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Leland Hawes: It's October fifteenth, and it's my pleasure to be talking with Mr. Manny Garcia, a prominent Tampa attorney.

Manuel Garcia: —since World War II, let's see. WWII, the beginning or afterwards?

LH: Like 1945 or forty-six [1946]—whenever you came from the service.

MG: Well, forty-five [1945] or forty-six [1946].

LH: Who would you say is the most powerful person in town at that point?

MG: Gosh, I don't think any one man—you would have to have a combination of them. I expect at that time the so-called Culbreath, Farrior, Hixon political combine was in effect, and that was probably the most viable factor here because they usually went together. [Curtis] Hixon was mayor and Hugh Culbreath was sheriff and Rex Farrior was state's attorney.

LH: What do you think were the influences that allied them originally? Similar backgrounds, or had they known each other or just been on the same side of the political fence over the years, or what?

MG: I really don't know what would have brought them together because you know that Rex Farrior was made—appointed state's attorney by Dave Sholtz.

LH: In the mid—or early thirties [1930s].

MG: Yeah, and he stayed on as state's attorney for a good while—

LH: Until after Kefauver.

MG: Yeah, in other words he went out when Paul Johnson succeeded him, which was 1952.

LH: Fifty-two [1952].

MG: Yes, he went out then. But Rex was a factor. Of course you know, when Rex was first appointed as state's attorney, Pat Whitaker and R.E.L. Chancey had that political machine in his power. And Pat was in the Senate at that time, the State Senate, but—

LH: Tell me, did you ever know for sure whether or not Pat Whitaker was a member of the Klan?

MG: Yes, there is a certificate. I don't know if—I've seen it. I've seen the certificate where his name was on there, rather like a diploma would be, or a college degree with his name engraved in there. I say this, that he was reputed to be. Now, Pat Whitaker, Junior—who's his son, who is still alive—probably would know more about that than anybody else. But Pat was reputed to be.

LH: Well, of course—

MG: However, you know they tell me when Pat first came to Tampa he ran for mayor, the first time he ever ran.

LH: I didn't know that.

MG: Yeah, he ran for mayor of Tampa and he lost by a very few votes. And in his campaign—this has been related to me, because this was a long time ago—and I suspect that this was at around World War I or right after World War I, because I think he came to Tampa in about 1915. But he decided to run for mayor and apparently maybe to get some exposure to the community. And he used a big whip from the stand, and would crack it, and he ran against the [Ku Klux] Klan.

LH: Now that's weird.

MG: Yeah, he ran against the Klan.

LH: Because of course he did defend the five policemen in the flogging case.

MG: Oh, yeah, the Shoemaker case¹, and that defeated him for the governor of Florida.

LH: You think he would have—?

¹ In 1935, a group of policemen flogged, tarred and feathered Joseph Shoemaker and several other men who were holding a political meeting. Shoemaker died of his injuries. Pat Whitaker, Senior, defended the five men brought to trial, who were convicted, but the Florida Supreme Court overturned the verdict.

MG: Oh, yes. I think that he would have had a very good chance to be governor of Florida. Instead a fellow out here by the name of Francis Whitehair ran with the same group that Pat Whitaker would have got.

LH: So, that case in 1935, thirty-six [1936], thirty-seven [1937]—

MG: It killed him politically.

LH: I see.

MG: And he recognized it.

GM: Was he involved in the thirty-five [1935] election?

MG: Pat? Oh, yes, he was involved in the thirties [1930s]. He was president of the Florida Senate I think in 1928. I'm not sure.

Gary Mormino: I think it was a little later because—

MG: Was it?

GM: I know he was state senator as late as 1934.

MG: Well I think he was a little after that. I think it was from thirty-four [1934] to thirty-eight [1938]. The last time that Pat ran, Peter Knight, Senior, was still alive. And they convinced Peter O Knight, Senior, not to fight Pat. And Pat got elected for another four-year term. And I believe that he served up to close to thirty-six [1936] or thirty-eight [1938], and after that then [in] the Senate as a member.

LH: I think you're right.

MG: As a member. But prior to that he'd been president of the Florida Senate.

LH: So the campaign of 1940 that you say he would have been primed for (inaudible) this race—

MG: That's correct. That's right, and that's why Francis Whitehair ran and everybody—in fact I was at the University of Florida, and I even went to see Pat Whitaker when I was at the University of Florida to see if he wanted to start an organization up at the University of Florida for him for governor. And he said that he didn't think he was going to run.

LH: What year would you guess that was?

MG: I'd say that that was about 1936, thirty-seven [1937], before I graduated from law school. I graduated from law school in 1938.

GM: Let me rephrase Leland's first question about Tampa power. Where was the pulse beat of Tampa? If you came in from the outside and someone said, "Where's the pulse beat of Tampa?" What would you have to do to get in power? What was the power structure?

MG: Well, I'll tell you what—and Leland, we're going back on this recording device that you have going here, and I want you to know that I am expecting you to respect my confidences on this. There was an old saying which was real bad. A lot of people used to say, "It's a hell of a thing when you're running for office in Tampa and you got to go off to see the gambling syndicate to get elected." Because back in those days there is no question about it, that the so-called, what you knew as the "*bolita* syndicate," you understand? There's no question at all that those people wielded a tremendous amount of power politically. Because they were able to spend so much money and they had so many people that during the years they would do favors for them and they had control of the political machinery. And that's where you had to go, really. You had to go see the sheriff. You had to go see Hixon, you had to go see Rex Farris, because those were the people who were the powerhouses here, no question about it.

