know who, I couldn't tell you who he wrote to...

MB: Was it somebody in Windber or was it someone else?

JT: No, no in New Jersey. And then finally he worked on the railroad for quite a spell but he wasn't pleased. His son there that he contacted, he told him about the mines, how much money they make and how much more he could make than what he did on the, he only got twelve cents on the railroad, so that wasn't a very big [laughs] salary, twelve cents an hour.

MB: Was he married when he came? Had he married your mother yet when he came?

JT: No, he didn't get married until we got here. So he stayed here about a year or so, then he sent money for us to come to Windber. And that's where we landed, in Windber. So we went up to 35 Eureka, that was his first stop, and we stayed there for a couple days until we found a house in Windber called "Hillside Avenue." We lived there for a spell, he bought the furniture, and he even got a chicken with it that was laying its own eggs [laughs] so we even inherited...we came here March 25<sup>th</sup>.

MB: What year was that?

JT: 1905. That's when we came, of course my dad he came here about a year earlier, so he was here before we were.

MB: Do you remember coming on the boat?

JT: Oh, surely.

MB: Well tell me about that. Do you remember the name of the boat at all?

JT: Oh, that's beyond me. At my age I was only five years old, so naturally I couldn't remember a lot of those details.

MB: Could you tell me what you remember about it?

JT: Coming, I seen big waves, you know, [INAUDIBLE] and the feed we got there, the feed was alright, they gave you plenty to eat, they didn't starve you. Then when the weather was good, we went aboard on top, you know, watching the water and the boats floating by. And then, oh there was a good many people there. [INAUDIBLE] they serve you meals, they didn't give you anything fancy, just ordinary, and it was all good food, naturally. No sweetness or anything like that—cakes, or the cinnamon buns she used to buy because some of those bakers that was there, there was extra money for them not to bake pastries and sell it to these passengers. My mother went to buy some, because she knew I liked anything that was sweet, which I do yet.

MB: Do you remember what port you left from in Europe? What city it was?

JT: Well, it must have been from Germany, in Bremen. That's where it was because we had to go to Germany and that's where we got on the boat in Bremen.

MB: How did you get to Bremen from your town, your village? Train, or...

JT: We went on a, someplace where we had to catch a train there, we went there about a day or, probably more.

MB: Was it hard, do you think, did your mother talk about it being hard to get to come?

JT: Well, I guess she...

AT: She couldn't talk English, anyhow.

JT: No, she couldn't talk English anyhow. What she learned, she learned here.

MB: Did she speak Hungarian all the time then? Or any other language?

JT: Yeah, she could talk Slavish, Croatian. Because my grandma and grandpa they, that's how they talked together, of course my grandpa spoke good Hungarian, but my grandma, she was kind of weak in that lingo, so they managed.

MB: [laughs]

JT: So...then we landed up at 34. That's where my brother was born, Eureka 34. He was born 1906, February the 24<sup>th</sup>—that's the day he'd have been 88 years old if he had lived, but he died almost two years now, it'll be two years in August that he died. So he was two years younger, he was 76 when he died. And he died in August, in 1982, and he was buried naturally a couple days after.

MB: What was his name?

JT: Steven. Steve Matthews that was the name he used. He used to have a place of business up here.

AT: It's over there going towards Rummel, they call it "Windber Builders Supplies."

JT: Now, we moved at Hillside first, then we lived on there for a spell, but the boarders wanted to move closer to the place where they worked, that's Eureka 34. And since they wanted to live there, we had about eight boarders, eight or nine boarders there. So, they wanted to be closer to the mines where they were working because the mine was about a little better than a mile away from our first residence—that was in Hillside—and we moved out to old 34. Then we moved along one of these places, we used to call it "Shacks". There were four of those buildings put together, with Polish people, Hungarian people, and Slavish people. They managed.

AT: [They all lived in] double houses.

JT: And then your water was outside, spigots, and if you done your washing or needed water in the house, you had to go out there in the winter time, and it wasn't very pleasant. As far as conveniences, there wasn't any, and there were no automobiles in sight, the roads were very rough. Even along here, just a regular old country road like it used to be 30, 40 years ago, none of it the same way in Windber. And then they start, whenever we moved—lived there for a while, they started working on the roads, and as far as automobiles there wasn't any. No automobiles, because the road wasn't fit, and there was very few people who had automobiles back in 1905 and 1906.

MB: Do you remember arriving in Windber? Where did you come from, New York? Did you land at New York?

JT: New York, and then we came to...

AT: Statue of Liberty, huh?

JT: Yeah, sure. I even saw the Statue of Liberty.

MB: Did you remember coming on the trip to Windber?

JT: Well some of it, but [it was] mostly night traveling, so I seen a lot of lights and so on telephone poles. Looks as though they walk past you, the way your train was going. It looked sort of odd when you pass those telephone poles, they think they walk ahead of you. It seemed odd to ride that and then we [INAUDIBLE] until we got to Windber.

MB: That was just your mother and you?

JT: Yeah. And finally we got to Windber. And we come in on the train from, I couldn't tell you exactly where we landed. Anyhow, we came on a train.

MB: What was your first impression when you saw this town, when you saw Windber, when you got off the train?

JT: There wasn't too much to think about, but still more than over in Europe, where we came from. And there were no street lights or anything, and no lights of any kind. And then we moved to this place called Eureka 34, there was no lights, water outside—

AT: Toilet outside.

JT: Oh yeah, no water toilets, no—

AT: They had men come and clean them every year. They used to call them “honey dippers.”

JT: And now these men worked, in these mines here up at [Eureka] 34 while we lived there. That's the same house my brother was born in.

MB: How many brothers and sisters did you have then?

JT: I had one brother, and I still have two sisters. Of course, they were born a good many years after we were here, so my brother and I was the oldest. And the one girl, she's 73, and the other one was born in 1911—the oldest.

MB: So where was your father staying when you arrived? Was he boarding with somebody?

JT: He was boarding up at Eureka 35, and that's where we went.

AT: Most of these men had left their wives. They came here, they was “starboarders” for the women, oh boy, we had a couple neighbors like that.

JT: Well, they weren’t all starboarders.

AT: Ah, most of them [were].

JT: Well, there were some of them.

AT: Your father wasn’t any better.

JT: No, no, probably not. I don’t know, I couldn’t say because I don’t know.

MB: Do you remember was it with a family that you knew, was it a relative that he came and boarded with?

JT: No, they weren’t relatives. Their name was [Shinai INAUDIBLE].

AT: Yeah, I know who it is. I slept with her.

JT: You did?

AT: Yes I did. Because she lived at Eureka 36?

JT: You know these men worked in these mines, and they were paid every other week. I was always paid for two weeks work. And all are paid for, all in silver and gold.

MB: Silver and gold?

JT: That’s the way they paid until the World War came along in 1918. That originally started in 1914 in Europe, but then this country didn’t get into it until 1917 and ‘18. 1917, I guess when America got into it with Germany.

MB: But they paid in gold, when they got paid?

JT: Paid in gold, and silver. And then I used to, these men used to give me these statements, because these statements at the mines are what their earnings were. Their earnings weren’t very good because between 20 and 25 dollars, you work every day and that’s all you earned. In two weeks, that’s all your earnings were. They paid you about 32 cents for a ton of coal that you had to shovel, and dig, and you had no man [INAUDIBLE] in the mines you walked in, in your working place or wherever you worked, these men. And then every other week, payday. And they come up, about three or four of these men with guns so nobody would rob them, pay what they had. And then some of these boarders would give me their statements to bring their money home but it didn’t appeal to my dad, he says. Because about a mile away, a mine from where we lived at that time, and—

MB: You were afraid of being robbed?

JT: Well, yeah, that's what he was worried of, I suppose.

MB: You were a child then, right?

JT: Yeah, I was about six years old.

MB: So your father had been working in the mines, then, for...?

JT: Oh, yes, he's been working in the mines—he worked in Lintondale before he came here.

MB: I see.

JT: And then finally he came here, he knew somebody here that he had contacted with and sent likewise in Lintondale with somebody that he knew at Europe. He worked there, and then he came to Windber because he recommended Windber; it's better here, the working conditions are better. No lights, no water, no convenience whatever, and no washing machines. All by [INAUDIBLE]. No water, no spigots. You got to haul your water in from outside. There are two spigots with four families outside, and in the wintertime, you had frost around your watering place where the water was put in. They had one spigot there, and then you build a sort of wooden, build around it so it wouldn't freeze. And you had to go out for water. And then roaches were plentiful where we lived because, well, everybody didn't take care of the roaches naturally; they are not human, they're very fast, and accumulation was great. So some of these people, instead of going out and getting fresh water from the spigot, they would keep their teeth closed! No that actually happened, things like that. You think it's not sanitary—it wasn't in a way, I didn't approve of it either, but—instead of going out and getting your own water out there in the dark, why they, what was in the house, even if it was yours, anybody took a chance on it [INAUDIBLE] [laughs].

MB: Did you haul water, then? Did you go bring water in from the spigot lots of times?

JT: No, not for them. They always had some on hand. A surplus for the night.

MB: I see.

JT: Oh, no, I didn't haul it. Of course, I was too young to do any of that anyhow.

MB: Did your parents keep boarders at all, then?

JT: Oh, yes, they always had 8-10 men.

MB: Oh really? Any 8 to 10 men?

JT: 8 to 10 men. She washed, and cooked for them, and kept their beds fixed up. And it was my job to fetch kerosene, kerosene lamps, because there weren't a lot of lights.

MB: Right.

JT: Just regular kerosene. Had to go up and clean the globes. And the only thing a man had bought there, they had to buy their own cots, or beds—whatever they slept on. And I went up every morning, and cleaned these globes, [and there were] about seven men. When I was big enough. So I had to take, had to put kerosene in, and put [INAUDIBLE] in it in case it needed it. So no convenience whatever. [INAUDIBLE] my mother. She had to do all the washing on the washboard, with her arms, and haul the water in from outside—it wasn't so bad in the summer when the weather was good, but in wintertime, it got pretty cold then, too. It got to be pretty wintery at that time, too, wasn't any different than what it is now as far as that goes. So kerosene lights, we had that.

MB: Did you go to school?

JT: Oh, yeah, sure.

MB: Where did you go to school?

JT: I went to St. John's Catholic School. Sisters were teaching us, and then I went there two or three terms, I guess, and then I went to the public school, a public school. Then of course [INAUDIBLE] moved back to a place where we moved to: from 34, back to the house, where we moved from 35 to Hillside, we moved back in the same house. And then I went to school over there in Windber, public school, for a period of time that I went there, so.

MB: How many grades did you go for? At what age did you leave school, then?

JT: I was only 15, they wanted me to go to work, so I went to work.

MB: Your parents wanted you to go to work?

JT: Well, I was sort [of]...I guess it was partly my fault they let me go, but I was so in favor I went to, you know, so that's how it panned out.

MB: Do you know what your parents expected to find in America? And why they decided to come, why your father came, and then your mother came? What were they looking for?

JT: Well, I'll tell you. As far as...everything was...money, you had more money, you could buy anything that you desired. In other words, like clothing or anything. And food. Now there used to be, we used to have a butcher come out with a wagon. He had all the meat cut up. He done that at night while he was home. And then he come out to the place where we lived—oh, not just us but the other—used to be Polish people that lived there, and Hungarians and Slovaks, is what they did for nationalities [INAUDIBLE]. Got in scraps, and had nice scraps—misunderstandings—especially if it was the...they had weddings there at times, and then they



had christenings. And then they'd, they had these silver dollars, you know. A silver dollar went quite a ways, [INAUDIBLE] collection for the bride or for the child they were christening. They'd go around with these here plates of glass, plates of whatever they used, china plates—of course nothing expensive, it was just plates. They take these dollars and slap [slaps his hand on table for emphasis] it in, you know, until it break, [INAUDIBLE] that was a Polish style. And I forgot my, finish my meat. Then you go out, get your meat, you get it [INAUDIBLE]. And you had all kind of meat—you had eight borders, eight pounds of pork shoulder, pork chops, whatever it was. It was already sliced, they had it all ready for you to put in. And then they come out early in the morning, so that it won't get too hot. They rang a bell so you could get out with your pen. They didn't wrap it. You go there with a [INAUDIBLE]. And you bought whatever you wanted. You bought eight pounds of pork. If you had eight or ten borders, you bought five-six pounds of beef, for soup. Soup every day, and a bone with it. And then they bought that, soup meat. Then they'd throw the shank in [INAUDIBLE]. Pork was only about eight cents a pound, pork chops were about ten cents a pound, so the difference in prices, what it is today and what it was at that time. And she brought big pen of meat [INAUDIBLE] for all those men, naturally you'd have to cook each man one pound of pork in his dinner pail, besides either apple or banana or whatever kind of fruit—or a pickle, whatever they wanted. It was a pound of pork and bread, naturally. She had to bake her own bread. She'd bake as high as eight-ten big loaves, you know, and cut it. And then put this pork in their dinner pail, and an apple or a pickle, and they were ready to go to work. And then—some went to work at two o'clock in the morning, three o'clock in the morning. There was no quitting time, or starting time, for those men. They went to work from three o'clock to seven—my dad never went that early, though. He said it was foolish. You wear yourself out, and before the day [was] up, you wear yourself out while you're not out [of] the game.

MB: Why did they go and work so long?

JT: Well, see to get their places ready, you had coal ready because it pushed coal cars into the place where they were. So you had motors. These...well the motors they had hooked onto a power line, you know, where [the] kind we...each motor has the kind we...extension. Then on the end they had kind of [a] ring on there, that you [INAUDIBLE] through the wire. And then you'd get your power from there, and then it'd take care of all these places where these motormen and [INAUDIBLE] what they called, the fellas that unhooked these cars that these men were reusing at work. And they got this, another one went in to have this cold ray so they could shovel it out whenever the cart was pushed into their place of working. If anybody got hurt or anything, it didn't matter; there was no compensation or anything. No protection of any kind. We just worked. The men were skilled, it didn't mean much. Ah another hunkie will come over [and] take his place, that's how serious they took anyone getting killed or getting hurt. No compensation or anything. You stayed at home. They had a hospital, all right. And the hospital is just about finished, they built a hospital—they still had the biggest portion of it, and the stone wall. Everything's still standing. They had these Italians and stonemasons, they done all the work on the, it was all stonework. You can still see it if you run by, all those stonewalls was put up by these here, mostly Italians because they were good stonemasons. And they were paid thirty cents an hour putting that up, those stonewalls. And today you pay about 30-40 dollars a day. And oh, more than that because, hell, those stonemasons make as high as 30 dollars an hour.

MB: Was that good pay in those times? Were the Italians paid better than miners? Were the stonemasons paid more, then?

JT: No, they weren't paid any more than the coal miners if they were ambitious and done their work and put all these extra work in. Some done pretty good, they done about as well as the stonemasons did, of course. Because they got thirty-two cents a ton, is what they were paid. So that isn't very much today, the coal sells for about thirty-five-forty-five dollars a ton. That's the difference in the coal prices.

MB: How much coal would a miner usually...how much coal would a miner load in an average day?

JT: Well it depends on the man and what sort of work it was. Of course they all try to get as much out as they possibly could—well, the ones that were younger and stronger would naturally put out more coal; 8, 10, 12 tons.

MB: Oh, wow. Hard work.

JT: And every now and then, depends on the conditions on what they had in the mines, too. [INAUDIBLE] conditions, I know my dad said he's [INAUDIBLE] 16 tons one day, him and his buddy. So that's a lot of coal for two men.

MB: Were they paid for the preparatory work that they did, or is that what's called dead work?

JT: That's called dead work. You didn't get paid for any, any—

MB: You didn't get anything for that?

JT: No, that was all free work. The only thing you got paid for is the coal that you produced or put out in these coal cars, and you pulled out, and they waited outside to see how much it was, they went over a scale. And sometimes their rates were underpaid, too, in other words. In other words they were hooked on that, too.

MB: Your father hadn't been a miner in Europe, had he?

JT: No.

MB: What had he been doing to try to earn a living in Europe before he came?

JT: He drove for a post office.

MB: Oh, that's right, tell me more about that.

JT: I did mention that. For a lady postmaster, and that's where he was paid. That's how they got a [INAUDIBLE].

MB: Do you know about how old he was when he came? Was he a young man?

JT: He was pretty young then, he was about 24, 25 years old then. So he wasn't very old.

MB: Was he the only one from his family that came here?

JT: It was just him.

MB: What about your mother's side? Was she, did she have relatives who came here?

JT: Yes, she had a brother but he didn't stay, he didn't work here, he worked over in McKeesport and then [INAUDIBLE] Duquesne. He [INAUDIBLE] he didn't come to the coal mine. He never worked in the coal mines, he worked in a factory at Duquesne and McKeesport. That's where he, he came over to see us a few times, not too often. Four or five different times when he came over to give us a visit, anyhow.

MB: Was he older than your mother, or younger? Did he come here before she came?

JT: Yeah he came here before her. Yeah he was a couple years, not much older, about two years older than her. So, I did tell you about injury at...

MB: Yeah, tell me—how did people manage if somebody was killed? How did the widow, and the kids?

JT: Widow? You either get married, or go to work for somebody. Whatever they paid them, they only, the hospital only paid three dollars a week. And then if you worked for anybody around that needed help, and they maybe pay four or five dollars a week.

MB: Doing what? What kind of work, housework?

JT: Housework, well that's the only kind there was no other work for women, especially for women. The hospital [was] the only place [where] they paid three dollars a week. That's all they got. They were lucky enough to get a job there.

MB: So you really remember when the hospital was built, and in talking about that?

JT: Well, some, not very much because they were working on it whenever we came through, but then I don't remember them working on it too much at that time because they were building it and I was just a youngster. I went to school in that neighborhood, a Polish...you probably don't know what a Polish Church is, do you?

MB: Yeah, I do, but tell me about it.

JT: Anyhow that's where I went to school at. The church wasn't the original, the one that's up there now, it used to be a wooden building. Then the school house is down below that, [you]

probably seen that too. We used to go to that school there, and my sisters used to teach there. Then they built...

### **End of Tape 1 Side A**

### **Beginning of Tape 1 Side B (February 24, 1984)**

JT: Farther south, he done all the contracting why he, that's, he was a priest there for years. And then after he built his church, he was transferred to Loretta, PA. He was there for a good many years. Father Sauce is his name.

MB: At the Slovak church?

JT: No, that's the Polish church.

MB: Oh at the Polish church, ok. Father Sauce.

JT: Father Sauce.

MB: So how did the, did all the ethnic groups went to the Polish church at first, is that right?

JT: At first, yes. All nationalities, that's the only church that...well the priest could speak different nationalities, he got along with them fairly good. He could give them confession, especially communion. That's the only...he spoke in Hungarian. Well, not fluently but, enough to understand him and understand people's confessions. And then even Italians. See [the] Italian church was built after [the] Slavish church. I remember that, too, when I was living in that neighborhood.

MB: Did your parents go to St. Johns, then? The Polish Church?

JT: Oh yes, we did. Yes. And then when we moved out...well, we did, it was much handier for us to go to the Italian church because it was much closer now from Hillside to the...Polish church is about two miles. So, maybe not quite two miles, but a mile and a half at least. And the Italian church was very close, it was close by. The only thing you had to cross were roads, that's all and you were there. So whenever we went there a lot of times, most of the time, say like in the evenings during Lent. We accorded our devotion and so on, Stations of the Cross. Why, that's where we went because we didn't have to travel that far to get to church, one was as good as the other as far as that goes, they were the same thing. Father Leone was the priest there at that time, he was the original. He's the one that helped to build the Polish church, the Italian church. Father Leone. He was the priest there, and he was there for many years. Then they kept on changing priests, so. Present priest—funny thing; it's an Italian church, and it's [an] Italian congregation, and today they have a Slavish priest. That's right! The priest is Slavish, an Italian church, because they all speak English, you take that generation, the old-timers are all died off, the younger generation picked up the English grammar, so. Other words, there's very far and few that really speak their own nationalities anymore. The old ones died off, and the young ones, they all learned enough to speak to anybody now in English. So the younger generation all went

to school here, so there was no trouble of any kind, for the priests or anyone else who get them, they understand. The old-timers, there's very few left anymore. What few there is, can't speak fluently. This other children or so on in the family [INAUDIBLE].

MB: I was just going to ask you, you only spoke Hungarian when you came, did you say Slavish too? Or just Hungarian?

JT: No, I, no, no, no I only spoke in Slovak because that's how my grandpa and grandmother, that's the only way they spoke [INAUDIBLE] was the only thing I learned while I was there.

MB: So you didn't know any English when you came, right? When you came to Windber you didn't know a word?

JT: No, I didn't know any English whatever.

MB: Did your mother know any English at all?

JT: Oh, yeah, she spoke in Hungarian and Slovak. Hungarian, yeah she knew that. But whenever we came here, I had to learn fast because we had these boarders, and they were all Hungarians, so I had to learn whether I wanted to or not. So it didn't take me very long. You take a youngster at that age, they can learn fast and they can forget fast, too. And you take it that age where I picked it up fast, couple years [and] I could speak almost as well as those men could. But the Slovak grammar started slipping away from me. Had to relearn that because you pick one up and lose the other one. That's the funniest part of it. Well that's the reaction, that's how that acts.

MB: Well, did your parents have a hard time, then, because they didn't speak any English? Did you have to help them, then, with English at times, and so on?

JT: Well, my dad, he spoke enough that he could make himself understood because all these mining bosses that he worked under, they could speak enough or speak to him in a way that they didn't understand just what they wanted him to, how they wanted it done, the work, whatever was to be done. So they spoke in a way that they got them to understand what they meant, wanted to accomplish to them.

MB: Did your parents read and write in their languages?

JT: My mother did, yeah; my dad, he could read but his writing wasn't...see I could write in Hungarian, too.

MB: Could you?

JT: Yeah I can still write as far as that—

MB: Could your dad write anything?

JT: No, he couldn't. I [INAUDIBLE] the letters for him that he had wanted sent to Europe because he wrote to this lady that he worked for, and a couple people there that he wanted me to write to. So I used to do all the writing, I was their secretary, my dad's secretary [laughs].

MB: Had he been to school at all, himself?

JT: No, he'd never had the chance. Because...see, he had a stepmother. And then his dad didn't make him learn anything or, they didn't insist on you going to school whether, if you didn't want to why, you were just left behind. So that's how it was.

MB: But did your mother go to school at all?

JT: Yeah she went to school, it was compulsory for her to go to school.

MB: In Europe, she went? When she was little?

JT: And she had to learn in Hungarian, too. That's how she had to learn whatever time she went to that school.

MB: You didn't know how many years she went to school or anything?

JT: No, I couldn't tell you that.

MB: Okay. So what are the first memories that you had of Windber, then? Is there anything that stands out like in those first years you came, and was it hard to adjust after coming from Europe like that?

JT: Well, you take a youngster, they can get adjusted fast. And I was kind of an ambitious guy. I used to, they bought me one of those little wagons, four wheels, you know, and used to haul coal from the brickyard. There used to be coal left over after they took the clay off and the coal used to act so much [INAUDIBLE] coal left there that they had to get rid of, because they didn't want to mix it in with the clay they were shoveling. [INAUDIBLE] right above our place where we lived, so. And then used to haul this coal down, used to haul a lot of coal. We had enough for even the winter years. And we didn't have no radiation heat or anything like that. Nothing but...one of those big heaters, you know, what they call...the big heaters that used in regular ordinary stoves. No fancy stoves or anything, no electric stoves or anything like that. Just ordinary coal stove. There're still some people that every now and then you hear on the TV that they like to buy one of them. People still want them. We sold ours, though. We could've got good money for that, but I...And then we bought a stove for \$165. That's the metal stove, you know. Kitchen stove. Done all the cooking, and baking and that. So you did everything in there, hot water, regular place for hot water. [INAUDIBLE] you put it on top of the stove, in pots, and heat your water. Then you would come home from work. And as far as quitting time, in the winter time, they didn't see any daylight. They went to work early, and you come home at 5:30 it was dark. Actually they only saw daylight on Sunday. That's the only time they seen daylight. Then we had the butcher, I did tell how he used to...

MB: Oh, I wanted to ask you about that: what about Berwind-White, what about Eureka, what did they think of this butcher coming through?

JT: Well, they didn't think much of it, I tell you. They didn't approve of it very much.

MB: What did they do about it?

JT: See that was in the early, before they put a store out there.

MB: Oh, this was before the store?

JT: Before the [store], they put the store up over there. And they weren't fond of this [INAUDIBLE] growing up and doing this here, and saying [INAUDIBLE] and groceries, you know, we had some individuals, you know, bought our groceries, whatever she ordered. And then we paid them, every month. And whatever, they keep all...my mother and dad would keep tab of all this, what they bought from the butcher and these grocery girls. And then on, end of the month, they'd figure out how much it amounted to. Their boarding...they'd pay six and seven dollars a month, that's what their board bill was for a month.

MB: Wow.

JT: That's all it paid. And two dollars for washing, on there, and cooking; two dollars a month. That's how much she got out of it.

AT: She was telling me about her brother.

JT: Miner died or got killed. Well it's another [INAUDIBLE] he died so another one came and took his place—that's how much, there was no compensation or anything, no protection whatever if anybody got hurt. Now same with her dad right there, there wasn't anything when he got killed in the mines. Her mother ran into the same thing. They give nothing, for burial or anything. In other words you have to look out for yourself, do the best you can.

MB: How did they bury people, then, and that?

JT: Well, they had to, somebody had a few dollars, and they'd lend it to them. [INAUDIBLE] only about fifty dollars, that's all they spent on funerals. That's all they could afford! And then, [INAUDIBLE] got along a little more, they made a little more money. You take the biggest pay.

AT: [INAUDIBLE] on that paper.

MB: That's nice.

JT: So, I thought while he was away, so I sort of—

MB: Make some notes, that's good.

JT: Now, you take something these miners, their payday. The average was between 20 dollars and 25 dollars a week for two weeks. That was it. And some, that was more ambitious or conditions were better, they made more. If they made forty dollars, that was considered a big pay, your exception big pay. Then you run into a coal strike in 1906.

MB: Oh! Can you tell me about that? That would be marvelous if you could tell me. Do you remember anything about that?

JT: In 1906 the...you don't know anything about it?

MB: Just a very little. Tell me what you remember about it because I wasn't here.

JT: We used to have...now if any of these men went to work a couple days you know and start strike started, and we had guards so nobody would hurt them because they went to work.

MB: Oh.

JT: And they couldn't see that because you took an awful chance to rouse anybody there or not. Then they call you "scat" and everything, in other words you was downgraded if you didn't follow the rest, follow suit.

MB: Do you remember what the issues were? Why was there a strike?

JT: They wanted more money. And they wanted a union here. And some of the men went to Wintondale, there was a union there. And they worked there. The only way we stayed here in the meantime, two of these men went to Wintondale, and they came back and didn't like the conditions over there, even if it was a union. So they came back, and they stayed where we lived because they chased everybody out that had nobody working. You got to move out of there.

MB: Out of your house?

JT: Out of your house, yeah.

MB: So what did you do?

AT: Your grandma had to move out, too, that's right. Where did they move those people?

MB: That's the next strike, but in 1906, you were a little boy then, right?

JT: Oh, yes, it was 1906.

MB: Did you get thrown out of your house, then?

JT: No we didn't. These men came and he went to work over here, so that saved our hides. And he worked there, so they let us stay there. And then eventually some of the others came back one by one, and the strike was kind of wearing off. Union demand was kind of slipping away. The



Union [INAUDIBLE] that's what they were really after, strongly, but they never could make it. So everybody went back little by—

AT: They never did have a union then in the mines, just lately.

MB: Well I was reading somewhere that there was a big parade or something of miners in 1906, do you remember that at all?

JT: They had a fight, too, not just big parade—

MB: Oh, can you tell me about that?

JT: Heck yeah, hell they killed a couple guys and everything else.

MB: Oh, tell me about that.

JT: McMullen, he...one lady bit his fingers off, two of his fingers. And they marched, sure, they demanded...finally, it sort of wore off eventually. And little by little they went back to work at the...

MB: How were these men killed? How were these people killed?

JT: They were shooting away at each other.

MB: Who shot? Do you know?

JT: I couldn't really tell you, but anyhow there was a shooting mix-up anyhow. So there were some shot, and some wounded, fights and so on. So there was quite a commotion over this unionization set-up.

MB: Did people cooperate? Like the different nationalities, or did they sort of fight amongst themselves about the union then?

JT: Well no, they...that's very [INAUDIBLE] because one nationality or one class, we grew up here, a certain issue more so than the other. So that's where the differences come in, that's what created all the disappointments, or arguments and fights. That's where it all come in. So...oh, yes they...

MB: Do you remember this first strike in 1906, do you remember anyone getting thrown out of their houses? You, your family wasn't thrown out, but were there any others that were?

JT: Yes, before they were thrown out they just moved away, instead of being thrown out. They wouldn't really force them out, that's strong if they'd throw them out, or throw the furniture out or anything. They were ordered to have to leave, get out of here. That's all [INAUDIBLE]. In other words, it was the same all over. All these places, like 35, 40, 37, all those places, they had to be [INAUDIBLE].

MB: Who was this McMullen you were talking about?

JT: He was the chief of police in Windber.

MB: What did you think of him? What was he like?

JT: Well, he stuck with the company. And naturally they didn't like when he [INAUDIBLE] a couple times. Even one woman grabbed him, bit a couple of his fingers off. Finally things straightened out, and he still remained to be the chief of police. [INAUBIDLBE] he was the only one. And he kept good order, too. Other words, there was no kind of fights or mischief. I know, when we lived up old 34—Eureka 34, some of these Polocks, you know. They used to scrap, and haul them in, and made them pay fifty dollars—in that day, fifty dollars was about as much as \$500 now, because they made very little money.

AT: If you didn't have the money, you had to clean the streets.

JT: Oh, yeah, they put you to work. So you couldn't get away with just sitting in jail doing nothing.

MB: Were there Coal and Iron Police then, around, or?

AT: Oh yeah, [INAUDIBLE]

JT: At that time, yes. And then [INAUDIBLE] police, yes. And then in 1922 it was likewise, there was Coal and Iron Police, too.

MB: I want you to tell me about that, what you remember about that strike, too.

JT: I remember more so about that than I do the other.

MB: Well, sure you were older, and so on.

JT: And naturally they seemed to progress more so. And they sort of organized a little better then; they got together and sort of...other words, organization was just a little bit better.

MB: How was it better, how would you, how were they different?

JT: The people that started with it...economize, and sort of felt the same way about conditions, how badly they were treated during the...when the Eureka had everything, and how to make them work, and like I was saying, they had no daylight. They had to work, never seen no daylight on Sundays. Sunday [was] the only day they seen daylight. That's the only day there was daylight for them, because they went to work, it was dark, you came home in dark. Summer, of course, some of them...well, probably all of them see daylight in the summer months. Winter months, you know winter months gets darker around five o'clock, sometimes at 4:30 you have to put lights on—oh, you know how the lights react, so.

MB: Sure.

AT: My stepfather went to work at four o'clock in the morning.

JT: Oh, yeah, some of them went earlier than that. Some went three o'clock in the morning. Get their coal ready so they can load these carts to push into them, these motors did. That's how they...it depends on the conditions of your place. The average pays were between 20 and 25 dollars for two weeks.

MB: When would that be about, that it was like that?

JT: Back in 1906 in them months, and then kept on gradually, they got more money, and they paid them more back in 1922, their pays are increasing certainly. And kept on being increased, so they were paid more so than...well, other words, see motormen only got two dollars and a quarter a day, it wasn't an hour, a day. And then the spraggers, dollar and a quarter a day, and it kept on increasing as time went on. Then the union sort of worked itself in. And then the, elected their union officials and kept on coming up so, finally their [INAUDIBLE] was coming up with it, so they made more money. But I forgot to tell you why the price was so low. My dad brought home a 55 dollar pay, you know, that was spread all over the town! So and so made 55 dollars, the others were made, if they made twenty-five dollars, [it was] considered good pay. 30 dollars was an exceptional rate. But he got 50, conditions permitting, because all your [INAUDIBLE] had pushed for all, you know, this push—but you wouldn't know much about the mines. Anyhow, this was push stumps, and they wouldn't have to do much digging to get this out—other words, it was sort [of], so much coal, you know, and it [was] crushed down and, say, such a certain place, what they called stumps, that held the roof up. And this stumps, you know, whenever they got through this digging it wasn't very hard because its coal was pressed by all this, on top of it. So the coal was easy to dig out, so that's when...when they had these conditions to make this pay. That's what the pay [INAUDIBLE] from there on, from 1922, was altogether a different story.

MB: Okay. I want to hear about 1922, then. And how that was different.

JT: Pay was increased. And everybody was making bigger money, and more money, and they were getting so much an hour, so much a ton.

MB: What were you doing in 1922? Were you working when the strike took place, what were you doing then?

JT: I worked in the store—Eureka.

MB: Oh, so you were in the store. But you remember the strike real well, huh?

JT: Well, I do remember it and I only worked in a mine six months. That's all the longer I worked in the mines. That's all the longer I worked in the mines. And I worked up in [Eureka] 37, too. But I never loaded coal. See, I worked in the store, I was getting 75 dollars a month,

wages were going up, and the miners were getting big leaps, a raise, about every month. So naturally I was getting 75 dollars a month and I thought that wasn't enough money. So I was supposed to get my vacation in November, but instead of getting my vacation I quit. I was looking for a job around the mine, and nobody would take me because I had no mining experience. So I went up to 37 here, and I asked the mine firm if I could job. They said, you know anything about mining? I said I didn't know anything; I never worked in a mine. My dad wouldn't take me, he said I had no business to quit my job I had in the store, and I should hang on to it.

MB: He didn't want you to be a miner, then?

JT: No, he didn't want me working in mines because he says [INAUDIBLE]. So, I went up to 37 and I got this job. [It was] what they called a company job. Other words, you're on day, you didn't, no coal to put out, odds and ends jobs. I had to put up walls for air courses, and repair air course gates, you know. And I had a buddy alright, and worked with a couple different men. But none of them could speak very fluently English, so it was pretty hard for the bosses to figure out how to give them the orders, because they couldn't understand them properly. Well now, when I was there, I worked with this fella—he was the same way, he couldn't speak the nationality well enough. So it made it pretty nice for the assistant boss, or my foreman.

MB: So how old were you when you went for your first job, when you went to work in the—was the company store the first job you had?

JT: That's the first job I had, I was 15 years old.

MB: You were 15. And then when did you go into the mines for the six months?

JT: Oh, six months. I was a little older, about 17 or 18. 17 years old.

MB: Then did you go back to the store after that?

JT: Well, no, I worked at the mines, and then I told them [INAUDIBLE] because they called me back in the store, they gave me a big raise. Almost doubled my rate that I was getting, from \$75 to \$140, \$150.

AT: \$125 because I—

JT: No, this wasn't the depression—in the meantime, yes, that was during the depression.

AT: Oh, well, maybe you got extra that I don't know.