GM: How did they, how did *bolita* become so powerful?

MG: God—well, I'll tell you why, because there was a lot of money in it. You see, initially, as I was telling Leland, I tried at one time to find out who the man was who brought *bolita* to Tampa, because I talked to Tony Pizzo and I said, "You know what we ought to do when we find out who he is, is build a monument to him out there in Ybor City." And all we knew was that he was known as *El Gallego*—which is G-a-l-l-e-g-o. *El Gallego*, meaning that he was a man born in the province of Galicia (G-a-l-i-c-i-a), in Spain, up northern Spain—in northwest Spain they got a province there called Galicia.

But I had heard that name again from Charlie Wall, and I had heard the name from other people, but never could find out—but *bolita* actually was what you and I know as the lottery, okay? Or what is known up in the country as the numbers game. The people here, the lack of people did not frown on gambling. And I believe there was a small fine. You could bet ten cents and back in those days initially you could pay eight to one—eight dollars. And then people, that *bolita*-seller, the man who sold the numbers. You would sell them like you were subscribing to the [*Tampa*] *Tribune*. I didn't pay in advance, but you knew that I wanted to play on few, but a select numbers. And every Saturday for fifty cents or the dollar and you automatically, you know it was automatically written. And the people and the fellows standing in front of the cigar factories as the people would come out on payday and right then and there negotiate these transactions there. It was nothing for people play *bolita*.

I don't know if you remember this, Leland, but they'd have guys downtown that would go up and down the buildings, office buildings, in Tampa and into different offices to sell *bolita*. It was an everyday thing. They first gave you tickets. Then after that they couldn't

be giving you tickets and you had to rely on the good faith of the fellow selling them to you.

GM: I guess the tickets were too often—

MG: Evidence.

GM: —confiscated as evidence.

MG: That's right, evidence. *Bolita* tickets, you know, possessing a *bolita* ticket—so they couldn't give them tickets. And what they would do, there was a lot of money in it. You had the black element in the communities, the Negro element. They played like mad.

GM: I can remember a black woman who would make the rounds in Thonotosassa.

MG: That's right.

GM: Just every week she would be around to sell a number to the cooks and the—

MG: You see? And you had backers. And these backers had what they call peddlers. They would go out and sell and they gave them a percentage, all right? Years ago it was eighty to one, then they dropped it to seventy and the last there, it was sixty to one. But they would give the peddler a certain percentage for everything he sold win or lose whether they were winning numbers or losing numbers. And then it got to the point where it was a hell of a business, at every little grocery store sold *bolita*. Why? You got a percentage and it helped you pay the light bill, pay the rent. It was sort of an everyday thing, and nobody thought anything about it. They went all over the neighborhood in Hyde Park. You know what I mean? The people that were—[it was] affluent people who were buying *bolita*.

GM: Well, it didn't really have a stigma as such.

MG: No. You see—but it was the core that created what you would call the bad element in the community. It created all of the gambling and led to all of these assassinations and patrolling.

GM: What was the turning point—from my reading of it in the early days it was a victimless crime. When did *bolita* become such a big business that it led to assassinations, etc.?

MG: Well, this thing had been going on for years and years and during the war, the war years, World War II? Nobody paid no attention. I wasn't here for a while, but nobody paid any attention to them—they were interested in the damn war. And God, it flourished like mad then. It just flourished like mad! And it was also on the side, they would have like—in the black areas particularly, they would have they called them "skin games." Remember Skin? It was a certain kind of game blacks played. I don't know how to play

it, but they called it Skin. And then they would have poker games around town and amongst the Latins, they would have a game called *Monte* (M-o-n-t-e), which is a card game. And it builds up a tremendous pot, and as you turn the card you bet on—I forget what it was. But they had a tremendous amount of gambling going on and it was a lot of people that made lots and lots and lots of money.

GM: Was it the money that really made it so profitable—

MG: Exactly.

GM: —that that's when the power plays began?

MG: Exactly.

GM: And the assassinations began.

MG: Exactly. In other words, you had police power. Right now, if you had *bolita* in Tampa—and I don't know what it would go by today if you had it. But as long as the police power was not in control, you're not going to have assassinations. What led to those assassinations would be this—I'm in good with a candidate. He's my man, right? And this candidate's got police power. I could use him as a whip against my competitors, and the only way my competitors could compete with me was to eliminate me. So that's what they would do. That's what they would do.

LH: A couple of people told me this, including Danny Alvarez. One reason *bolita* became so big in the forties [1940s] was that you had the other sources of vice closed up. Prohibition ends in thirty-two [1932], and with the opening of MacDill in thirty-nine [1939], the MacDill people cracked down on prostitution because of the servicemen.

MG: That's correct.

LH: Therefore, *bolita* was the only game in town.

MG: Well let me tell something to you, prostitution would not keep people from gambling. Just because you would have prostitution.

LH: But it eliminates—

GM: A source of income.

LH: —one more vice, I mean, you know?