JT: Anyhow, I worked up here and I told the mine foreman who saw—not the assistant mine foreman but the mine foreman himself—he sort of, took a liking to me when he come around, you know, he'd visit us because assistant boss and so did the mine foreman, he'd come around and says, sit down, he says, have a little chat, that's what he told me. I said if it's alright with you, it's alright with me. He says well, it's alright, he says. You come over here and do a little

chatting with us. So he did, my foreman [and] assistant boss—other words most cases, bosses would insist on [INAUDIBLE] work, if they caught you doing nothing, well, they didn't like it very well but this, these bosses I had, they [INAUDIBLE] the other way around [laughs].

MB: They like to talk too.

JT: Oh, yeah. So whenever I told them I was leaving, I said you can call me back, and they wanted me to go back to the store and I told him, he says you're foolish for coming back. He says, school learning, he says you can improve yourself and do a great deal better than...make more money than you would in the stores.

MB: Who told you that?

JT: Mine foreman.

MB: The mine foreman.

JT: He says you were foolish for leaving.

MB: Who was that? Do you remember his name or, who he was?

JT: Yes, I remember but his name doesn't come to me because it was a good many years back.

MB: Sure.

AT: Wasn't Teasedale.

JT: No, wasn't Teasedale. It was another one.

AT: Baylor?

JT: No, it wasn't Baylor. It'll come to me eventually.

MB: Were some of the bosses, could a Hungarian become one of the bosses?

JT: Oh, yes.

MB: Okay how did that work? Who were the bosses and who...

JT: As time went on, if they thought you were bright enough and knew enough, you picked up enough about the mine end of it, sure they'd encourage you to take up schooling or book learning, and they wanted you to be a boss.

MB: Oh, I see.

JT: Now this gentleman, he insisted on... what was his name? Oh, it'll come to me eventually. Before we leave. And he told me, he says you're making a mistake. You could make considerably more money if you stay on the job you're on. With a little book learning, he said, you could be an assistant mine foreman from here on. You could get hired as a mine foreman. He says your chances are good to advance yourself. He says you make considerably more money than you will in a store anytime. And probably he was right on that point. And I said to him, well I'll tell you, since I promised them I hate to look foolish. He says I'll have to take what I promised him. And I said but, I could get my dad to take over the job I was doing, and I told my dad about it. He sort of, he thought it was a good idea. So he says if he's as good of a worker as you are, he says, we'd be glad to have him. That's the words he used. So I sent him up and I told him who I'd speak to, and he went up and it didn't appeal to him because his grammar wasn't as good as it should be. And he had one of these assistant bosses who couldn't really translate too well to him to get him to understand properly, just what was to be done because this was one of these running around jobs from one place to the other. It wasn't a steady job. One day you had to put up a brick wall, the next day you had to repair a gate, and the third day you had to do something else, always something different—either move a hoist and pull the cars up out of the seep spots, you had to move it up higher—so all these odds and ends jobs, that's the reason I didn't do any coal loading, I didn't have to because these odd jobs kept me busy. But this buddy of mine, what I call buddy, and so it kept me busy. That's the reason I never done any coal loading.

MB: Did your father load coal then?

JT: That's all he ever done.

MB: How long did he work, then, in the mines?

JT: Well, all of his working days.

MB: From about, when to when would that be?

JT: Since he came to this country, back in 1901 till he died, he worked in the mines for about 45, 50 years, till he was able to, and then when he wasn't able to, he had to give it up whether he wanted to or not. After so many years in the mines you can only take so much of it.

MB: When did he die, Mr. Thomas?

JT: 1973.

MB: '73? Wow.

**End of Tape 1 Side B**  
**Beginning of Tape 2 Side A (February 24, 1984)**

AT: ...a long time ago, that's him.

MB: He went to the Hungarian church?

AT: Oh, he came when the Santa Claus used to go over there too, you know, and he was on a picture. And this is Mr. [Vanchel?], now he knew lots about Europe, he went back five times. And he met woman down there, and then this is Julius [Colvatch?], that Mrs. [Choredache's?] brother, this one. And then this is his brother too—both died, though. And this is a [Brotsky?], he just died. See most of them—he got killed, he died, he died. Well, there's...every once and a while I get a letter from her on her anniversary and different times she tells me about this stuff.

MB: I'm going to get this going here. Now your full name was Anna Marie Timko, right?

AT: Right.

MB: And you're born October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1902, in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, right?

AT: Right.

MB: Okay. Now tell me again something about your dad and your mom and coming here.

AT: Well, when daddy served in Europe, for three years he had to be a soldier, he was 21 years old then when he came out. And he went...my mother was here first because her aunt sent her the money that had that big apartment, and sent her the money and she come out to this country then, and then my daddy come right after—he was through his service. And when daddy come out he was working in Perth Amboy in the candy factory, making candy. And then when they made the candy over there, there's another man that come from Europe from a different town, and he said to him, he said Mike, he said—my daddy's was Mike, typical—and he says Mike, he says, how 'bout us going, he says, to the mines, he says, their making good money at the mines. So here then my mother, she'd came from there in June, the following—

MB: What year was that?

AT: 1903. In June, as she'd come from Europe—or from Perth Amboy—my daddy came here first, and then my mother came here in June with this man. And then my brother and I was the only ones living at the time, we were the babies. And then whenever he come, that man did, he made my daddy come with him, and they came here to [Eureka] 37, to some people's name was down there, and so they wanted—these people got a house for my mother. And empty house, had six rooms in it. We lived down below—we were the third person then living in [Eureka] 37 then.

MB: Oh, so 37 was new, [INAUDIBLE] company houses?

AT: See, 30 houses were built first, up on top of the hill—I don't know if you can see it from here—after a while you look, you want to look at it?

MB: Yeah, sure.

AT: Last row towards the end. See those big houses up there? They're all the same kind. See right there by that big tree there, see those houses down there by the top there? See? And there's... they tore a bunch of them up there on the corner way up on the hill here, but they tore them down because there's a couple [INAUDIBLE] but the, this other houses are the...the thirty houses, those were the first houses was built, and then the, down here, they of course—these are all [INAUDIBLE] houses and then the old folks built theirs up on the top now, the old folks' home. But that's the houses they—you can see the chimneys and tops of 'em there good, but those [INAUDIBLE] trees are growing in [and] I don't know why they won't cut them.

MB: Those are the only houses there, then?

AT: That was the first houses built in 1901. And then my mother's, where they were built over there, they were—my mother moved in over there it was in 1903. And my mother lived from June till November over there. My daddy then asked my mother to come from New Jersey, to come and stay here because he got a house for her. So here then he said he liked the mines. Alright then from June till November my daddy worked in the mines. And then my mother lived here with my daddy and us two children. And in the mines then, they didn't have what they call a space where the two motor—one coming in, one coming out—so my daddy was caught in that in November the 3<sup>rd</sup> when he got killed, in November the 3<sup>rd</sup>, so here then somebody asked, come, one of the neighbors come over and he says can you tell me, he says, what kind of a belt the boss came with this lady. He says can you tell me what kind of a—told my mother—he said what kind of a belt did your husband have on? And my mother said well it was a new one because he just bought himself new suit you know to work in the mines, so you have to have overalls and everything. So finally then, here, my mother said oh my God, she said, it can be my husband. So then she went up and they had a—right by the mines they had these here homes that they petitioned...was taken out of it. That was a six room house, too. And then they used to bring the body from the mines, down up to this house, in order to view them with the doctor and everything. But my daddy was already—he had one arm and one leg taken off because he was in between the two cars. Early in the morning at eight o'clock, and here then after that, my mother was crying because she didn't have no money, she didn't have nothing, you know, and here then my daddy didn't get paid yet. Every two weeks they got paid. And then my daddy didn't get paid yet or nothing, so there was a lady over there, Mrs. Elias was her name, and she happen to be that Mrs.—her daughter is married to one of the [INAUDIBLE] that was in the paper the other day? Well that's, you didn't know them either—so here then my mother asked her, he said to the neighbor, he says, what shall I do, I don't know where to go here, because my mother was strange here, you know. And couldn't talk in English, so here they got...the neighbors helped my mother then, so they gave my mother sixty-five dollars then to get my daddy ready to bury him. So my daddy was the third person up at the St. Mary's church, up here at the Greek Church. Right along the fence there's two other men there, then my daddy was the third person buried at that cemetery when the company gave us that cemetery up on the hill. Well, my mother had no transportation to go up there. My daddy never had a tombstone. So here then when my mother come back from Detroit—after she was living out there already—she said Anna, let's go to [Meak?], she says, because Meak buried my daddy. And she says, let's go to Meak and let's see what we can do about this because...she said I don't even know where your daddy is buried. Because my mother couldn't read [or] write, she had no way of going up to the cemetery. And it's just right over the hill here, but my mother was living out the other end on 37, they tore those



houses down already. And here then my mother couldn't leave two of the little children together, and then of course, she became pregnant after that, she was almost three months pregnant with my other sister.

MB: Oh when he died?

AT: See, when my daddy died already. So then my mother didn't have nobody there, just the neighbors, you know, to help her. So—

MB: She spoke Hungarian, or Slovak?

AT: Slovak. My mother...she could talk both, because her...how shall I say...she come from where they had to learn to talk Hungarian and Slovak both in that school, in that book.

MB: What was the name of the place again that she was from?

AT: Cholis?

MB: Can you spell that for me?

AT: C-H-O-L-I-S, I think it is, Cholis. My daddy was from the same place. My mother worked for the organist, because her mother died [when] she was seven years old, see, and she was an orphan.

MB: What did she do as an orphan, then?

AT: So she had to watch children, and the father was a teacher of those children and mother was a teacher. So here then my mother couldn't go to school over there because she had to watch these children. So she watched about four children for these young people, you know.

MB: When she was very young herself?

AT: Well, she was young herself, but what could you do, you know?

MB: She was only seven when she started watching [the children]?

AT: My mother was only seven years old, and she couldn't go to school because she had no mother and her father was a carpenter and her father fell off of the roof of the house and he got pneumonia and died. And my grandma, whenever she [my mother] was seven years old, my grandma gave birth to a little girl, and here my grandpa fell off of the roof of the house, developed pneumonia and he died. Well then this girl, my grandma had pneumonia and had this childbirth, and here the child died and my grandma died, they both died.

MB: So then tell me about how your mother worked?

AT: So then my mother...she only worked with the children over there. And they gave her eating, you know how it is, they throw a piece of rag on you and you're dressed up. So poor, she didn't have anything. And then she had one sister, she died on a mommy's gray broken heart. So then my mother didn't have anyone, she didn't have anybody there. She didn't have no brother, she only had these two sisters and then the one girl, she got married after my mother come to this country, why then she was working in Budapest, a well-dressed, pretty, you know, and she was keeping house for rich people over there in Budapest, you know.

MB: Who is this that you're talking about now?

AT: That's my aunt, my mother's only sister. She was younger than my mother.

MB: I see.

AT: And then when she got married—she married a shoemaker over there in Europe—and this shoemaker was so mean and jealous of her that he hit her in the middle of her back and knocked her lungs down. She bled to death. She was 33 years old when she died. So then my mom got a picture from her, but she never saw her.

MB: Again, after she came?

AT: Yeah, after she came here she never saw her after that. Her name was Bertha.

MB: Your mother's name was Bertha?

AT: No, my mother's [name was] Anna.

MB: Oh, your mother's Anna. You were named after your mother, then?

AT: Yeah. And my brother was named after my daddy Mike, Mike Timko.

MB: Was that common?

AT: Yeah, it's always used to be like that.

MB: I see.

AT: Mike Timko and Anna Timko. So here then after that, when about two years later after my sister was born in [Eureka] 37, when my mother was pregnant with, and then her daddy was dead already long after that. And then about a year later, not quite, my sister was a year old when my mother remarried, second time, to John Paul. So she remarried, and he was a boarder over there in the neighborhood. Then he went to Europe and he asked his mother and father to let him...that he wants to get married. Well then his father and mother in Europe said well if you get married you're not getting any property. So then he said if you're marrying, why don't you marry a single person, not a woman with children. So here then, he came back again and then he married my mother, he married here in the Greek Church over here—St. Mary's. And then after that...

MB: It must have been hard for your mother to get along.

AT: It was. Because when the man that took the insurance paid for my mother had a thousand dollar on my daddy called "The Woodman's Circle." And my mother couldn't read, nobody else knew the company, nobody knew or heard about that kind of insurance; just these Hungarians heard the Hungarian insurance stuff like that. So here then my mother had no choice. So the man promised to bring the money back, you know, if he gets it from the policy. Never showed up, he never came back to 37.

MB: So she was never able to collect on her benefits?

AT: No, never. And then they couldn't get nothing, the company never gave them nothing, it's under your own, everything was under your own. And there I was, three little children, so my mother had no choice and she had to get married then. So she kept boarders. My mother worked day and night. In the night she'd wash clothes when the boarders all go to sleep, and then my mother [would] wash clothes in the shanty for us. In the morning she'd have them hanging out after the men went to work. And my mother worked like a horse, she had thirty-forty boarders and they all wanted to live over there because my mother was a good cook, she was a wonderful cook so what they did out there at 37, they made my mother what they call...it would be a furnace out of bricks, round furnace out of bricks, and...oh, it was longer than a stable because there were 22 bricks that could go in it. And they built this outside, and my mother had to have coal underneath of it, and then all the bread that my mother used to make, you know, she'd have to take and push that in there with the [INAUDIBLE] would make her one of those big long iron holders with the wooden handle on the top, and then push that bread all back, you know. And then when it was ready to come out, then it would hook on the pan and fold them out, you know. And then she'd have them all, she'd have a big bench on the outside there in the yard, and on this bench then she'd have to leave all this bread till it cools off. When the men would come home from work they just break it off and eat it like that. So here then after that, why...but my stepfather was jealous of my mother. He beat her up and everything, and us kids would have to run under the porch and someplace else to get out of his way. He used to be real mean to us. And he was...just mostly for my brother Mike and myself, but now the others it was different. Yes, we had our time then. I started school then, I had to be seven years old in order to start the school. So they wouldn't take us any quicker. So here then when I was seven years old, why, we had a nice French neighbor across the road, living across the street from us and then he said, alright Annie, he says, Rose's going to school tomorrow, he says, taking you to school tomorrow. And so here then, she came and she picked me up and took me to school; I was so proud, and poor mother she had these from Europe, they have these big, heavy skirts [INAUDIBLE] and everything—[INAUDIBLE] old fashioned, you know old fashioned—they're wearing them a lot of places yet—and had that, and then she'd make me a jumper out of that for that, and I used to be so proud I went to school, you know, that I was all dressed up, but I didn't have...same shoes for every day, I had for Sunday, and if it was tore, it was tore, so what [do] you want to do? And then—

MB: Where did you go to school?

AT: At 37 here.

MB: There was a schoolhouse in 37 itself? Where?

AT: Yeah, and it burned down for us. It's just right down at the bottom of the hill over there at the curve. And that's where the schoolhouse was. And it's...there's another one up here, along the road, but the other school was down below further. But the houses are still there except those houses that was down at the bottom where we lived—six room houses—there was one two three, four rows of houses there, never...they tore them down just not too long after the war broke out. And I believe it was in 1932 or something, '33 they tore 'em down, the company went out of business and they tore everything down over there. But the rest are all sold. Those houses, they got those houses for two, three hundred dollars, mind. But they fixed them up, it cost them money and you had to look, those houses are [INAUDIBLE] fixed up nice. Then they put two more rows of houses, one on the upper end on this highway street, there's one on the upper end and then down, and then there's a first houses was close to the store, but the old houses are still sitting there, there's two rows of them, way on across the top there. That's still there. And then we had a...big hotel was over there, the strangers come from other countries or from different places. This hotel would accommodate them, you know, they'd pay for the room over there, and then the men had a barroom downstairs and grocery on the other side. And then the porch was made around, circle, and they had these old fashioned rockers out there on the porches. Oh, I used to help clean that a lot of times. And then the man was never married, Pete Bogel, and neither was the lady that worked for him. She was just a little skinny thing, there was nothing to her but she was a good worker. And she took care of the hotel over there and when people would come in and come out, you know, and some would leave and get one of these homes for—its only, we paid eight dollars for a six room house—so those were the days, the other part paid twelve and fifteen.

MB: But you bought food at this hotel? You could buy food at the hotel?

AT: Oh, yeah, we could buy food. We could buy anything there, yeah. If we run short of bread or anything or milk, that's the only place we went. It was all downstairs; the store was downstairs on the ground. And it was fenced off. And then if you wanted to go up into the hotel you had to go outside and go around. It had a porch in the back and...it was as high as the ceiling here. And then the upstairs was up there and the barroom was downstairs but in the back. It was pretty nice. And then the men would have cows, he'd have people coming in there, and then he'd feed the cows and eat the grass for them and everything over there so they didn't have to cut it all. And [they] had horses there like we had at the store over there, they had horses there to pull the wagon and deliver orders, the company did.

MB: Well, now, you had the company store, then?

AT: Yes, that's what they have that song about: I owe my soul to the company store, so that's the way that was, honey.

MB: But did they get mad when you tried to buy things at the hotel, though?

AT: Oh, yeah, if you run short of anything, oh yes.

MB: The company didn't care if you did that?

AT: No, the company didn't care because the store was closed there in the evening up there already. And if you'd run short, if you'd get company, then you'd just go into the hotel there and it's halfway, you know. This side was the barroom and the other side was the store, see? But two different doors were on it, one door was from the one side, and the other one from the other side. And there was a petition in between them, you know, so we never could bother with them, borrow, you know. It was pretty nice, the way it was fixed. And then the big round porch on the top there, a lot of time the girls would go up, you know, and they'd sit down there and wait for something if they had to buy anything, you know, they'd go up there and sit down. This Daisy—Cramer was her name, Daisy Cramer—and she never was married but she had a boy out of wedlock to them, to people. That people was... what they called where they buried him. It's still up there by the cemetery along the road. And it says on there, there used to be a schoolhouse there, where a lot of time we used to go visit in that schoolhouse. And then whenever we'd go out there, why we'd walk from 37 to [Geistown?] here. And then we'd call a church grove—there's a cemetery there, too—it's up on the other hill, going towards Johnstown. Oh, there are a lot of places to go up there.