MG: Yes, but the whole thing is this, just because prostitution in Tampa—what you're talking about was what I would call ratty prostitution, two-dollar whores down in on the line in Ybor City. I mean even when you had prostitution wide open, *bolita* was wide open and gambling houses were wide open. Prostitution didn't compete with *bolita*.

GM: But I think his point was though, was that when prostitution was eliminated as a source of big money for the higher-ups, that put more emphasis on the gambling end of the line.

MG: I don't think that prostitution ever produced the money that *bolita* produced.

GM: I see.

MG: I mean, prostitution was nothing. Suppose some woman went to bed with a man for two dollars, for Christ's sake. I mean, you know, what was she going to be paying every month for protection or every week? She couldn't be paying too much.

GM: What about the ethnic—

MG: You've got to remember you had gambling casinos here, but they weren't big. You had El Dorado, but that was not [until] after World War II. That was before World War II.

GM: Imperial?

MG: No, I never heard of the Imperial. The Imperial was a—I don't know maybe; the one I remember was El Dorado, which is on the corner of Fourteenth [Street] and Eighth [Avenue], which was a gambling casino. You had a yellow house which they had the crap games and this, and they had the Lincoln Club—

GM: Now, is that the one on Lincoln Avenue?

MG: No, that was the Lincoln Club on Lincoln Avenue. That was in the thirties [1930s]. And that was Charlie Wall's idea.

GM: Because I came across a lot of clippings where Farrior, in his early days as state attorney, was making a big deal about closing down the Lincoln Club.

MG: That's correct. That was Charlie Wall's gambling casino.

GM: Was Rex Farrior on the opposite side of Charlie Wall?

MG: Yes.

GM: And John Parkhill was Charlie Wall's candidate when (inaudible) ran against him.

MG: Yes. That's correct.

GM: I see. Who was backing Rex Farrior?

MG: Culbreath, Hixon.

GM: Were there any gamblers in back of Rex Farris in the thirties [1930s]?

MG: Oh, in the thirties [1930s]?

GM: Before the Italian group finally—

MG: No; that I can't tell you. Let me see. All I know is this. I know one episode that was related to me. Charlie Wall decided to run Leroy Allen for state's attorney against Rex Farris. Leroy Allen had been an assistant county's solicitor under C. Jay Hardee. You remember C. Jay Hardee was suspended from office by the governor, and they put in Leroy Allen as acting county solicitor. They decided to run Leroy Allen against the state's attorney.

[Fred P.] Cone was governor of Florida, and Frank Umescott was Rex's assistant state's attorney, and was a very strong Cone supporter. So Rex threw Frank Umescott. Because I think, I don't know—[in the] back in my mind I think Rex may have supported Pettaway. I'm not sure about that. Pettaway was defeated. Remember, he was a Tampa man who judged a criminal court of record? I don't know. But anyway I do know this, and it was related to me that Cone got in touch with Wall—with Charlie—and told Charlie, "I do not want you to fight Rex Farris." And Charlie Wall called in Leroy Allen and told him, "You're going to have to get out of the race." And Leroy withdrew and Rex went in without opposition.

GM: In the race of 1936.

MG: Whenever it was, yeah.

GM: Or thirty-eight [1938] or whenever.

MG: In that area. It had to be before thirty-eight [1938].

GM: Because I was thinking Parkhill ran against him in one of those races.

MG: Parkhill ran against Farris twice. He ran against him one time after World War I and one time after World War II. And he may have run against him—he ran—I tell you what he ran against him in 1948. He ran against him in forty-eight [1948], and then I think he might have ran against him in forty-four [1944].

GM: With Charlie—

MG: It wouldn't have been in forty-four [1944], because that was during the war. He was in the war.

GM: So it must have been earlier.

MG: That's right; he ran against him once before he went in the Army and then he ran against him in 1948. Because he ran against him the same time Fuller Warren ran for governor in forty-eight [1948], I remember that.

GM: But each of those time Charlie Wall would have backed—

MG: Oh, Charlie Wall was backing Parkhill, yeah.

GM: Parkhill.

MG: You know he was related to him. They were all related.

GM: Now, you were talking about Rex and whether there were any gamblers backing him before—

MG: In the thirties [1930s]. I don't know. I do know this, that when Culbreath was in there—

GM: In 1940.

MG: —and Hixon was in there, and that's right—starting with 1940.

GM: Hixon in 1943—

MG: There's no question about it, from then on out—I mean, Rex had the support of all those people whoever Culbreath had controlled and Hixon controlled. And Eddings was chief of police.

GM: Now wouldn't you say that out of all that group that Hugh Culbreath as sheriff was probably the most powerful of the bunch at that point?

MG: I don't know. I don't know if he was. He was a powerful fellow. You know, being the sheriff he did have a lot of muscle. But you want to remember that old Hixon had a lot of muscle as chief of police too. Of course Culbreath, you know, influences outside of the city too and in the counties as well as in the city. Rex didn't have particularly the connection himself directly with the so-called underworld or so-called gambling element, you know what I mean? He didn't have it directly. It was more or less because he was state's attorney and Culbreath wanted a friendly state's attorney and he got along with Rex. But Rex was—I'll tell you what, Rex was a fairly honorable fellow as far as I know. I'd have to characterize him as being an honorable fellow.

GM: How did Culbreath get his ties with the gamblers?

MG: He ran. You're going to have to turn that off before I tell you that.

LH: I'll give you complete veto over the tape, how's that? When we're over. And you can erase or—

MG: No. I would rather you just cut it off.

Pause in recording

LH: Cause I think that Charlie Wall is particularly interesting when you're talking about how he reached the end of the rope there when— The governor's race in 1940 and sheriff's race in 1940 made the difference.

MG: That's right. In 1940 when Culbreath got elected and Holland got elected, Rex Farior was actually Holland's man here and a very powerful and very close friends and I'll tell you a little story that was related to me by a fellow. Henry Toland, who you know—the attorney—was a member of the legislature, and he was not apparently satisfied with certain things that were going on down here considering something that he didn't particularly like.

GM: Rex, Holland or Henry Toland?

RM: Henry Toland. He was running for the legislature. Remember when he was member of the House in Plant City? And of course Rex Farior was calling all the signals down here. In other words, you know he was a political patronage man which is you know you cannot frown upon that, I mean hell its done everyday. He was the man. In fact I suspect in the state he had as much influence as anybody else. Well this is a nice little story that you can tell. Henry Toland went up to see Holland and not that Rex was doing anything illegal or improper, but Henry didn't like any. He figured he was in the legislature and he ought to have a little something to say about some patronage or something and apparently Rex was, you know, running the show the way he liked it. And he went up there to complain to Holland and Holland say this to him. He says, "Henry, let me say one thing to you, when I was at the University of Florida I was the pitcher on the baseball team and Rex Farior was the catcher and he never gave me a bad signal." (laughter). Pretty good story?

GM: I think so.

MG: And Henry caught on right quick. Henry told me that story himself.

(laughter)

GM: The story you told me the other day about Holland going into the Italian Club—

MG: Oh, yeah! Now here's the thing, you know. And it's not that Holland was dishonest, don't misunderstand me. He was a very honorable man, but apparently back in those days people accepted a lot of activity in politics that today they'd frown upon. I've been to the Italian Club and it was no different. Centro Asturiano, the Spanish club, they'd always

have these occasions where they would have different social events. And they'd invite—you know, all candidates wanted to be there. I mean that was the thing to do, to get a table and be there and meet all of these people that belonged to all of these Latin clubs. I mean that was politics. Statewide candidates and local candidates, they all went and they bought tickets and all attended and had their campaigns there and you know with their literature and everything else. And at the Italian Club for instance, I have seen Holland dancing with Ignazio—

GM: And this is the governor of Florida—

MG: He's running for the governor. This is in 1940—Spessard Holland. I've seen him dancing with Mrs. Antinori, Ignazio Antinori's wife. And I've seen Mrs. Holland dancing with Ignazio Antinori. Well, in this day and time you wouldn't do that, because Ignazio Antinori, you know, later was assassinated.

GM: Now was he Paul's uncle?

MG: Paul's grandfather.

GM: Grandfather.

MG: And a lot of people would come to Tampa, you know, and they would think nothing about that, being around people who were supposed to be, not necessarily. In other words, they didn't stand away at arms length with people. They were great mixers. They would go to these Latin clubs and they'd dance with anybody you know. It was a good deal. Now Rex would probably have a table. See he would have Holland and his aunt, Mrs. Holland there and Governor Holland or Candidate Holland, and probably you know, these other people were there and came over and wanted to dance and they'd dance together. Nobody thought anything about it. But in this day and time if you had something like that—well, Christ, your friends Clendinen and Logan, man, they would love it! Have the goddamn cameras there taking pictures.

GM: Why don't you tell us again about the businesses switching the ballots?

MG: Well, all right, here's the story that was related to me. There was a fellow back—and by the way you all ought to talk sometime to Frank Alonzo. I told you about him. Didn't I tell you about Frank?

GM: No, you didn't mention him.

MG: Well, Frank Alonzo is a fellow who's been here a long, long time. He used to work for Lawrence Hernandez in the justice of the peace office. And he was very active in politics for many, many, many years, years ago before they had voting machines. His son is the chief deputy of the property appraiser's office, Daniels. And his name is—I think it's Frank Alonzo. His name's Frank, too. I think it's Frank Junior. But you ought to find

out from his daddy because there were certain different ways that they had so-called elections when they had these so-called controlled voters stole the votes.

There were certain ways that they did it. One way that they did it was that they would print additional blank ballots, the Australian ballot. And somebody would take these Australian ballots and he would be in charge of certain precincts. Well, if you had a city election, you had a city election board. So the city election board controlled the election because they would appoint different inspectors to handle the machinery of the election. If it was a county election, you had the county election board. But they were not together, you see. You had the city group and the county group and they were antagonistic to each other, politically.

GM: Were they appointed groups or elected groups?

MG: No, city election board—I believe initially when the law was created they were appointed, but after that they had to run. They had to run.

GM: I see.

MG: But you had the county election board, the city election board and purportedly—actually they were supposed to have been created to keep elections honest. But what happened was they went and got in control of it and they would put the machinery in that they wanted. Well, when they had the Australian ballot, and I said they had these additional ballots printed—

Say for instance John Doe would say, “Okay, now you have these precincts—which I’m going to rate this story—you have the precincts for Hyde Park and for Ybor City, okay? And here are our candidates that we want.” So he would take those ballots home. Well, over there in Ybor City they had districts and over there the justice of the peace and the constable were running out of that district. And in Hyde Park the justice of the peace and the constable were running out of that district, which would be two different sets of candidates. In other words, if you lived in Ybor City, you couldn’t be voting for the constable over there in Hyde Park or vice versa.