MB: Maybe we could go for a drive and you could show me some of these places, tell me [about them] because you know them.

AT: There are a lot of places to go up there. And then that way it's marked on [INAUDIBLE]. That's all that's marked on there—he's the only one that's laying in there himself. It's a nice little building, square, but it's along the road, you can't miss it. And then the cemetery's on the other side of it on the ride over.

MB: I see.

AT: They had a flower store there and you buy a flower there and just went to the cemetery, oh there are a lot of people I know there. 35 and 36 people that died, two of those reforms they didn't have no... they didn't want to go in the woods out here to the cemetery so they was buried up there, lots of reforms up there, lot's of them. And then all the others too, those that don't have regular, but they like that cemetery, it is well taken care of and everything. Only have to go over the hill there along the highway.

MB: So what kinds of people were living in 37 in those days, in those early days?

AT: We had a lot of German people there. And then we had a lot of Polish people. Not too many Hungarians, and the ones [that were] Hungarians was only there was Mrs. King, and [INAUDIBLE] she was a midwife, too and Mrs. King was a midwife. And Mrs. [INAUDIBLE]. We didn't have many Hungarians there. And then Mrs. [INAUDIBLE] and couple ladies down at the bottom there that...

MB: Did the Germans sort of live together in one area?

AT: Oh, yeah we had German people, we had English people, and we had all kinds of people living in our double house. Because my mother, when my daddy died he died from the bottom up of the third house in 62 or 63, or along that way. And then when my mother, she couldn't walk, her legs bothered her—well, we had a child every fifteen months, you might as well say—so then that way my mother, she turned around then and asked the carpenter if he can move in the other house because there was no steps on there. He says sure, he says as soon as they're empty, you move in. So they did, all you had to do was change the numbers, that's all. But you could move in [to] any of the—if they were empty. Yeah. And down in the bottom then a company built a big house down at the bottom between the two houses and it was like this tablet here, and the two houses were here, and then we had the road in here, and the sidewalks—we had boardwalks then. And then on the other side of it, and then there was a big farm down at the bottom of the hill, and then a company built that, so the people bought it after the company gave it up. So then [Jerfies?] lived in there. And then I had to—if I wanted anything done, the girl—she used to milk the cows and then she delivered the milk for us in cans, you know. And she'd deliver our milk and everything at the houses. And then...she turned around then and she said Anna, she said, my mother said if you want your dress made, she says she made—because I used to watch a lot of little kids for them. Oh my, I used to, every place—

MB: How old were you?

AT: Oh, I couldn't even reach the table, to tell you the truth.

MB: You were watching children, yeah.

AT: And I had to watch the children from six years up, not even six.

MB: Well how many brothers and sisters did you have in the end then when your mother remarried? How many did she have?

AT: I didn't have only that one brother then, and when my mother got married and then us two sisters, my sister Rose and myself.

MB: And she didn't have any more with the second husband, then?

AT: Oh, she had all the rest of them from him.

MB: How many?

AT: Ten!

MB: Ten, plus three?!

AT: Yes, and then besides that, then he had other good-looking women with him. Oh, yeah. Oh, my mother had a hard time with him. Oh, and then Mr. [INAUDIBLE] was one of his buddies too, Mr. [INAUDIBLE] and Mr. [INAUDIBLE], all these guys got together and if they went out

together they always had somebody else for themselves. And then my mother she stayed home and watched us kids. Oh yeah. But then he worked in the mines, and then they gave him a contract to work, and then he had about twenty-five or thirty men under his hand and they had the mines way down on the bottom, they call it “Uppers Drift” and “Lowers Drift,” so then we had a couple shacks up there, two—one big long row, and there’s twelve people living on each side; one on this side, and one up above: twelve. Yeah, the company had an awful nice nest.

MB: So tell me about your school that you went to, how long did you go to school?

AT: Till I was...I was seven years old, and then I had to quit before I was fourteen.

MB: How many grades would that be about?

AT: Not even a fourth grade, part of a fourth [grade].

MB: Was it a one-room schoolhouse?

AT: One-room schoolhouse, but three hundred of us kids was in it. And that school wasn’t any bigger than—put these two rooms together. We had our seats so close together, and each one then—two of us sitting at one little desk. So here then we had one teacher in there, and one teacher on the other side, so there [was] two teachers for the third and fourth grade. And then we used to have...the boys used to be awful bad. But we got a lot of lickings if we were not doing the right thing, you know.

MB: Teachers?

AT: Oh, yeah. The teachers gave us lickings—one time, he said to me, one of the boys...I had my hair braided, you know, and had my mom put a ribbon on the end of it for me, and...

## **End of Tape 2 Side A**

## **Beginning of Tape 2 Side B (February 24, 1984)**

MB: ...tell me when you start to get tired and we’ll stop, okay? And then we’ll do more another time.

AT: Okay. And then after that, why, the teacher...we had first aid at the mines. All the kids had to go to the first aid at the mines.

MB: Oh, I didn’t know that at all.

AT: And the school, we had a picture taken every year. Oh, if I’d have known Mrs. Ward has...her brother died and they could afford to buy pictures, because they were selling for 50 cents each. But I never had the money to buy them. How many times I used to ask my stepfather for it, so I only got one picture—I’ll have to bring that down [and] show it to you—with the kids that were in school at the time. And we had one picture that was taken, just reminds me of that little girl whenever it’s on the television with that little...Perry, House of Perry, where she has

those long dresses and that's just how I was looking. Same thing, I looked the same way. Every time I look at her I think to myself, my dear girl, I was the same way—shoes, high shoes and everything, oh dear Lord.

MB: Oh, boy. I'd like to see a picture of that.

AT: I have it up in the attic there, I'll bring it down and I'll show it to you when you get around.

MB: Was it hard when you left school?

AT: It was, because they put us in plays, and we learned how to let on that we were cooking, you know how the plays are. And then we were keeping house and everything—it was really worthwhile because I had...and then we had one good teacher that I liked over there. First teacher, my teacher was Amy [Mangus?]. Then Earl [Micheler?] was my second, Mr. [Keeper?] was my third, and Mr. Weaver was my fourth teacher. And then I got another teacher just before I had to quit; my mother got real sick then. And here then, Mr. Rose was his teacher but he'd always go around with the ruler in his hand and hold it always in the back, and this boy he grabbed my hair I was going to say, from the back—on the seat, you know. And when he grabbed my hair, he pulled it, then I swing my hand back and I hit him in the face. So here then when I hit him, the teacher just happened to look there. So he says Anna, get up here. So I had to go up and sit on one of those high stools, you know, with a cap on my head. And then whenever he was coming back, you know, then I thought to myself, well all right, I had to sit on that stool, I says I'll fix you up. So you know what I did then, my inkwell was right on the end. When the teacher had to go past my inkwell...they always wear a coat, you know. And then when he wore that coat—I could just picture him coming—and he come past my inkwell with that ruler on there, and he turned around [INAUDIBLE] I put my inkwell from the hole, on the end, and it spilt with his coat, you know he pulled it down with his coat. And he said now where did that come from? I said well you pulled it out with your coat, I said to the teacher. And then he said now get downstairs and get a mop and mop this floor up, he says to me. And it was just before we're ready to leave the school! And here then what I did then, I picked myself up, I thought to myself, no and I only had a little scarf in my neck, you know, we put on the shoulder. And here then I picked my scarf and I was going down the steps, and I went home. Next day then when I went, and he wanted to know why I left. I said because I was called home. He didn't say anything, but I lied. Yeah. But then after that...oh, they liked me, the school, because I used to help all the deaf and dumb girls that couldn't talk and couldn't hear. I used to take care of them, if the boys would go...when we was going home from school, they'd grab the girls' hair and pull it, or pull them by the skirt, or dresses—because they all [would] wear dresses—pull them by the dresses or their sweaters or something. So I always used to chase them boys, you know, and I beat the devil out of them. So here then after that, when I used to beat them up like that, you know, and then one girl she was crippled...my nose was bleeding yesterday already [INAUDIBLE]...So here then this boy turned around then next day, and he was...these girls, he had tripped them, and one of them fell on the grass. Boy, I pounded the devil out of that boy from 37. And here then after that, these girls, they wanted me to be Mrs. George Washington.

MB: In a play, or...how do you mean that, in a play?



AT: No, it was outside on recess! And you know I had, my mother had one of these here crochet scarf, you know, that they used to make a long time ago, and it was one of those long ones. So here then I didn't have no coat, because we were poor, so all I had was this scarf to keep me warm when I was going back and forth in school. So here then I put that scarf over my hip first, and I brought it down the shoulder, and follow the leader. Then I'd walk with a cane in my hand, I was George Washington for them. And then all the girls and the boys were coming after me, you know. So then there was a big stump that the tree was cut off, you know, so there was nothing but a stump. All right, I had to get up on top of that, and I had to preach to them and hold my stick up. Oh, I used to be a little dickens with them; they were nice though to me, you know what I mean. And they enjoyed it. And after that not one of the boys ever touched any of the girls, after I beat them up. So then they called me Mrs. Washington, so I was Mrs. Washington for them. Every time Washington's Birthday comes I think of that. So I'm thinking to myself how silly I was. But I was goodhearted, they all liked me, and then the teacher had even tears in his eyes when Mr. Newton says to me—our teacher—he says Anna, he says, you know, he said, you've got a head on you, he said, that other kids would have to study a whole month for what you could tell me. But I had to study at home, after I got my work done for poor mom, I'd scrub and clean and done all kinds of work for her after school, and then on top of that I'd go in the evening to these other people and stay there till their husbands come home from work. Because they were afraid to sleep alone, see? So then I slept with them till in the morning, and then seven o'clock I went home after I got up from her house then I'd go out to mom's house and then that's where I got washed and get cleaned up and put another dress on. Oh I had a hard time though, oh, Lord.

MB: It must've been hard to leave school, then. So your mother was sick, did you say?

AT: It was. My mother was sick, yes. She was operated on and... here they said my mother would never have any children, but she had it anyhow; one after another, she had 10 children. But every fifteen... oh, some of them I think was only thirteen—fourteen months apart. And my mother couldn't do anything, and she had hard work with all the men, and a mean husband on top of it. He used to go down on the railroad track, down over here, after payday with these men from 37 [INAUDIBLE]. He used to go down to the barroom down—they used to call it the Bloom's Hotel down there—and every Saturday the Bloom Hotel would serve eats. And then all the men and women would go down there with their husbands, you know, so he didn't like my mother for not going down with him all the time. My mom says how can I go like this, I can't even put a decent dress on, because she was always pregnant. But he was... then when he came home, these women would talk to him at the barroom and... first thing you know he come home [and] fight. Oh, we had a hard time. My brother was beaten up; we went up to the... we hauled all our wood in, and our coal in and everything. Some of the boarders were so nice though, they helped us to bring a lot coal in, you know, and they said come on Anna, he said, before your father comes home we'll bring the coal in. And we'd go with my brother. And then couple times I came one day, and then my mother said... try to be home, he said, before he comes. So we went up by the tipple. So this here Mr. Mullen and Jack O'Neil was our policemen out there for the mines, you know. So then here Jack O'Neil would sneak up by the tipple, and he'd... when we were bringing the coal with the buckets, and he'd come in back of us and grab us, you know. Well he'd shake the dickens out of us and then he'd tell us to take the coal and spill it back where we got it from. But then when the policemen's were not there, then we got back and we

brought it. So one time my poor brother he was bringing wood in and he had a whole bag, one of these old fashioned sacks they used to use for potatoes and stuff, my brother filled that up with wood, you know. So when he was coming home my stepfather asked my mother, he said where are the kids? And mom said one went for the coal [and] the other one went for the wood. He come in back of us, came in front of us from the yard, and he beat my brother up [and] beat me up. My poor brother, how many times...and I always say God only took him for that reason. Because you know that brother of mine never swore, he was such a good-hearted soul.

MB: Did he go to school?

AT: Oh yeah, he went, but he couldn't go till just the third—not even the third grade, poor thing.

MB: What did he do after that?

AT: He took him to work when he was 14 years old. We were going out to the cemetery there looking for our Principal that would give us a paper so that he could go to work when he was 14 years old and lie that he was 16. See? And then when we went down there, why we were coming in from way down the bottom of the hill, and we were coming up that way and we passed the cemetery that you go towards Johnstown there, where St. Benedict's Church is? Right down that way? Well on St. Benedict's lot, on this side before you go to St. Benedict, there's a lot over there and he says, we were sitting over there so tired, hungry, because we had to go way on the other side by the river to get this principle to sign our paper. So he says on there on one [INAUDIBLE] I've never forgotten it says, "Go home dear friends, and shed no tears. I must lie here till Christ appears. And when he comes, I hope to live. A life, that never dies." And I've never forgotten that, and I learned that twice going down that road. That's how I learned it.

MB: You still can say it now?

AT: I still, yeah and the other night, I was just thinking about that. Did I leave anything out? And then I happen to think, yeah, well I always say, go home dear friend and shed no tears. And I couldn't figure out the other part to it, you know. And then after that I was laying in bed there thinking to myself, and that's how I found out then I say, oh yeah, that's how it was. I could just picture that on that board.

MB: So did principles sign these things then?

AT: He signed it. My brother went to work then at the age of fourteen.

MB: Did a lot of boys go into the mines then, that young?

AT: Well, some were older though. Some were sixteen. But my brother had to have a...we didn't have nothing and then my mother had a great big garden, we...oh you could have any ground you wanted at 37, and where we lived at the corner house here at the top, or at the six-room houses, we lived right here on the corner, and right across from us was the tipple, between the tipple and the rock dump there was...place. So here then my mother had that...the boarders had it dug up with horse plow, plowed it up. And then my mother used to raise corn, and beans, and

potatoes and different things. And we'd take that and help my mother pick that out after school, and put them in boxes, and then we'd take it up to the store and we'd get credit and get to eat for it. That's how we... we had a hard time. There was times when my mother landed and then we got that depression [INAUDIBLE] and then we was allowed to have nothing from the store beside flour, that wheat flour and a lot of beans and stuff like that. And my mother landed in the hospital then, and I went and I took the little boy—he was only six months old, and I took him because my mother... we had to wean him while she was in the hospital. And the little boy was crying and crying, and I didn't know what to do with him. So then I took the little boy and I carried him from 37 on the railroad track to the Windber hospital. And when I took him up there, they wouldn't let me in, I was only... I had to be sixteen and I wasn't. I was fourteen years old and not quite. And here then, I talked to the nurse over there and I told him, she says honey you can't go in with that baby. I said but the baby's crying. I want to find out [INAUDIBLE] baby and see my mommy and then it won't cry no more. So she says I'll tell you, you can go in there, she said right in the back, you go in the back with the baby, she says. And [at] the back of the hospital on that little hill, that's where I would sit with the baby so the baby... and she pushed my mother in a wheelchair over to the window so that my mother could see the baby. The baby was crying, and my mother was crying. Then I felt so bad because I carried that little—he was a heavy baby!—and to carry that baby way out from there and back to 37, and when I went home, I didn't know how to cook the bean soup because I put a lot of water and just a handful of beans. Well, that wasn't good, so then my stepfather when he went, he says to him—he was laughing about it—he says yeah we got a lot of water, but we didn't get nothing to eat. So mom said well [INAUDIBLE] why didn't you tell her what it is, but he wouldn't.

MB: So women had a hard life.

AT: Oh, I had a hard life, honey. Hard, hard life.

MB: Did you work at other jobs, then?

AT: Yes, after I got out of there, then I got a job up at the store, up at 40 store. I worked at the 40 store, and then I was working there for four years because I was only 15.

MB: What did you do?

AT: I was only 15. I was an order girl, I went from house to house and holler “order girl” and for each one of the kids, I used to take either a pack of chewing gum, break it in half, and then the kids would always holler for their mommy. Hey mommy, he says, the order girl's coming, Annie's coming, and here then I'd give them a piece of chewing gum all the time. And then they used to have, there used to be a lot of Polish people up there. Oh, there used to be a lot of Polish people up in 40. And then from there then I'd do the ordering—got the orders. And then we had to go down to the store, and wait on all the miners, six o'clock, and go down to the warehouse, down in the bottom—they just burnt that place up there, I heard—and here then down to the barn we had to go by the railroad track and bring a 25 pound keg of powder up, carbide, all that stuff—I had to carry that and I was just a little skinny thing. I was only not even 118 pound when I got married. So here then after that I got that job, and then whenever the boss says to me, he says well Anna—he's still living, Mr. [O'Holley?], and he says well Anna, I don't know. He

says I hate to see you come from 37 to 40 to work for thirty dollars now they're cutting that down. I said well Mr. O'Holley, what am I going to do, I have to wear high-top boy's shoes, and I'm ashamed of it anymore. The boys are all laughing at me [INAUDIBLE] hey he said you have your brother's shoes on. And I says I'm old enough, I says, to wear decent shoes and dress like somebody dressed in the store. So then Mr. O'Holley, he gave me a pair of high-top shoes, shiny...oh it was shining a sort of a brown. It was a real high-top lace shoe. And I wasn't allowed to take them home though, see? I only put them on when I come back to the store, but I wore the boy's high-top shoes with those buckles on. Well everybody was laughing at me. And I just felt bad, you know, because I thought that all the girls dressed nice and they went for a walk on Sundays. You wouldn't believe it, but I took my shoes home Saturday, then I told Mr. O'Holley, I says I'm going to church in the morning, and I'm going to wear my shoes, Mr. O'Holley. He says that's alright, Anna; as long as my stepfather didn't see it. And then here whenever I put it on, I went home, and by the railroad track in between the cars—it has that bottom underneath the steel car—I stuck my shoes under there, see? And then in the morning, when I was going to church, then I sat down on the railroad over there and I put my shoes on. And I left the old ones there.