GM: Sure.

MG: So he would get the ballots of those precincts in Ybor City and at night he would mark them. And with all of the candidates that they wanted, for the governor’s race for the governor, and U.S. senator and whoever it was right on down the line. He’d mark the Hyde Park ballots too. So what he would do then, he would deliver those ballots to some say the chief inspector who was on their side, who was going to have charge of the Hyde Park precincts and he would give him the ballots to the Hyde Park precincts. And then he would go to the Ybor City man in charge of the precincts over there, and give him the ballots. So what happens is the election was over [and] they didn’t take the ballots to the courthouse. What they would do they’d close the doors at the precinct and count them

there. What they would do, they'd open the box where the good ballots went and they would put in the bad ballots, okay?

Well when they started to count the ballots over in Hyde Park they were counting Lawrence Hernandez and Hardee Graves, who were the constable people for Ybor City, and in Ybor City they were counting Hugh Culbreath and Joe (inaudible), who were there. So he had to go pick up the ballots and take them over there and switch them back. (laughter)

That's one story that was related to me which I thought was pretty good. And I'll tell you another story which was related to me. And this fellow's dead. If you'll cut it off I'll tell you. You'll remember his name.

LH: Well, why don't you just not mention his name and tell the story?

Pause in recording

GM: Is the 1934 election?

MG: Yeah. When Claude [Pepper] ran the first time. When was that?

GM: 1934.

LH: Park Trammell.

MG: Okay. Park Trammell was the United States senator. And of course the powers of the county was supporting Park Trammell, because he had always sort of you know, been very friendly to certain elements to all those so-called establishing him.

GM: Wasn't he from Lakeland too?

MG: Yes, initially yes. He was mayor of Lakeland. He was also attorney general of Florida. He was also governor of Florida and he was also the United States senator. He went right on up the ladder. He was quite a fellow.

But anyway they were supporting Park Trammell, and Claude Pepper was running.

GM: He was the one who up-started that point.

MG: That's correct. He ran a hell of a race and damn well beat him. There was a fire station in West Tampa on the corner of Main [Street] and Albany [Avenue]. Remember that fire station?

GM: Yes.

MG: Okay. I think it was Fire Station Number Five, I'm not sure. But that's where they used to have the precinct to vote in West Tampa. And of course that precinct was controlled by Charlie Wall. He had his people behind the tables and Dan Rokay was one of them. So Dan said that after the election was over they got to talking about "How many votes are we going to give Claude Pepper?" And one fellow said "Hell, don't give him any." And one man said "Man, you can't do that. Albert D'Arpa is a city councilman here. He's supporting Claude Pepper. He and his wife are supporting him. Albert's got a lot of supporters. He's got a big organization here. Man, that would look bad."

GM: And it was for that district.

MG: That's correct. It was in West Tampa in that district. And so he said "Man, don't do that." And they got to arguing over how many votes to give Claude Pepper. So finally, Rokay got on the telephone and he called old man Charlie. And he said, "What should I do?" And Charlie Wall said, "I'll send somebody over there." Well, now, you can imagine back in those days, a precinct is sealed off. The people are inside purportedly counting the votes, right? Outside are candidates, candidate supporters, deputy sheriffs and everybody. Nobody can go in. And all of a sudden up drives a car and Peter Ramos. You remember Peter Ramos?

GM: I remember the name.

MG: He was Charlie's little punk.

GM: He gets right out of the car and he walks right on into the precinct. So they tell Peter Ramos the story. That some guy doesn't want to give him any votes. And this guy over here wants to give him ten and one guy wants to give him five and they explain to Peter Ramos that "Albert D'Arpa's over here and he's a real strong candidate and everything and he's got a lot of friends and we've got to give him some votes." And Peter Ramos said, "Well, I'll tell you what we'll do. We're going to give Claude Pepper two votes, one for Mrs. D'Arpa and one from Albert. Everybody else (inaudible)." (laughter) And when they counted the precinct it was something like 3,554 for Trammell and two for Pepper.

LH: (laughter) Oh, God! Was that was the precinct that made the difference?

MG: That's right! That was one of them, probably one of them. You see they held out, I understand, around here. I was at the university, but these stories had been related to me and back in those days that was the name of the game. If you could get some of those, if you could get, Leland, some of those old, old, old results of the elections they would absolutely flabbergast you when you counted the Latin precincts. You could see—in other words, the candidate that was the machine candidate. You want to remember that Peter O. Knight, Senior, probably was the closest thing to a political boss that Florida ever had. Now Fuller Warren told me that, and Fuller Warren was a great student of history. He said, "If there ever came a man who was as close to being a political boss of Florida, it was Peter O. Knight, Senior."

LH: And what years would you that—?

MG: Well, I would say it was in the twenties [1920s] and early thirties [1930s]. Right after World War I you might say it started and it ceased. I'll tell you what. I think with Pat Whitaker coming into the picture, he became the competitor of Peter O. Knight, Senior, and I think he was the one who broke Peter O. Knight's political power. But P.O.—P.O., Old Man Senior, and I think it was a fellow named Doc—was it Cash or something, I think from Key West? And another fellow from Jacksonville—they'd get together and decide who was going to be the governor. Or who was going to be the U.S. senator.