MB: Well how often did you go around taking these orders? Did you do that every day or once a week?

AT: Every day, every day. In the morning early, and then at dinnertime, by dinnertime you was down back at the store to put them up. And the driver would take them out in the afternoon at one o'clock.

MB: Oh, the driver took them. You didn't deliver the things they ordered?

AT: Oh, we didn't deliver them our—no we just took the order, but we had to put it up. So we knew just what it was. Oh, a lot of times [it was] 25 pounds of sugar, and we had to go in that barrel with a vinegar, pickles, and pick out the pickles in there, sauerkraut, and everything, put them in trays and sell them like that. Kerosene, pump that thing up and down, you know. We had a hard time in the store, we did, everything's modern now—now people take everything to the counter. We had one of those—we never carried money in our hands, just took it from the customer, and put it in...we had a little box about that big, a little box there. And then we had a lid on it, and to open that lid up we'd pull a chain, or the wire, and then it would go into the office. And then she'd send our change back, our change, so we'd get our change back. So we never handled money. Oh, if they'd handled money like they do today, I saw many of them up in the hill here, what they done. Oh it's a sin.

MB: What happened?

AT: Oh, they steal the right, and they'd, oh...it's a shame. And then they...the customer took their stuff over there, you know, for them to pay. A lot of times they don't even take them and put the money in on there, just wrap the stuff up and give it to them, and take it and keep the change. Oh, I saw a lot of crooks going on. I could never do a thing like that, never did.

MB: Well when you were an order girl, did you have to deal with different languages, then?

AT: Yes I did. I learned Polish, I learned Hungarian better, and I learned Slovak and I learned English. And then a couple places, well, there were some people that weren't exactly French or... I don't know what they call them. And they'd tell me, and I said now what's that? Then the lady would go in the back on the porch there, and bring out of a box there. They used to have boxes there on the porches and bring something out of the box and she'd show me the potato. Oh, that was a hard job there for me, you know for... so then after when he said he was going to lay us all off, and he says well you can go for twenty dollars. I said I can't walk in 37. So when I went home, I said to my mother there, I said they want to give me 20 dollars. What can I get for 20 dollars? I wasn't allowed to open the envelope; my stepfather would beat me up. One time—

MB: You never saw the money you earned?

AT: No, no.

MB: And you had been earning more money?

AT: I would've, yeah.

MB: Well you were getting paid more, and then they cut it to 20?

AT: From 30 dollars to 20.

MB: When was that, about?

AT: And then the 30 dollars was given to me, so that the family would have the debts taken off of there, for the family, see? Just like I'd be helping to pay the bills, but I was never allowed to open the envelope and take it home. Once I took it home all the girls had nice clothes and we went for a walk on the railroad track or went to Windber and went to [INAUDIBLE] they used to call, [INAUDIBLE]. And McCouth, we used to go down there, why then I felt sort of, you know not dressed like the rest. So Mr. O'Holley, I said... he said to me Anna, he said, you're wearing your brother's coat, aren't you? I said, yeah, a man at the football game gave it to my brother. Not football, baseball because my brother was playing baseball, and organized a baseball [team] down at the hill here. And he says... my brother says to me then, he says Anna take my coat, he says when it's cold I'm not going to be working anyhow. So here then a couple times I'd put on cold weather, I'd put this coat on and Mr. O'Holley says Anna, don't you have a coat for your own, something that you don't have to go in a boy's shoes and boy's clothes. So Mr. O'Holley gave me a sweater that my sweater still hanging up there that Mr. O'Holley gave [me]. All those years I wore it, but I washed it, you know. And I still have that sweater. And he gave me that, and I said, Mr. O'Holley, I can't pay for it. He said that's alright Anna. He says I said well yeah, but if you have to have inventory; how you going to put seven dollars in there, it was seven dollars that's the first time they come out, those sweaters. And he gave me seven dollar shoes and a seven dollar... well the shoes are tore long ago. But the sweater, I still have it just as perfect as can be—I'm always watching it, you know so I have that—

MB: Maybe you'll show it to me sometime?

AT: Yeah because my boss is still living. So he always mentions me and...he said some day, he says I'll come out and see you, he says. But I guess it's hard for him to see now, too, he's ninety. Yes, honey I had, so here then...he says don't worry; he says I'm going to put it as a donation to charity. And that's how he wrote it down in the office, so the big store wouldn't come back on him and ask what he did with it, see? They had to do something like that.

MB: So what...when you were this order girl, do you remember any sicknesses or anything like that?

AT: Oh, I do—the flu.

MB: When was that? 1918 or 1919?

AT: Wait. After 1914, the war was in 1914. 1918, yeah. And then I had to go from house to house that I wasn't allowed to go in! I had to stand outside by the porch; you know how the porches are over there. And I had to stand out, and I had to...Order girl! I screamed it. And then the lady she come to the door, and she says, you Annie? And I said yes. And I wasn't allowed to go closer to the porch, but on the yard there. They had a nice little yard on the side. And I had to stand there and then she'd give me the order, [and] I'd write it down, and then when we used to put the orders up at the store. Then the driver would take it down and set it on the porch, because he wasn't allowed to go in. Oh, that flu was rotten, oh how [INAUDIBLE].

MB: Lots of people got it. Were there [INAUDIBLE] from it?

AT: People that were...the whole family, when they died out, I had those people still coming over here at my place from Chicago. I have these [INAUDIBLE] family come out to see me. We were raised together, little kids, and then their kids...the boys all went to school with me, but they all died in the flu. And then my mother took care of four little orphans. Here then after they found out how many children my mother had, they wouldn't allow my mother to keep these other two little girls. Mary and Annie and Katy, three of them, and they put them in a home and they [INAUDIBLE]. And then when they put these three little children with the two brothers, that's three, four, five of them. The oldest kids all died. And then this here, the father died, the mother died. And then before the mother died...her Tony was the first boy that died in the family—the father was already dead. And Tony died, the mother was in the hospital, in Windber hospital here, crying, and old Father Sauce, he says, please, go and dig my boy out, my Tony not dead. So Father Sauce got the...told her he said, we buried Tony. They buried him one day, and [INAUDIBLE]. Here then Tony...Mrs. Novak, we used to call her, but their name was [INAUDIBLE]. So here then...the mother-in-law or the grandma says to the priest, she says my Tony not dead, not dead, and she kept crying in the hospital and here but she died in the hospital after that. They were neighbors with my mother. We lived in the second, we lived in the first house second door, and she lived in the second house third door. So we really lived close together. And here then Father Sauce said to these men, he said this woman, he said this woman here, she can't die till I find out about her son, she claims her son wasn't dead. So here whenever they went out to the cemetery, the Polish guys with the priest found out that Tony was not dead, he was turned in his casket. He had that sleeping [INAUDIBLE], you know? And he was turned

in his casket, he tried to rise up, but he choked to death. So when they opened him up at the cemetery, they went and they took the [INAUDIBLE] and they gave him a picture and told her that Tony was dead. So that's how then she died right after that. Yeah, so when these orphans were left, my mother took care of the boys. She washed their little clothes off of them so they wouldn't be dirty going back and forth. And then...to school, and then the girls were the same way, my mother...

## **End of Tape 2 Side B**

### **Beginning of Tape 3 Side A (February 24, 1984)**

JT: He (his father) worked hard in the mines, and he drank.

MB: Oh.

JT: See, he drank so much, and he worked so much, but he never over did it with drinking or anything like that. Just moderately. At that time, you used to go around and take orders for a beer.

MB: Oh.

JT: They would take orders for a beer. You take 8 to 10 kegs of beer, you get one free. You would run down to the brewery and bring one back on your shoulder. It was such a big container.

MB: Do you remember the Windber Brewer Company?

JT: Sure, I used to go down there for ice. When I was a kid, I was say to the fellow who was helping, "hey, don't forget my ice," and he was says to me, "what do you think I am a cow?"

MB: [Laughs]

JT: I said to him, "don't forget about me," and there were people there before me, and he told me to just be patient.

MB: What did people think of Prohibition when it came?

JT: They didn't think much of it. They ran that stuff, you see? Prohibition came in 1919. Prohibition was on for quite a spell. Until 1932, I think. A lot of people made their own, when Prohibition was on. They were making moonshine ... whiskey, before Prohibition was enforced. They would take orders, but each man would run something different like drinking something like whiskey. One would run one brand, one would run another brand, and one would run a quart of alcohol. A quart of alcohol can make two quarts out of it. Alcohol was pretty strong. You would put brown sugar in it or either honey and color it. That was when you bought alcohol, so it was more economical than others. Others, they wanted better grade, you ordered better grade, you paid more for it. You paid a dollar and a half in those days that was considered

big money. If you had a quart of whiskey and you paid a buck and a half, well, that was a lot of money.

MB: Did they go door to door to take these orders?

JT: House to house, yes. These places here were what they were mostly interested in, boarding houses, because there were 8-10 men there and each one wanted something else. The boarding misses had to keep tabs on each one what they ordered. How much his whiskey amounted to because each was a separate price. Beer, they would split that, your share of the beer bill was so much, that was what you had to pay, same as your groceries and your eats, was part of your board bill. The last Sunday of the month, and they would figure all of this out. My Dad would pay three dollars for me, my share of the board, and the boarders six ... seven dollars a month for a whole month board they paid. Well there was some left over next month, but it all fell in that one month. Boarders, there were always some nasty ones, and they spent their money. Some just worked for their eats.

MB: Who were these boarders? Were they mostly single men who had families in Europe or were they married men with families in Europe?

JT: Some were single, they came out here for so long. Now, these married men would stay here for so many months, maybe a half year or so until a certain bill accumulated over there. They would send \$40 over there, well, that meant a \$100 over there in Austrian-Hungarian money. Every \$40 they sent, they got a \$100 for it. If they wanted a piece of ground or something, they could accumulate that, say for four, five or six months, they could buy it, and it would only cost them \$38 to come here. So, that's how it paid for the transportation on the boat that they came on, \$38.

MB: How did that work? Was there a system with the steamship companies? How did that work in Windber, do you know?

JT: It brought them as far as New York. Then you get on a train for the destination you were going to, and that was how it was taken care of. You go back, you would do likewise, get on a train and go and meet that boat that you want to go on to Hamburg or seaport, mostly all in Germany. That's where you landed and you went home to, the place where you're from. The funny thing about those little towns or villages is, you take those people over there, they used so much of this lingo you know, grammar that they could not understand each other or what they meant. One place used it and another place didn't. That made it hard. They had to hire someone to speak for them in case they want to court.

MB: Interpreters.

JT: They had interpreters to interpret it for them, in the same language they spoke. Their speak wasn't good enough for them to express themselves properly. They had to hire an interpreter to interpret for them properly.

MB: Did you have any experiences like that?



JT: Yes, I remember, but of course, I didn't go through it. I didn't have anything to do with that. My Dad, he spoke fairly well, he didn't have to go through that. I passed grammar in school, you would have to go through school. Grammar was considerably different between each small town. That's the reason why you had to have an interpreter to interpret for you because with your grammar you couldn't express yourself properly.

MB: How did you realize that?

JT: Some of the fellows came along, and you could figure out that their grammar wasn't very good. So, it wasn't hard to figure out.

MB: You say that they never saw sunlight, would you say they worked 10 hours or 12 hours?

JT: No set hours. They had to get compensation to take care of their family.

MB: I would like you to tell me about the strike of 1922 sometime. I would like to hear more about that.

JT: I wasn't one of the strikers.

MB: No, but you would remember, you lived here.

JT: They had the state cops here.

AT: I wasn't here then, they dropped my wages, so I went to Cleveland to take care of three little boys over there. I was what they called a nurse maid there.

JT: Then we had lights put in our house where we lived up in Hillside there in 1912. Boy, that was ...

MB: Do you remember that, 1912?

JT: We had electric lights put in the house in 1912.

MB: It must have been nice afterwards.

JT: They made quite a difference, I didn't have to clean those globes anymore.

MB: That worked out didn't it? [laughs] Is there anything else you remember real vividly from your childhood Mr. Thomas?

JT: Something worthwhile? I don't know really...

MB: What about ... did they have any fraternal societies?

JT: They were for insurance. They would have to pay so much if you got sick or if you died they would pay so much and you would use it so much. Instead of being buried out of charity, why of course, these lodges took care of the funerals. I belonged to them, and they even had offices in some of these so-called societies. That was different, I didn't belong to that.

AT: Yes, you did, you still belong to it.

MB: What did you belong to?

AT: That's Royal Ark. You are still in it.

JT: Royal, Yes.

AT: They bought insurance to pay until death.

MB: Did your parents belong to any? What did they belong to?

JT: I paid so much a year.

AT: Here is the other one. Your uncle was in all of them. A bunch of people belonged to them.

MB: So your parents joined one of these or none?

AT: Oh yeah, his people all had it. His father had it, I don't know about his mother.

JT: Royal Ark and William Penn. Your Dad would know, he belonged to it too.

MB: Oh.

JT: They had these so-called clubs you know. They had these small organizations, what they would call more of a social club than anything else. I had their little drinks so on, just a little association. They paid \$1,000, each one of those.

MB: William Penn and Royal Ark?

JT: Royal Ark was the best one though. That's 100% American. That other one is sort of foreign, but that has turned out practically all American too.

MB: Probably they all are now. Was there one for each nationality when you were a child?

JT: They had what they called branches and they branched out. For my branch, I used to send money into this headquarters at that time. I would send money in for these dues. That was my job.

MB: Did they pay much? Did they pay when people were sick or they died?

JT: Three dollars a week.

AT: They don't pay no more.

JT: No more. They did at that time. They cut out the payments, they used to be 90 cents extra a month. Then if you died you got that \$1,000.

AT: No dividends anymore either.

MB: At one time though, these were the only insurance things though, weren't they? They didn't have like Medicare or any of those things.

JT: No, they didn't exist.

MB: So were these societies real important?

JT: Well, you had to belong to something because you would be left out. Now, like her people, her Dad didn't have anything and depended on charity to collect this money to bury him. Now after they had these lodges, they had enough money to bury the people.

AT: He [her father] had a [wooden encircle]? policy from Perth Amboy, New Jersey. But they stole the policy from my mother, they said that my mother was going to get paid, and the poor thing didn't get paid. They asked for the policy, and the man came around the house, and he took the policy and he collected \$1,000 from it. So, my mother didn't get nothing.

MB: I want you to tell me about that, maybe ...

### **End of Tape 3 Side A**

### **Beginning of Tape 3 Side B (February 24, 1984)**

[Picks up in the middle of conversation]

MB: Well Mrs. Thomas, why don't you tell me what your full name is? What was your maiden name?

AT: Anna Maria Tinko. That was my name.

MB: When were you born?

AT: October 1, 1902. I'm an old lady.

MB: Where were you born, were you born here?

AT: Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

MB: Oh, you were? I didn't know that.

AT: I was born there, on Hall Street. What did they tell me the place was? New people wandered in there. When my mother came off of the boat, she lived right there in Perth Amboy close to the river. All I know is Hall Street and they said the water is down at the bottom.

MB: Had your mother recently come from Europe?

AT: Then? Yeah, she came from Europe. My Dad, he was only 18, and then he married my mother. He had to serve three years in the army, in Europe. When his three years was up, he came to Perth Amboy, New Jersey. That was in 1900. Whenever Mom came out there, my brother was born in 1901 and I was born in 1902.

MB: Your father came first then?

AT: No, my mother was here first. She had a rich aunt. She had one of these apartments, you know, where all of the factory girls would come out of there, out of the factory and they would rent rooms. She got very rich. I don't know her. I didn't find out what her name was. The girls would have their own board and take their own buckets and bring their own beer in there with them.

MB: Where did your mother come from in Europe.

AT: From Eunbach [sp?]

MB: Is that Hungary?

AT: I'll show you that book. I think there is a map in there.

MB: Was your mother and father from the same place?

**End of Tape 3 Side B**

**End of Interview on February 24, 1984**

**Beginning of Interview on March 8, 1984**

MB = Millie Beik

JT = Joseph Thomas (November 30, 1898 – March 2, 1991?)

AT = Anna Thomas (October 1, 1902 – November 1992?)

**Beginning of Tape 1 Side A (March 8, 1984)**

MB: Okay Mrs. Thomas, tell me about when they cut your salary.

AT: I went to ask for a job at the hospital. I didn't get the job over there, they would only give me \$3.00, and I said I can't. So here then, from there then, I went to the cigar factory. Well I didn't make much, \$6.00 a week.

MB: You went on the street cars.

AT: Yes, but I had to pay too much, 30 cents round trip.

MB: You were going to tell me about going to Cleveland. Tell me who you went with.

AT: Margaret B., and I and my sister went to Cleveland then. After we went to Cleveland, I asked Mr. Borie, what they do here when we have to have a job. He said, "I'll tell you what Anna, there are lots of jobs in the paper. If you want to answer them, you can call from here. But if you don't want to answer them, you can put an ad in yourself." So we put an ad in the paper, and here comes my, Mr. Comforto, and he comes to the house, and he says, "Is there girls here looking for a job?" So he picked me then, and I took care of Billy, Richard, and George – but we called him Laddy, the oldest one, he was young when he died, poor thing. So when we went out there, two other men came over with their wives and they picked the other two girls for the jewelry counter, but they didn't work there, they did housework. Both were Jews. Both girls went separate to one Jew, Stein and Dr. Klein. They are all dead though now. So when I went out there, Mr. Comfort, he took me over to the house the same night. He said, "Emma, here I am, I got a girl for us. A nice little girl, little Annie." He asked me there what my name was, and I told him. So in the morning when the little boys got up and they looked at me, and they said, "Are you going to take care of us?" I said, "I guess am honey. What is your name?" He told me his name was Willie and the other one told me his name was Laddy, George, and the other one was Billie." I asked if they go to school, and they said, "No, only Laddy goes to school." Billie was only 6 years old, and I took care of him until he was about 8 years old or 9. They were crying when I left.

MB: How long were you there? When did you get there?

AT: Two years. 1922 and 1923, and I came back in 1924 and I got married. It was in 1924 that I got married. So Mrs. Comfort came in the morning, and she questioned me and everything, and she told me, "Anna, your job will be taken care of, these three boys and nothing else, and I have a girl to do the cooking, and a lady to do the washing and cleaning. I don't want you to touch nothing, but take care of the three boys." So she went down and she says to me, "What size dress do you wear?" So she went down to a Forbes store and bought me a dress and a pair of shoes with one buckle on it, and then she bought me stockings there. She paid me, gave me \$30 a month over there, all the eats, I didn't have to buy anything. Every time she went to the store, she took us with her, the boys and myself went with her. No matter where she went, she took her man to the golf course, and to Lee Road, and she took her husband and we went with her. We played on the grass until she was ready. Sometimes, she met people there and talk. Eva was her name, Eva Rayburn, but she was married to Mr. Comfort, George Comfort. He was a Kirby Wholesale Company for lumber, that's what he was. They had their own place, they were pretty nice to me. She was crying when I was leaving. I told her I have to go home because that was when that kid sister of mine, where's Betty, here she is [points at photograph] this kid sister

was born, my Mom was 46 years old then. She was expecting. So when I came home, she told me, Mom was crying, she said, "Anna, I want to tell you something, you're old enough to understand this now, I'm going to have another baby." After this boy was born [pointing at photograph] this boy was five years old, and this girl came along. My mother had an operation and the doctor said she would never have any more children. She had this boy and five years later, she had this girl. It was a change of life girl. I wrote back to Mrs. Comfort and told her my Mom was expecting another baby and I won't be able to come back again. She wrote me a beautiful letter, I have them all in the attic, she said, "Well Anna, I understand, but if you ever come to Cleveland, don't forget to stop." Then I stopped at her place in 1927. I went to see her. They always called me, "My little Annie." She was real nice to me. They have a lake over there, not far from Shaker Lake, I used to go there with the children. They would wade their little feet in the water, you know. We were close to the lake, we just had to cross the street. From there was Lee Road and Coventry was down below us. We had a man come in and fix the garden for us all the time. This lady there said, "I don't know where this lady got you, but I like you." I asked her name, her name was Mary, and I asked if she got paid, and she said yes. She said this lady is nice to work with. She was good to me. I was allowed to have anything.

MB: Was it hard to come back then?

AT: It was. I didn't want to come back, but I had to on account of my mother and my stepfather was kind of mean anyhow, so I figured I would support my Mom. My brother Mike, this one here [points at photograph] he went to work, and he said to me, "Well sis, I'll go out, him and me."

JT: Good morning [closes door].

MB: Hi Mr. Thomas, yeah, I'm here.

AT: My husband went with me. She [Mrs. Comfort] said, "Don't feel funny, but I'm crying." So, he went with me then. You remember when we went to Mrs. Comfort's?

JT: Oh yeah.

MB: Please sit down Mr. Thomas.

JT: That's alright.

MB: We can do the interview together if you want.

JT: I'll sit down for a while. The weather is nasty.

AT: I know, they fixed my phone, I couldn't hear anyone on it. So then, I asked about the little boys, "How are these little boys of mine?" She said Richard is away, and I could see the littlest one he had all this cute curly hair, and Richard wasn't home, but Billie was. She said, "Anna, if you go down to the lake, he's down there with the boat." He went down there a lot with the boat. I said to Daddy [JT] I just have to see that boy, and we went down to the boat then. We talked to

Billie down there. He was big and tall. I said, "Well, Billie, do you remember me?" He said, "Oh, yes!" And he hugged me and kissed me and everything.

JT: I'll sit down over here.

MB: Yes, why don't you sit down over here, and we'll catch everybody this way.

MB: So, do you want to tell me how you met each other?

AT: So, we came back, and my mother had the little girl, and we couldn't come back anymore, so I wrote to her and she told me that she understood. I told her that I was called back to the store for the company again. They wanted me to work at the Eureka Store. I said, "Well Mom, now that you are going to be alright then, I'll go to the store and I'll work." I got \$30 then, they gave it back to me. So I got work up at 37, and from 37 they transferred me to 40, and he [JT] was working there.

MB: At 40?

AT: At the 40 store. I said to him, "What are you doing over here?" The owner wanted me to meet all of the clerks. From here they took him to 30 store from 40. Then they put me from 40 store to 30. So, I worked at the 30 store when he was there. I asked what he was doing there, Charles Ziegler said, he was our bookkeeper then over there, and he said, "Do you know him?" I said, "Yeah, and I don't like him." I said, "He's always tattling to the store boss on us."

JT: I didn't tattle, she just had that in her mind. (14:18)

AT: I made coffee for Gerald and Ben Adams while we were sitting on the counter, the store closed at 12. Gerald said, "Here's Joe Thomas, he's a Hungarian guy that's why I don't like him. We wouldn't know what to do with a girl." Gerald and Adam would walk us from 30 store to []. So, I said, "I don't think he's ever kissed a girl." Then, he leaned over and kissed me. He started talking to me different since then. By September and November, my sister was getting married, and my mother said, "Ask the boy to come to have a meal with us." So I asked Joe, "Would you like to come to Thanksgiving, my mother wants to know."

MB: Did you know each other before the store?

AT: Yes, we worked together in the company. We worked for different places, but when we went to the park for union meetings we would see each other. So, they transferred me to 37, and I was working for Mr. Colewell. I said to him that I think I'm going to get married. So, my sister got married in November, and I invited him and the boys from the store. So, Joe asked me, "Why is your sister getting married first and your older?" I said nobody asked me. So he says to me, "I have no time to look for a girl myself. I have it hard at home, but I think I like you." So he wanted to take me to the movies, to watch majestic. He came to my place on Thanksgiving night, and we all ate at the dining room table. My mother said, "You have it hard at home anyway, but you have to be good to my daughter." So, we told each other our hard times and he turned around and said, "well let's get married then, I'm not postponing or anything." I belong to the

Greek Church, and I wanted to get married there. I couldn't get married until my step father saw who was taking me out of the house. I went with Joe to his house, and met his parents for the first time. He said to his mother and father, "her people won't let me marry her until you people come see them." He then started to cry because he's parents didn't want to come. They were pushing each other saying "you go, "no, you."

MB: Where did they live, Mr. Thomas?

JT: 37

AT: And he lived on 8<sup>th</sup> street in Windber.

AT: I said to my mother, we had a hard time trying to get them over here. They are different people from what we are.

MB: Did they go to a different church, Mr. Thomas?

AT: He went to St. Mary's, and I went to the Greek.

JT: There isn't much difference between Roman and Greek Catholic. The holidays just fall on different days.

MB: So your family was going to the Slovak Church?

JT: No, we went to the Hungarian.

AT: I went to the Greek Church.

JT: So, we got married in the Greek Church.

AT: His father said, "If you belong to a Hungarian church, then you're getting married in that church." So, when we decided he said, "Don't bother coming home." At 2pm, there was 3 weddings at the Catholic church. In the morning I went to church for the communion and confession before I was supposed to get married. I walked there from Winder, down to 37. When, I was coming, my brother said to me, "Sister you know people are coming to the house today, and you're not home yet, and not even dressed." I said I don't care if I get married or not. The neighbor's boys were our chauffer to the wedding, and from there we got our pictures taken. I still have those pictures

MB: Did you get to have a honeymoon, Mr. Thomas?

JT: No, no the following year.

AT: No, it was the year after that.

JT: We went to Detroit.



AT: On a boat. We didn't go to see anybody. We went to Cleveland too. That when I went to see my lady too.

MB: Oh, in those days I guess that it was hard for people of different religions to get together. Protestant marrying a Catholic, or Greek Catholic, was probably frowned upon.

AT: Well his father didn't want him to go to Greek Church. I went home, and I said to my mother he won't get married in a church over there. After that, the priest told me that he understood, but you will have to belong to one church then, and he wanted us to go back to the Hungarian Church with this family. I worked from the time I got married, to just not too long ago that I quit. I worked at the church, they wanted me in the store, but I didn't want to. I joined his church and the woman asked me to help them, so I went.

JT: It wasn't a pay proposition.

AT: They made me kill chickens, haul hot water, and clean them out. We had an old cook stove, and I had to keep putting hot coals on them, and I cooked. They used to slap my hands if I didn't do something right. We were in debts at the church, so at every payday, I had to go sell tickets for dinners to help make it.

MB: Father Luddy, maybe I shouldn't tell you this, but he thought the two of you were the main stay of the church from what he could tell for 50 years.

AT: The light at the center of the alter, the church got that when Mr. Thomas got his pay from the store. We bought bells for the procession, and the angels on the alter were also bought with Mr. Thomas's money. The statue outside, the big blessed mother was another purchase. Anything we could donate too we would. Mr. Thomas would come after work, and took up tools from the store.

JT: Someone donated a whole calf from the farm, and I went up there and cut it down clean. Getting around was much easier because I had a car. There were no automobiles when I came to this country in 1905, then they came around, and everyone got curious. The roads weren't suitable for the cars though.

AT: Wagon routes.

JT: The first time I saw an automobile was in 1906. I don't know what kind of car it was, but I noticed the streets were awful.

AT: No cement, just mud.

JT: There seemed to be a demand, but no one had any time or money.

MB: When did you get your first automobile then?

JT: 1924. They were only \$307. The Model T.

MB: Did you like it?

JT: I got around with it. We went to New York with it. We travelled around New York state, and even went to Buffalo and Niagara Falls. It wasn't anything fancy, we had plastic curtains, so if it rained we could put them outside so we wouldn't get wet. It was cheap to keep up. Then the Model Phase came out and it was more modern. It operated a little different. That cost around \$500 to \$600, but we went to Detroit with it. It was a good driving car that I could depend on.

MB: Did you have vacations Mr. Thomas? Where you working at the company store during all this?

AT: Yeah from 15 years up.

MB: How long did you work at the company store?

JT: 60 years.

MB: Can you tell me more about that like where you worked when. Did you collect most of that time? Tell me a little bit more about that.

JT: I took orders from one house to another. That was the reason I had a chance to learn some of these other languages. You had Pollocks, Slovaks, and Hungarians of course. My grandmother and grandfather, they were Slovaks. When I came here, my dad could speak in Slovak so we had to learn Hungarian. Winter came along, and they wanted me to solicit on the first job. I didn't have to do much stocking because someone new came into the store. They had me take orders.

AT: He was a clerk then, and after that you were a butcher. From butchering, he went to manager.

MB: What stores did you manage Mr. Thomas?

JT: I worked in 30. That's where I managed. Then, I took 32. Competition started when more stores came in the area. The butchers would come up on wagons with hooks for the meat. The meat prices were 8 to 10 cents a pound. The whole thing was under the Bourbon family name. People started buying from other stores rather than the company store which led to some fallouts.

AT: I owe my life to the company store.

JT: If you worked for them, you had to buy at their store.

AT: They wouldn't even let you rent a house if you didn't buy from them.

JT: They had everything sewed up. The 1906 strike came along. We had about 10 managers all together. A lot of them were single, and some were married. They all had different currency from

the different countries they came from. Some only stayed for about 4 or 5 months. One actually got married here. These men, some of them were only 20 to 22 years old. It only cost \$38 to get to Canada, so many would leave and get into some debt then come back to work for about 8 or 9 months until they paid their debts off. Borbon had these men called company police and they tried to keep peace. The fellas would try to organize, but there was some commotion about scrapping down in Windber. So, the company had scabs come in. [Previous Transcriber Paraphrased?]. They wanted to be union.

AT: They are doing it just like today, the steel mills and all.

JT: They are coming back were they want to kill the union so there is no foothold. It is the same thing with USG. That's what they're doing. You see they had an election here a week or two ago. The majority favored the union and a minority didn't. Now some of these people that didn't favor the union rushed in there saying they wanted another vote again. I don't know how that going to go. Probably the same as before.

MB: Probably not every day.

JT: It's 1922, and they finally got organized a little better. They still had the commotion still in Windber.

AT: That's when I went away to Cleveland.

MB: What were you doing? Were you working in one of the company stores Mr. Thomas in 1922? Which one were you in then?

JT: Yeah, at that time I was over at forty. Then things got slow so they sent me up to the place. What do you call the place they had their explosives. They wanted me to watch that for a while. I worked there for a few months. I got the same wages that I got when I worked at the other place. Some people resented that too so finally things got straightened out so I went back to forty. And that's when I got hook up with this sidekick of mine.

MB: It must have been something though because people were thrown out of houses or left.

JT: Oh yeah. [...]. Manager, because I was his sidekick. That the reason they resent that because I have a little more say so in the store. [...]. Me and him as manager.

AT: You know my boss is still living. Ninety-some years old.

JT: Yeah ninety-seven years old. He's still living [...].

MB: He was the manager you were working with then?

JT: [...]. One house to the other. He had all these store books that everyone was buying that got destroyed because of the strike in 1922. He kind of wanted me to go with him, so we did. We went from one house to another. He said, "As soon as this thing is settled [...] present time."

All the bookstore books are in. Other wards you can't use the bookstore books to do the purchases; you had to use cash. Some had no money, so they were using money they had on hand. [...]. We didn't resent any of the customers though. While this was going on it wasn't a pleasant proposition. Some places had to take in furniture that they had on lease. [...]. With some of this furniture we had to collect. [...]. That's what they wanted, their furniture that they had on lease. It really was an unpleasant job. Do all these odd thing's. I resigned from the [?] so I went through all that too. I went back and got my job back after the strike was settled. I was that manager's assistant. I was a very good manager so they resented that. [...].

MB: So you saw lots of changes in your work over the years in the stores. Can you tell me of any big changes you saw in the stores managing all those years?

JT: I had to go out and solicit sometimes. Manager and I went together sometimes, I went on one side of the street and the manger went on the other. We had a cartload of flour. He said, "Instead of putting in the warehouse, let's go out and take orders for it and sell it." So he took orders for an entire cartload of flour and we had these orders from different homes. He went on one side and I went on the other. Every now and then there was like enough [...] soliciting. Some things come in cartloads. Everybody had [?] cows. Practically everybody kept pigs and poultry and all that sort of stuff and they had their own cows.

### **End of Tape 1 Side A**

### **Beginning of Tape 2 Side A (March 8, 1984)**

JT: We were there in #32, just as a meat cutter and a grocer, and another fellow was there as a manager at that time. [Soger?] was here then [Soger?]. He said "What do you think? You could take it over. Maybe you could do alright over there. You speak different nationalities; you have an advantage over the other fellows." I told him right then, "I'm real pleased where I'm at." This was when I was at 42, I would've been foolish to try and make that change. I paid \$12 rent, I got a free garage, I got free lights, free water, and free fuel for \$12 a month mind you. And wanted me to move to Windber and have to get another house.

AT: \$25 we paid over there.

JT: Then you have buy your own coal, own fuel.

MB: Oh, I see.

AT: And a \$125 of pay he only had. He didn't get very much raise, and if they did give it to him, they'd give him a \$5 and \$10 raise and then still had to pay \$25 rent.

JT: Of course, I had to pay the garage \$3, I had to pay \$25 for rent, and the place was empty, that's right. It wasn't empty, but they moved the fellow out of there that lived there. Since they found some homes for me that I wasn't please with no how. I told them I wasn't going to move into a place like that. One was a roach nest and the other was really undesirable, so I said, "No, I don't want a place like that." He said, "Well, how would you like to live in the apartment? It's

above the store.” And so finally that is where we finally moved. \$25 rent, \$3 for garage, and you had to buy your own coal and then we had a stove, but then they fixed everything up upstairs for me, oh, everything was high class you know, very different from these other places they wanted me to rent. They took me around to two or three different places.

AT: If I make some more hot dogs, do you want any?

JT: Yeah, go ahead, sure.

MB: Alright, I'll have a hot dog, if you'll have one too.

JT: So, he said, “Try it for a while. Try it.” So, I went back to him in a week, and I told him, “I have no desire for that place up there.” Well, he said, “God damn it, somebody has got to take it.” Those were the words he used.

MB: He couldn't get anyone to do it.

JT: He couldn't get anybody to make anything out of it. So he said, “Somebody has got to take it over. You try it for a while.” He said, “You think you can't do it, well, we'll make a change.” You know a couple weeks, this couple months, I worked there 35 years.

MB: This was at 32? You worked there for 35 what?

JT: 35 years! I took the market over, and it turned out to be a success. They gave me a bonus one time, \$100 extra for making a success of it. They gave me an increase. I got \$155, they increased my pay. Then I got up to \$165.

MB: Were you there when you retired Mr. Thomas. Is that where you were managing at 32?

JT: That's where I retired yes.

MB: From that one?

JT: Finally, they sold the place. They wanted me to buy it, I said no because at my age, I didn't want to take it anymore. I worked there for 35 and I was 25 when I went there, and I was in my early sixties. At my age, I didn't want to take it over anymore.