LH: But in Tampa, Ybor City and West Tampa were definitely the delivery wards.

MG: Oh, yeah, they were. They were. You see, here's the whole thing you want to remember. Back in those days the people were a little bit different. You had too much crackers. There were crackers that would do what certain people did for them because they depended on them for help. But the Latin people, a lot of them, you know, they didn't know too much about politics. They didn't even want to come to town and pay their light bill, you know what I mean? They just didn't like to come to town. It wasn't that they were scared or anything they just didn't want to come to town.

LH: You're talking about the crackers?

MG: No, no, the Latin people.

LH: You mean coming downtown.

MG: That's right; a lot of them would send their children down to pay the gas bill, the water bill, the electric light bill. A lot of them didn't even speak good English.

LH: Didn't want to leave the neighborhood.

MG: That's right. I mean it was just one of those things. All of these people were all law abiding people. I mean they weren't—they were not law violators, they were always hard working people. But they were tolerant, why? In Europe for instance, say in Spain or in Italy or in Cuba, hell, gambling was nothing—they had a lot of reasons, you know what I mean? So they didn't frown on this kind of thing—

GM: They even had the lotteries there.

MG: That's right. They were liberal in all their thoughts. So they didn't frown on any of those things. So when it came to elections most of them would want to help a guy by telling them, Yeah, I'll vote for your candidate, why? Because if his candidate got in, he figured if he needed a little help he'd go see this guy. Sort of you became a ward boss. But they had little guys all over the place.

One of the things they would have, Leland, that was really funny— For instance let's say that Leland Hawes became the campaign manager for Joe Blokes. And so I wanted to go ahead and get paid to help Joe Blokes—so I would go see Leland Hawes. And I would give Leland Hawes a list of people that I said would vote would like I told them to. Leland Hawes would have down there the name of the person and their address.

Well, most people who were knowledgeable about politics would say, "Okay, give me your list people or four people on a list of about fifteen or twenty." See what I mean? And find out hey, so and so told us that, "Hell no, I don't have to do what he tells me," you know. And they would spot check it. They'd send somebody to go see maybe two or three at I mean? Some people would come in and try and run a list on you that was fictitious. Others did have it. Some would come with a list of fifty or seventy-five people, and make you think you had fifty or seventy-five votes. Well, then it got to the point that the thing got really organized. And it was organized primarily with the so-called syndicate that developed with the advent of Culbreth, Hixon and Farrier. That political group.

They actually had that thing, man, set down. A person who was supposed to be bringing a guy to the polls to vote that they had told him that was off of his list. When he would come and drive up with that person there would be somebody there that had some armband or some identification you had to give him a card and he'd have to show that the man was going into the precinct. Now they couldn't tell, now this was even when they had voting machines. This is when they had voting machines. Now he couldn't go in there and see how he voted, but then another guy would come along and start picking up all those cards and they'd go back to a central headquarters to see whether or not this fellow on his list was bringing those people to the polls. And if he wasn't, they'd get in touch with him and say, Hey, it's eleven o'clock and you've taken one guy to the polls, you know what I'm talking about? And they really had that thing organized.

LH: And they were really transporting him physically.

MG: Oh, definitely. Definitely and the guy there at the precinct would know his (inaudible) Fernandez. Where is she? Right over there.

LH: What was the payoff? How much per vote?

MG: Oh, one question per vote. You put a guy on the payroll and he'd chart—say for instance most of them would say, Okay, you want me to campaign for you? Yes. All right? And they would pay for their gas and they would pay for their lunch, say, and they would pay them something every week to campaign for them. And then on the damn day of the election they would give him twenty or twenty-five dollars, it wasn't much. In other words, they gave them a flat amount of money. They weren't paying them per vote. The ones that I knew, they'd pay them.

Most of them, though, clear—they did not pay until the election was over. And some of them were suckers. They would give the guy the money ahead of time. A hell a lot of those guys maybe wouldn't show, but the guys who were the wise guys who were really you know the pros—if you wanted to work for them they had the reputation that they were going to pay you. And so after the elections were over say the elections were on Tuesday? On Thursday or something they'd have a place where everybody went and got paid.

LH: Do you think there was an honest election in Tampa between 1930 and say 1950?

MG: Oh, hell yes, a lot of them. Christ, after they'd got the voting machines in there were a lot of honest elections. There was many a guy that ran that had—that didn't elected. I don't think they did much stealing when they had voting machines, very little. There used to always be some talk about somebody could get to the voting machines, they kept them in the warehouse and they could juggle them around, but let me tell you something. In 1940 Fuller Warren ran, and I had something to do with his campaign. There was a boy named Quayle was in charge of the voting machines in the warehouse. You remember Quayle? And I went to see Quayle and I took with me an engineer. And I looked at those machines. And he said, "Manny, there ain't nobody going to be able to fix all these damn machines." It'd just be a difficult thing. Now I certainly think you can do to any mechanical device, you know what I'm talking about? You can have a lever up there—

LH: Or a magnet or something?