MB: When was the last year that you worked there?

JT: 1961. Previously, we made a go of it.

MB: You did well.

JT: Well, that's the reason I got a \$100 extra a month. So I did very good. That was when I was there eight months and they gave me an extra \$100, which I didn't expect.

MB: When did you buy this farm then? When did you come to live here?

JT: This isn't a farm you know.

MB: Well, it looks like a farm.

AT: I'll say it looks like a farm, when I moved here.

MB: When did you move here Mrs. Thomas?

AT: You know what, 1941. My mother was real sick, and I said to my mother, "You know mommy, Joe wants to move from the apartment where he wants to do something when he comes home from work." And mom said to me, "What are you going to do?" I said, "I don't know mommy, I have my application in at the bank for a house." Spencer sent me up at the other place over there, and he said you look at that house, and I went to [Mox?] out by the high school. It had such a little bedroom that you could put a little single bed in there, but you couldn't put even a chair in there. They didn't use their upstairs. I said where was I going to have the upstairs, I can't put it in the living room. So the living room was a nice size, but the other rooms were all small. I said to Spencer, "Oh, I can't see my way into this house, and he said to me, "Ann, let me take care of this for you, I'll see what I can do." Then he sent me out to about four or five places and we went out to east Johnstown here to see a nice place there. It was \$7,000. Remember that one down in there?

JT: \$8,000. I did want to buy that one though.

AT: He wanted it and I said to him, "How are you going to go back and forth to work? There is no bus or nothing that come through here. How are going to go?" So, I let it go and then Spencer called me up one day, and he said to me, "Anna, since you lived at 37 all your life, how about seeing that house, this one, along Weaver's Hill?" He said there was not a good road there because there are all these big rocks in there because they only had cows and farms, and the buggies used to go through here. It was really bad. So he said to me, "I'll tell you what Anna, how about you go see that house up there?" I said to him, "Where about is it?" He said, "Along that road." That man, when he built that house with Livingston. He never paid the bank, only once, did he say that pay for that property here. From Weavers, he bought the ground over here, but he didn't pay Weaver either.

JT: There is 600 feet frontage here. Otherwise it would be 12 lot.

AT: 6 lot on one side and 6 lot on the other side. So then Spencer said to me, "We're selling that house Anna up there in Ebensburg," he said, "you'll have to go down there to bid on the house." He said, "They've been trying to get it. So whenever the notice comes in they have to sell this house by a sheriff's sale." So the sheriffs came down there to talk to him and said, "He's not going to pay, he don't have that kind of money." So here then he don't need the house. Finally, he didn't bother with it because he did put his wife in a county home. She is still in there living. I used to sleep with that lady when she lived with her first husband. It did hurt

me and I said to her, "I'd like to do down there and see that lady because after all I was a little girl when I used to go from school in the night home and then I would go to sleep there and in the morning I'd get out." So I said, "I'd like to go down and see her." This man he wouldn't let the daughter go. She had a child [from the change of life?]. She lived with me here then. So then Spencer said to me, "Anna, I'm going to have two men bid on the house, but you'll have to be the third one." And he had a couple houses over there. So then I said to him, "Well, since I can't get the other house." Well, the only way for me to do is for me to bid on this house with him when he started the bidding the other man. [So then I gave him the last bid was on there?]. I said to him, "I don't have that much money." I said, "I want to pay cash for it, but I don't have that much money." I said, "Because I haven't saved it with this 150 dollar pay, 125 a month." So you know it was kind of hard for me. So I said to him, "What shall I do Mr. Spencer?" he said, "I'll tell you what Anne," he said, "We'll see how the bid is going to go."

JT: Get that [?] of water off the coffee (table).

AT: I see it. So he told me then just what to do, this Spencer did. I came out to see this house. And I asked the man that lived in here, I said, "Mr. [Strucka?], you want to sell this house or do you want it to go through the court?" He said, "What do I want to buy it for?" He said, "I wouldn't be living here if I had won the house, I'd be paying the bill to the bank." I said, "Well they're going to have an insurance sale on it." He said he doesn't care. Alright, then. He said to me, "Well, if you want to give me money for it, I'll take it." When I went back to the bank, Mr. Spencer said, "He can't sell that house Anne, he didn't pay it out." He said, "The woman put a thousand dollars in just before she was taken away from here." And he said, "They didn't put any money in that house." I said, "Well then why'd they [he do that?]." He said, "He pulled a trick on you, you can't get a clear deed. The deed is here in the bank not there." I understood after he explained everything to me. So then after awhile he turns around and I had come down then to see the place. Well I didn't like it because the coal mine was over here and dust, oh, you should have seen the thick dust.

MB: [They?] were working full-time then I guess.

AT: They were working on the mine over the years, you know. All that dirt.

JT: Had this nice apartment living in. It was an apartment you were proud of.

AT: Here then after that I had come back then and Mr. what's-his-name (Spencer), I said to him, "I don't think I like that house. You ought to see the dust on there and everything and on the pouch. And people around here are telling me." From the farm, Mr. Weaver told me, "Anna, you'll have a lot of dust here." They were straining dust coal over here at the [tid-pool?]. And all that dust blew this way. When I bought this house, after I told Mr. [Waycough?]. He said, "Well they are going to close that mine off of there, you won't get all that dust later on." But I got it for how many years?

JT: A couple years.

AT: Then up in the attic, dust like this, I had to shovel it and everything. I had to scrap all of it and get the floors and everything and wash them. I don't know how many times before the man came out here. So I told that other man then that I bought the house over there. Well he started tearing things, you know. So he said, "He's not going to let me have this or let me have that." And then they put a stop to it because he was not allowed to touch anything after I bought it. So then after I paid the bill and gave them the money and I told Mr. Spencer I have the money here, I said, "Mr. Spencer I'll pay for the property." I had thirty days wasn't it?

JT: No...

AT: Yeah. Thirty days because I had to report it. So after thirty days then I came down here. But did I have work here.

MB: Why did you move from the apartment then Mr. Thomas? If you liked the apartment so much, why did you move then?

AT: Oh, he wanted to be on the ground.

JT: It was nineteen-forty-one.

MB: Why did you do that then, if you liked the apartment so much?

JT: The apartment was very nice, but you didn't have the place to do anything or get out, or any kind of work. It gets monotonous too whenever you sit in one spot. Look at it, I can't do anything, it almost kills a person. It isn't that I don't want to do it; but, it's that I can't do it.

AT: And now we have to hire somebody now to pay them to do it.

JT: Yeah, too much house now.

MB: Yeah, it's a big house. Well how many children did you have all together?

JT: One.

AT: I have only had the one girl. But see I was only twenty-four years old when they operated on me. And my girl was only eighteen months old. I had a bronchitis cough, and I tore the tube down inside of me and they had a hysterectomy done for me. And they put the...

MB: Must have been an awful operation in those days.

AT: Appendix and everything, and I was bleeding. There was a funeral just then and I went to church in the morning and I went in the afternoon again for church because there were two



funerals, two men died in the mine. One at thirty-seven and one down at the bottom here at Fletcher. Here then [Turner and Julius Kovach's what do you call it?]. So I went down and a lady says, "Anne, are you going home?" And I said, "Yes I am." So she gave me a ride up here. Then in the afternoon I walked up there and stayed for the funeral and I gave another cough. But I was at the doctors the night before. To Dr. [Benscholf?], I said to him, "Dr. [Benscholf], I don't know but I'm bleeding and I'm coughing hard. He said, "Well I'll tell you what, you stop this bleeding and then you come up and I'll examine you." But he didn't have time because I got sick in church. I was up on the choir and I had rags that I took up all the time, old rags and towels that I didn't need, to dust the alters and window seals and chairs. So here then when I was up there I gave one cough. I was up in the choir and the priest started to preach, just started to say farewell to the wake then all of a sudden I started bleeding. They took me up the hospital, three o'clock in the afternoon, from the church the girls walked up with me to the hospital and they operated on me. Three o'clock in the afternoon then, and here the doctor whenever I was ready to come out, I was in there for a good while. When I came out he said while patting me on the shoulder, Dr. [Wheeling?] he said, "My dear girl don't cry anymore," because I was crying whenever he told me I would never become mother and have another child. Then Dr. [Benscholf] said, "I'll take your girl and I'll give you the boy." Dr. [Wheeling?] did the same thing. Oh, they were good to me.

MB: What's your daughter's name?

AT: Brenna.

MB: Brenna?

JT: Brenna Virginia is her name. She was born in nineteen-twenty-five so she [?]. She'll be fifty-nine this coming May. May the nineteenth. So another year she'll be sixty. Well she has a boy that's thirty-four years old.

MB: Well, you've already had your sixtieth wedding anniversary because I shall your pictures last time I was here with the celebrations.

JT: She wasn't born until a year and a half after we were married.

MB: That's fantastic. You have nice pictures from your anniversary, a nice daughter. Those are pretty.

AT: Her other pictures are upstairs.

MB: Those are pretty.

AT: I have the wedding picture with the kids, I forgot about that.

JT: This is her husband; he's kind of a tall, lanky man. That's Charlie and her; he's almost a head taller than her.

MB: Did she marry somebody from this area?

JT: Yeah. This people that lived down below here.

MB: But they don't live here now?

JT: Northern, New Jersey. Somerset, New Jersey.

MB: You've really seen lots of changes in this time then. Did you have to drive then; did you get a car then and drive to 32? You were working at 32 and living up here. You had to go that distance, did you walk?

JT: After I moved here because I worked in the store, I was a manger then. After we bought this place, naturally I had to drive back and forth. But while I lived there, I didn't have to drive because the garage was right across the street where I kept my car. I paid three dollars rent for it. So I didn't have to go too far for the car. Over here I didn't have no garage for awhile until [we?] built that other place then we had room for my car. She lived there and her husband that's who the house was built for up above there. [Wanted to?] have people living in it.

AT: Whenever I bought this place, what I done, I gardened this place. I had it plowed up over here and I gardened the place. He used to talk a lot of things to the store and sell over there for me when they didn't have to order from someplace else. I didn't rent it because I didn't pay for it, I didn't charge nothing. But I gave the other part there to [driver, Ringard?]. Albert [Ringard?].

JT: He didn't need the merchandise.

AT: Him and his wife. So he had that whole half of it there. He used to make a good [garden?]. But then he had people and Bedford and all over. It wasn't hard for him to dispose of a lot of things.

MB: Well, that's nice.

AT: This is her wedding picture, but she's fat.

MB: Did they get married here in Windber, then?

AT: Oh yeah, in the same church, everything was in here. They just moved away about twelve years ago.

JT: It was more than that. It was more than that.

AT: Well, not too much.

JT: Over twenty.

AT: No.

JT: Oh yes. [Anne's?] little girl is past twenty years old. They were there, that's when she was born. She's over twenty, about twenty-three years old.

AT: Maybe about that much. He didn't have no job or nothing, so you have to go where you're going to get your bread and butter. So she bought a home over there then.

MB: Mr. Thomas, can I ask you what was the first election you remember taking place, that you were conscious of elections taking place?

JT: I don't remember naturally.

MB: What one would that have been?

JT: Oh that's quite a number of years ago. At that time, it seems that [baron?] kind of had a hold on that too. We used to have the head of the coal mines by the name of Newbaker. He was the boss of the stores and everything. In other words he had his fingers in everything, hospital and everything. We have his picture over here.

MB: Did he go to the Hungarian Church?

JT: No he didn't.

AT: He enjoyed being with the people because he played Santa Claus and he donated a lot of money. When he went over there to see some of the guys he brought the money down to the church to the priest. And that's when they had it [his picture], they were getting pictures taken. So he got on there.

JT: He came along and said, "What seemed to be the occasion here?" It's this gentleman right here. See he was a big shot. In other words, he had influence over everything around here. What he wanted, why that's the way things worked. Whoever he wanted for burgess, was a burgess too. By the name of Fairfield, he was in there for over twenty years as a burgess. Finally I said to him because it's one of those occasions when these boys here got together to get their picture taken together for remembrance, I said, "Would you mind joining us?" He said, "Sure, why not?" He said to me. I of course would you mind joining me up here with the fellows and he said, "Sure, why not?" I have [reputation to do whatever?]. You see he was in the hospital. He was a big shot at the hospital too. Whatever he said had to go up there. There is only two people living on there and one of them is me. The other one is [Schuldas?].

AT: [Schuldas?].

JT: You don't know [Schuldas?], I'll have to show you the picture.

AT: Yeah she does.

MB: The name I know, but I don't know the person personally. So tell me more about the elections in Windber then.

JT: Well they gave you a special ballot they made in advance and they hauled around and showed you and said, "I vote for so-and-so because it will be better for the town and better for everything else. His influence will help us considerably. Other words they've been around and they didn't exactly push it with who they wanted you to vote on but they suggested you should because it would be more beneficial to the town itself. So that's how the election took place. Other wards, they didn't force you to vote the way you wanted, they suggested it. Then they had some of these so-called guys around the mines that had better jobs, and they'd go around at the foreign elements, you know. A Polish and a Slovak class and a Hungarian. I know because they went on up to my brother-in-law's place up there. He was a Hungarian and came to the [US?], my brother-in-law, George; her sister's husband. Of course, I didn't believe in that, it was a bunch of bologna to me. Here you had a free chance to vote, and somebody else telling you how to vote. I didn't believe in that it was all wrong in my estimation. When they tell me what they wanted from us, I tell them, "We'll see." That's what I tell them, "We'll see." I leave the impression that I would take their suggestion but I never did. Then I went up to 37 and talked to my brother-in-law, that's when [Meteor?] was up there you know and then he'd come up with a picture. He said, "Now you vote for this fellow. That's the one party that the Company selected, you're supposed to vote him." I told him you vote for whoever you want to. I said surely that's who the company desired to have put in the office. But he doesn't have to go with that. You can vote for anybody you desire assertable for that. He said, "Sure, these guys are picked out to vote for somebody the company favors." I said, "You really don't have to go for that."

MB: It's a secret ballot, too.

JT: It's a secret ballot and things are going to sort of loosen up. It wasn't a matter you were compelled to or forced to vote the way they wanted you. You voted the way you wanted to unless they talked you into it. They put out a nice picture that it was the right party for us to have.

MB: The Company used to favor the Republicans as I understand it.

JT: Yeah, they did. That was their favorite party.

MB: So when did they Democrats start to win some candidates then? Do you know about when?

JT: They did eventually. They come along. They seemed to have their hand on it. They got in too. That's how it is, the way it is now. We still had Republicans and Democrats here now too. This fellow is a good friend of mine and this is me right here [pointing to picture]. This is

[Schuldas?] right here. He was only one of two sledding out of the whole push. All the others are dead. Of course, even Newbaker, he dead and has been dead for a number of years.

MB: But he was one of the big officials with the company then.

JT: Oh yeah. He had charges in mines and charged everything that was here.

MB: Do you remember someone named Thomas Fisher? I guess he was a big official once.

JT: Thomas Fisher, yes, I remember him, but this fellow was over Thomas Fisher.

MB: Did you ever meet the Berwyn's at all? They had lived here, I guess?

JT: They never lived here. The only time they stayed here is whenever they came to do some checking of some form or some kind. They came here and needed to go up to the house right above the bank. The big house right there. That's where they stayed. They always had two women there whenever these officials came along that's where they stayed. They had two officials. Two women by the name of Mrs. Hellene? Well they were two sisters were the name of their handmaidens.

MB: Were they like cooks and house cleaners?

JT: Yeah they took care of the home up there and they cooked for the occasionals or the officials that showed up to do and checking or make any changes. Yeah, Fisher was a number two man here too. [It was?] Newbaker's job. That's how the whole thing started.

MB: So do you remember what election you first voted in?

JT: I made some changes, I didn't really vote for who they wanted me to vote for. The way I figured, I went to my brother-in-law after this party here, he said, "Yeah I voted for the job I picked him." Of course whenever you have a better job, you do as you were told to do and I guess they did too. They never tried it on me, tried to persuade me. They gave you these ballots, special ballots who they wished for you to vote for. I voted on some of them like that but most of the time I didn't.

MB: Do you remember when women got the right to vote? Was there any stir in the town about that?

JT: Oh yeah. I do remember that. No there wasn't any stir about the woman I remember that it was when Ronald Wilson was the president.

MB: What do you remember about that?

JT: Oh yeah, I do remember that plainly whenever the women got the rights, but then woman didn't seem to do any of that voting then. You see, the younger generation, the youngsters weren't old enough and their mothers didn't know about the election business so there wasn't

any voting for years after that until the younger generation really sprung up. Then they got wise and they [?] over woman, that they should vote this way instead of the way they decided on voting. They gave them an idea that we should have somebody else besides the Republican Party; we ought to have the Democratic Party too. We started mixing up. And the women started mixing too, they went in with their husbands, they hadn't registered though. Whenever they got the freedom they had to register, same as the men.

### **End of Tape 2 Side A**

### **Beginning of Tape 2 Side B (March 8, 1984)**

MB: Do you have any recollections of when that happened?

AT: Well, I'll tell you the truth, I don't vote yet.

MB: Oh, really?

AT: You know why, because when some of the people needed help they didn't get it. So I figured that if they're in the office why don't they help some of them people. You know that I walked away from the apartment way up to forty over there. Mrs. Bollinger and them used to live on the corner over there at forty. And they lived down at the first house, first door, if you remember Bollinger. All right, that woman was real sick and here I heard that when they collect for the Red Cross and different things they usually give help for the other people. I took my own nightgowns from my home and walked over that forty hill down to her house and that woman didn't have any clothes to wear even to the doctor. She was a widow woman for many years and she had these three children to raise here with no income. So here then, I went to the Eureka store and I bought two nightgowns down there. I organized the Alter Rotary Society and when I went to see her she didn't have anything but a big white skirt with a lot of covers on it.