MG: That's right. You can have a lever up there that's got the name of Leland Hawes, but when I pull that lever Leland Hawes's name is really not there. In other words, Manuel Garcia's there. And I may be getting his votes. In other words they start to claim on the back the numbers—there were all kinds of gimmicks, but there were lot of honest elections. Oh, yes, God. Just as honest as they are now.

GM: So the voting machines were a real breakthrough in that—

MG: Oh, I think so, gosh, yes. I'd say this, there probably was maybe a little repeating, you know what I mean? A guy might turn a deaf ear or blind eye to a guy that might come in to sign for somebody else you know? But overall when they did away with the poll tax—remember the poll tax?

GM: I guess that must have been—

MG: That was when you had to have the—you had to pay I think two dollars to have the right to go vote. You had to have that poll tax. In other words—

LH: Was that poll tax basically a holdover from the days of keeping the blacks from voting?

MG: I don't know if it was, but I am inclined to believe that it was. Because if you didn't have the poll tax then what they would do, they'd go out and pay it and buy poll taxes for all these people, see what I mean? So when the people voted they'd have to have the poll tax and they'd give it to them.

GM: Now what about the white municipal primary?

MG: Now, I don't know too much about that, but that was the one created where only white people were allowed to vote.

GM: That was a city election process only.

MG: City election. That's right.

LH: Did blacks play a role in politics in Tampa before the 1950s?

MG: Oh, gosh, let me tell you something. No, man, and you were scared to death. Let me tell you something. I can remember—and this was really ridiculous—when you didn't have a black come in your headquarters. No, you met him somewhere. I can remember the advent of old—you remember old Richardson?

GM: Dewey Richardson.

MG: Dewey Richardson. I can remember—we'd meet outside on the sidewalk. Better not come into it. Scared to death. When a candidate would come to town—like do you remember when we used to close Madison Street up between Tampa—I mean, Florida [Avenue] and Franklin, and they used to put the stand up there on the side of the building where—on Madison Street, where the Sun Bank is now? Do you remember that? When did you become active around here?

LH: Not really, until I finished school about 1950.

MG: Yeah. Well in 1948, say for instance Fuller Warren's campaign for governor, and before that, and probably maybe after that—maybe one campaign.

LH: By the old courthouse—

MG: Yeah, the courthouse square. But what they used to do, they'd put the speaker stand over the sidewalk and street up against the side of the building at Pendolas. And they would close up Franklin Street and Florida Avenue and put chairs all in the street and people would sit, and they usually had that rally on Saturday night, see? Well, I can remember like if it was yesterday—

LH: Well, that is when people still came to rallies.

MG: Oh, hell yes! And I remember old Doyle Carlton standing there in 1948 on a Saturday before the election. I'd talk him into making his damn speech in Tampa. Tuesday was the election and I talked him into making it Saturday before the election in Tampa. Doyle Carlton was standing there next to me and he looked around and said, "This is the biggest crowd that has ever been to a political rally in my lifetime in Tampa."

LH: How many people?

MG: Five thousand. That was lots and lots of people. We had about a thousand chairs and they were just screaming all over the courthouse, and all over the damn place. And Fuller—you know, he was really a hell of an orator, as you know, and he made a real bang-up speech. But when he got through, he would come down and shake hands and he would stand and the people would line up and come through. We used to stand there, three or four us, to make sure no niggers got in line. Because if they did somebody would take a picture of it of Fuller shaking hands with one of them and shoot it right up to West Florida. But the other candidates would do the same thing.

GM: Really?

MG: They didn't want any blacks shaking hands with them. No, man, God no.

LH: It was still considered a dangerous campaign tactic to photograph—

MG: Gosh, yes! Even in 1948. Then after that—of course these things started changing a great deal. But for a long time, man, you just did not want to get identified with a black. Nobody did.

LH: Do you want to talk about some of the candidates now? Or what—?

GM: Yes, why don't you do that?

LH: Curtis Hixon.

MG: Well, as far as I know about him, he used to be on the County Commission before my time. And then he became mayor.

LH: In 1942.

MG: That's right. He ran a drugstore on the corner of Nebraska [Avenue] and Columbus Drive.

LH: How does a drugstore owner get to be mayor of Tampa?

MG: Well, old Hixon had a lot of friends. He was an old timer here and he did have a lot of friends, and he started on the County Commission and he had a lot of friends. And a lot of people talked him into running. And he was running R.E.L. Chancey, who had been

here a long time, and who had become, you know, sort of worn and who had had a lot of bad publicity. And then with Chancey they had the Shoemaker cases. And it was an error when Chancey was not in the best—and Pat Whitaker had broken with Chancey. Pat Whitaker—

LH: He was his brother-in-law.

MG: Brother-in-law, and Pat Whitaker went on with Hixon. Charlie Wall stayed with Chancey. And most of the people around town here knew that Hixon had been on the County Commission like I was saying and had become really friendly with a lot of people. And he had a lot of supportive people. He was well regarded in the community. And he had a drugstore, it was true, but—and he was very tight with that money. And people used to kid him that he had one light bulb in the whole store; you had to sort of feel your way into the whole store.

(laughter)

LH: Some people would have suggested that Hixon was the first politician, the first mayor that began hiring Latins [at the] police department [and] fire department.

MG: Oh, God, no. R.E.L. Chancey hired a lot of them. Oh, yes. Oh, yeah. Oh, God, yes. Hixon, he hired some, but R.E.L. Chancey hired some too. You had to hire Latins, man. You had—for instance, on the City Council you had Cannella, D'Arpa, another city councilman. You had Benny Vigo—all these are Latins. You had a lot of Latins on the council.