MB: She never got this Red Cross help she was supposed to get?

AT: She didn't get any help from anyone. So here then I didn't know what do then. I thought to myself that I'm going to come down and she that woman again. So I brought it up in a meeting over there and some of the people didn't know her and they didn't want to bother with it. Well the people had hard times anyhow. So I went to the Eureka store and I bought two nightgowns over there and I sent one to be washed and I took two pillow cases out of my own that I had at home and I took it down there. She didn't have no sheets, she didn't have no pillow case, and she didn't have no nightgown, she didn't have anything. I sort of felt bad about it. So I said, "Mrs. Bollinger, if we get the doctor here for you will you?" Do you have a sheet; I'll fix your bed and put pillow cases on for you. She said, "Annie, I don't have any." So here then what she have was out of sacks, made out of scratch beet sacks, but she didn't have that only. After she got sick she didn't have any chickens. So I took mine down and I put the bedding on and cleaned for her then. And I told her, "You get washed." She couldn't wash herself because she

was bed fast. So I said to her, "I'll help you and I'll wash you and dress you up." That's when I called the doctor up to come up and she her.

JT: I thought you had something to eat?

AT: Yes I have. Go down and get a can of corn or beans. After she died then, poor thing. [...]. So there's how many people I gave scarves and stuff like that that they didn't have nothing to put on the head even when they were in a casket. But I was pretty good when they blocked the Altar [Mergers?] Society. They couldn't pay ten cents. I put, a lot of the times, I put my own money in. He was making one hundred and twenty-five dollars a month so I could help poor people. These are all my brothers. This brother just died her not too long ago. This one had a heart attack; he left a beautiful home and his wife ran away with another man and used all the money up. And this brother here was killed in the race tracks in Indianapolis Race Tracks. And this brother is living and this brother is living. Now his wife she died, she was drinking heavy, she was a Polish girl. Something happened to her, I guess over-doing it. And then this is the youngest sister that my mother had when she was forty-six. And this is my sister Marie here, Mary Evans. And this is Violet Redcoski and this is my sister Evans here, they're not related by their names. And this is myself here and my mother and my brother Mike. [Inaudible].

JT: [Inaudible]. They never read it the way we do. [Meig-ya?] means Communist or state. Now there's two letters that are pronounced as one. So that would be hard for you to figure out too. (Gy) is [meya?].

AT: Spell it in English its easier.

MB: This is fine. So say the whole thing for me.

JT: [Abo-terno-meigya?].

MB: Oh, that sounds nice. Is that where your father's from or your mother?

JT: Both of them. [Inaudible].

MB: [Inaudible]. That's okay, you're hungry. Thank you. You can do it both ways for me.

JT: You want me to write in Hungarian?

AT: Write it in Hungarian for her.

MB: Write it in Hungarian for me. I want to learn some Hungarian.

JT: You have a really long name. Here is the way write instead of the other way. I will use my dad's name.

MB: Oh, Yamash Thomas. Yeah, Yamash is John, I guess.

JT: Yeah, it is. [Inaudible].

MB: Okay.

JT: [Inaudible].

MB: Okay. Well write it the way they write it then.

JT: Now these two words together sounds as one. [Meig-ya?] is the way you pronounce it. I have always told them meig-ya. Austria-Hungary, I will just put Austria-Hungary or should I put Hungary?

MB: Austria-Hungary is the way it was when then when they came. It's not that way now.

JT: It's the way it is yet.

MB: Europa.

JT: Same way you do here send a letter United States North America (Hungarian). I not putting on I'm just telling her.

MB: So that's nice. That's their place. Do you know if it was near any big villages or towns or anything that I would know.

JT: No it wasn't anywhere. I didn't go anywhere. It's just where I was born.

MB: Then this is where you were born then. You were actually born then in this place?

JT: The [r...?] itself I don't have that on me.

MB: Do you know the village you were born in?

JT: When I was born it was [...?] and my daddy was from [Senye?]. I place called [Senye?].

MB: Can you spell that?

JT: I really don't know. I'm not too familiar with it.

AT: Sing or sin?

JT: No, [Senye?].

AT: S-E-N.

JT: No. [Senye?].

AT: S-E—E-E-N.

JT: Alright.



MB: However, you spell it.

AT: S-E-E-N.

JT: Now this is only [early?] anybody would account a small village? I will tell what it is there. [Senya Patrick?]. That was my dad's place.

AT: I never knew that either. You never told me those things.

JT: It wasn't interesting. I still forget the Hungarian way to write it.

AT: You don't have to write it the Hungarian way because you can't get it anyway.

MB: I guess the Slovaks didn't like the Hungarians too much in the old country. Can you tell me about that. I guess they sort of ruled over them or something.

JT: They did yeah.

AT: I don't know my mother went to the Slovak school and the Hungarian school.

JT: oh, yeah. That's right.

AT: But she couldn't read or write we think because they took her in when she was seven years old.

MB: That's all interesting. That's good. I am glad you got the names. If I can find a map I would like to look those up and I will have to see if I can find an old map.

JT: No you'll never find them.

MB: No, there so small you think?

JT: In the first place they are too small to put on a map.

MB: It would have to be an old map.

JT: [Mayget?] may be on it but not the [Selpe?].

AT: I was just wondering because I have a book here but it doesn't have anything in it.

MB: Probably not that. You would need a really good map. I was really curious to what regions because people usually came in other...

JT: Did your dad ever mention where he was from originally?

MB: Viola Sluska area. Which is, I forget, Zemplen?

JT: Zemplen. It's the same as a county here. The other one is where I was born. Zemplen is the same as here. It's another state or another country; I don't know what size [inaudible] is. I am not familiar with it because I was about six years old. You can't get much information on that because I don't know very much about it. I didn't bother to study it because really I wasn't interested in it.

MB: Did you parents talk about the Hungarians ruling over the Slovaks in the old country?

JT: My mother was sort of half and half, she was more Slovak than she is Hungarian. What she learned in school, she was [compelled?] to go to a Hungarian school whenever she went to school. My Dad he was always tied up because he had a stepmother and so on and he never had a chance to go to much school. He didn't have much schooling. So he worked for a Post Mistress, he used to be a delivery man, delivery mail from one village to another.

AT: [inaudible].

MB: Okay. I am just going to let that run until the tape runs out. Alright, I'll take a hot dog.

AT: Because I don't want you to go hungry.

MB: I'm not going to go hungry, believe me; I'm putting on too much weight as it is.

JT: No you're not.

MB: Well here is where it goes.

JT: Well for your size not bad.

MB: So how did people manage to get through the Depression here in the Windber area? It must have been very hard if the mines weren't working much.

JT: It was a shame some of those people didn't have any money at all. [Inaudible]. It was hard to keep the church running or any kind of organization. I was lucky I had this job. I might not have made a lot of money but I could depend on it. Now those wages were one-hundred and twenty-five. Of course towards the end, they went up, everybody's went up.

MB: Right. Do you want some mustard?

AT: There's mustard, there's ketchup, and what do you call it, did I put the beans and stuff on it. Just got ahead and eat. Please sit down and eat. I'll get your coffee now. Daddy do you want coffee?

JT: Well if you want to get me some.

MB: I guess it must have been really hard.

JT: I was lucky. Like I said, I didn't work in the mines and I didn't get caught in that mine sluck. I got paid and it may not have been too much but I got paid and I spent it accordingly. Other words, we were never in need, never to say that we were without money, we always had money. We were never in need. We had a baby grand piano I told you about.

MB: So what did you do for fun? What did you and Mrs. Thomas do for fun?

JT: We went to different places, we had they car then.

AT: We had [inaudible] all the time [inaudible] dances and he bought tickets in the store from everybody. We helped every church that was in Windber. Then we'd have to go to the, what do you call it? You want this Dad?

MB: Mrs. Thomas, please sit down.

JT: What do you want honey?

MB: I just want her to sit down.

JT: [Corkie?] died. [Inaudible].

AT: He used to live in Windber.

JT: He was my insurance agent.

AT: [Inaudible] will come whether we like it or not. That's one thing we have to get out of the world whether we like it or not. Hey honey, do you want mayo-, oh, you don't choose mayonnaise for nothing do you.

MB: No I don't. Relax. Have something to eat.

JT: What's a matter?

MB: I can't think of anything else really to ask you about, I'm afraid we might have missed some things.

JT: These are good, try one of them.

MB: Alright, I'll take one of them. Thank you. [Inaudible]. I know what I could ask you about. What do you remember about people in the area what they thought when World War I was going on? I keep thinking that must be awful for families because some many people came from those areas in Europe and they must have still had relatives there. Yet, some of them were on both sides, not just the Atlantic, but on both sides of the war fighting. Do you remember anything about that?

AT: We had one boy from here that came from here. He made a career; he was over there for about thirty-five or forty years in Europe. He was over there during the wartime, and he was [inaudible] boy, here that lives at carpenter part. He married a German girl over there not too long ago.

MB: In World War Two, you're talking about?

AT: Yeah. Oh, World War One, I forgot.

MB: When the immigrants had been coming into the area from some of those same places while the war was going on.

AT: Oh, yeah. [Inaudible]. What do you call it? Here honey, have some more. There is some more there.

MB: I'm fine thank you. Do you remember anything about that Mr. Thomas? I would just think it would have been hard on some families or people with all that death.

AT: Nineteen-eighteen!

MB: Nineteen-fourteen the war started and 1917 the United States gets into it.

AT: Or 1914, I mean. Nineteen-fourteen and 1917, and 1940. Nineteen forty-one.

JT: Yeah I remember both of them. I was too young one and too old for the other. So I sort of got around that alright. I will tell you. Everybody had to work. You were compelled to work. You had too. If you missed a day, even after like you had after school kids, when they are not in class, they go to the house they better not see where you're at. Why are you not at a job? Why are you not working today?

AT: How's that coffee? Is it warm because I have some more, dear?

MB: It's fine.

JT: As far as anything else there's nothing. Nobody carried a grudge against one or the other.

MB: I didn't know. I just wondered because nobody said much about that that I talked to.

JT: No there really weren't any.

AT: It was pitiful when they were taking them though because a lot of places they took three or four boys that didn't come home. I worked in a cigar factory when that war in 1914 was there. I was only fourteen years old.

JT: So really there was no commotion over there with where you belonged because anything could happen. Anybody that comes, it wasn't anybody's fault in particular, especially the ones

that were here. If they were in that mess, it came along and they were caught in it. Most people, they realized that nobody really involved [Russia?], why should they struggle among themselves. So there wasn't really any commotion.

AT: Girls used to throw cigars up at the boys when they were waiting for the train to pick them up in the [inaudible] city.

MB: When you were walking at the cigar factory?

AT: When they were coming we threw cigars down for them. Some of the mothers were standing out there by the train station crying.

JT: I don't know if he's coming today or not, if he's working or not?

MB: Did the mines pick up with the Depression? I guess they didn't work much. Did they pick up?

JT: Oh, yeah. You had to work day and night then. If you was missing [inaudible]. So you had to produce then.

AT: During the Depression it was pitiful.

MB: I guess that's when they weren't working much at all.

AT: No, they weren't working at all. The young boys used to come into the store and sit on the top of the counters over there in a row kidding us clerks over there. Remember, that was during the Depression?

JT: I remember. You had a hard time keeping them off. I told a couple of them. I said, "You know you boys aren't doing the right thing you shouldn't be on the counter there."

AT: I didn't mind them because I had boyfriends there too.

JT: I called a couple out. I called attention to it. I said, "You realize the things you're saying and the way you're saying it, the way you're cussing?" I said, "You're supposed to be good churchmen." I said, "If I had someone to replay this for you just the way you talk, the way you speak, and the way you cuss. You'd be ashamed of it." I said, "I thought you were good religious boys. The way you act and the way you talk, that just a low-down shame." You know that same guy; he came along about [inaudible] later. He said, "You know it's a good thing you did call me out. I didn't realize I was talking the way I was. I starting to think about it for a while. You know everything you said, that was the right reaction to it alright. He said, "I thank you for it, I don't feel bad about it, about you calling attention to it because it's a good thing you did." So other words, he was sensible after I told him. He still lives up there at [forty?].

MB: Did you know many people who didn't go to any churches? Were there many people that didn't go at all?

AT: Oh lots, oh yeah.

JT: There were some, but not as many as you think there were.

AT: My mother had a neighbor over there, too. Whenever my mother was taking us on the railroad track to church when we'd come home, this woman would say, "What did you get in church now that you went to see the priest." They made fun of us. They said, "You went with your chickens to church." Oh yeah, they used to make fun of it. They would say, "Oh, here comes Ms. [Opopite?] with the chickens from church, what'd she get?" Oh yeah, there used to be a lot of people like that.

MB: Did people who went to church make fun of the people who didn't go to church ever?

AT: No I didn't bother. I used to ask them in a nice way, I used to tell them, "How come you didn't come to church?" I had boys that went to Thirty-Seven school over there. "You know," I said to these boys. Some of the Kovach relations are in that picture, while they're in two. I have those big pictures that I have up in the attic there. These boys that I went to school with I said to them, "How come I never see you in church?" And the boys would say, "I don't believe in going to church." I said, "Well if I don't see you next Sunday don't even talk to me. I don't want to even know you." You know that I made them promise me that they would be in church. I was so shocked when I was sitting in church over there and looked on the side once in a while and would see those boys sitting over there. Oh I used to get around them good. And the girls were the same way.

MB: You think Windber was a religious community Mr. Thomas? Do you think Windber was a religious community in all those years?

AT: Oh yeah. A lot of them were.

JT: Especially the Slovak and the Polish people, or they were Hungarian a good many [inaudible]. We used to call them bullshitters.

MB: Oh you did?

JT: They had a sort of organization of their own. They like to have meetings. I don't know how often, once or twice a month. They had a place down here, these unbelievers. They didn't believe in any faith. They just lived like creatures that hide in the [inaudible].

MB: Coming up the road here, somebody was telling me that the church down the hill was a Romanian church, do you know about that?

AT: My grandfather went in that church. All the kids that I used to say the prayers in there.

MB: So were there lots of Romanians around here?

AT: There used to be a lot of Romanians around here, thirty-seven too, and all over. There's only about two or three families you'll find now.

JT: They all died off most of them.

MB: Or moved away maybe.

AT: I went to that church here too because it was closer.

JT: The younger generation they don't speak [lengal?] or [inaudible] everything changed considerably. The younger generation grew up and had their own beliefs and there isn't much you can do about it. Say religion, you can have chosen it there if you wanted it. After all, they are all trying for the same thing and to get to the same place.

MB: Do you remember there being a Jewish community in Windber?

AT: Oh yeah. There were one, two, three, or four families.

JT: Oh no there wasn't. They don't have any church here. They used to go down to Johnstown.

AT: They didn't have their own church, but there were a lot of Jews here.

JT: Not so many.

AT: [Salwms?].

JT: [Salwms] aren't Jews.

AT: No the other one, what do you call it. Down there that had that doctors son down there that died down there by the fire hall. They lived and had that store there.

MB: When you were in 1917, 1920, or 1922, was Scalp Level considered part of Windber?

JT: No. It was a busy little place that had all kind of businesses and everything that died off. November is bad enough.

At: We had two doctors, we had a bank, we had restaurants, we had a meat market, Baumgartner's Meat Market, we had a hardware store, and we had Mogul, what you call it an Arabian store all clothes and shoes. We had two attorneys, what do you call it where you have your licenses and veils.

JT: Justice of peace.

AT: Justice of peace, we had two of those.

MB: Post Office?

AT: A [sckrunk?]. If anybody was arrested we would stand at the window there and watching them wondering what they were going to do with them.

MB: So you didn't go the Windber much?

AT: No.

MB: Did you go to Johnstown much?

JT: Oh yeah when we had our car we went there quite often.

MB: But before you had your car, did you go?

JT: No.

AT: And right here by the creek or the other church where Dr. Berman, where they had their church over there by the creek. Why we had doctors over there.

JT: You need this right here don't you? The milk?

AT: No, you can put it away. [inaudible].

MB: Were all these places of business down along the main street then?

AT: Yeah, all on main street honey.

JT: It used to be something but not anymore.

AT: Strauss had a big store over there across the street right by the doctors. Then the other one had it over here.

JT: It was a busy little place at one time.

MB: You had your own Post Office?

AT: We had our own Post Office. They just tore that down when the fall was on here. They had the upstairs and when all the firecrackers was in on the Fourth of July somebody shot over there, shot one of our Postmasters. [inaudible].

JT: [inaudible].

AT: That's the secretary for the North American, biggest lodge, for thirty-two years. Then when I got sick they took me to the hospital and I gave it up. And then again, when I got out of the hospital, they appointed me deputy and everything. [inaudible]. Well to do members. I had



had [?] ladies. From there then on, I did a good bit of working at the churches and places and the store.

MB: What do you like about this area, the 937?

AT: It's quiet. It's awful quiet and we don't have any trouble and we don't have any colored's here. And not one colored here.

MB: What about you Mr. Thomas, what do you like about being here?

JT: Well, I always liked [no matter where you were?] you had your accommodations.

AT: I don't like Detroit; I don't like any of the cities. Just to visit them I like them.

MB: You have visited them.

AT: I am not for the big excitement that's going on.

JT: You don't have the people here that create a lot of commotion and mystery.

MB: Is there anything that you don't like about this area?

AT: Well, it is too far from everything and no bus comes passing.

MB: That's too bad.

JT: Since we can't get around. The younger class in the Summer months, they didn't have very far to go. [inaudible].

MB: That's alright.

**End of Tape 2 Side B**

**End of the Interview (March 8, 1984)**