LH: Well, even as far back as the D.B. McKay days when he was mayor.

MG: He was married to a Gutierrez.

LH: That's right. And I can't believe there was ever a time when there was discrimination against Latins.

MG: No. The only thing is this; you never did have many Latins in state government until Fuller Warren came along. Fuller Warren put in a lot of Latins in state government.

LH: But the way they got around it was to use the ward system. Where, if all the Latins live in Ybor City, they only have that chunk of power, whereas most of Tampa lived elsewhere. So the Latins—

MG: Yeah, but you want to remember the county commissioners ran county-wide. You had the governor ran county-wide. The senator ran county-wide. The mayor ran city-wide. In other words, if you are talking about the city councilman, that was the only thing that was the only thing that had ward politics on.

LH: When did the Latins acquire political clout as a voting bloc? When would you say that was?

MG: Oh, God, yes. Here's the whole thing, the Latin people really became active I think in politics back in the thirties [1930s], when certain elements in the community here decided to build up a political machine. You see, Latin people that first came to Tampa that were law-abiding people like I said had to depend on people that spoke English to get things done for them. They didn't know what to do. So there was always a guy in the community there—some Latin who spoke Latin, but spoke good English, you know what I mean? And get them interested. What? To him it meant something because he was going to benefit by either financially, [or] he was going to get a job and this and the other.

Side A ends; side B begins

MG: —became a political factor except when I came to Tampa they were a political factor, and they were a strong political factor in the early thirties [1930s]! When they didn't have any voting machines. My God, everybody knows that. And that was because I think that people like Charlie Wall, Peter O. Knight, which were two powerful people here, Pat Whitaker and those people. They utilized those people.

LH: Wouldn't you say that when the second generation came in, the kids who could speak English—

MG: Oh, that's the ballgame. That's right. Once that happened that was the ballgame was over. They became very independent. For instance, once for instance—once Ybor City lost that Latin flavor that they had, you know, which it don't have now, and you had those second generations of people came along that they went to high school at least or went to college—and they spoke as good English as anybody else.

LH: But I was thinking though that their influence in politics probably went back to the kids who at least got through enough school that they were pretty conversant.

MG: Oh, yeah.

LH: And so that would be back in the twenties [1920s], maybe mid-twenties [1920s] or somewhere through there, that from then on the political influence began to grow.

MG: Well, you know the Latins that came here, I wouldn't say they were subservient, but they had to be depending on other people for a lot things. All they knew was to go to the cigar factory and make the cigars, primarily. But when it came to anything else, you understand what I mean? They had to look to somebody to help them. And it became that they looked to the politician to help them, or the guy in the community that they felt had some leadership or had some influence. That fellow that had the leadership would say, "An election's coming up and I have a friend running," it was to his benefit to get his friend in and this guy would say, "Sure, I'll be glad to help you in any way I can,

why? Because he would look to this man to help him. It was lack of education and know-how on the part of the people, originally.

LH: Would you say that the labor organizations had any influence?

MG: Not at that time. I remember when Charlie Sole was president of the American Federation of Labor. They never did have real—now, the Cigar Makers' Union did.

LH: That's what I was—

MG: Oh, yeah, the Cigar Makers Union did, but the regular labor union as you and I know it, the A.F. of L., the C.I.O. and those people. They didn't have a muscle until later on in years.

LH: When these cigar strikes were going on—

MG: Oh, yeah.

LH: —weren't they looking to politics as a means of gaining influence at that time?

MG: Well, you see the thing—in that case the cigar maker when he went on a strike it was against that cigar manufacturer for wages or for working conditions. Now, if you find out that a guy was running and he can identify with the cigar manufacturer you were in trouble. He wasn't going to identify with the cigar manufacturer. He was going to that labor temple over there and do business with those labor leaders. He was going to get out of identifying with the manufacturer.

LH: Would you think the labor leaders had any influence at all in helping get the vote going?

MG: Oh, sure. Oh, definitely. And they had the organizations. You had Mario Ozpeita, who became the president of the international union of cigar makers. He was from Tampa. And that fellow named Diaz that used to wear a little hearing aid, remember him?

LH: Frank Diaz.

MG: Frank Diaz. I represented him. He and I and Bill Pierce carried his case to the Supreme Court of Florida, and won it. They tried to prosecute him for perjury. He had signed an affidavit that he had never belonged to or advocated communism or some damn thing and they had a—he had a job over at the (inaudible). And somebody claimed that he had entered a meeting in New Orleans years before, some damn meeting of communists. Anyway, they tried to prosecute him, but we went to the Supreme Court of Florida and won it all the way.

LH: You know, I had forgotten that situation. He was like the general secretary for the whole cigar makers union.

MG: Exactly! That's right! He was no question about it. And Mario (inaudible) was the president.

LH: And I guess he was a victim of that McCarthy-type thinking—

MG: Exactly.

LH: —in the fifties [1950s], because I remember that was about the time it happened.

MG: That's correct. Yeah. That's right. And we went to the Supreme Court of Florida. And Bill Pierce and I represented him, represented Brother Diaz on that case.

LH: Now was he involved in politics to any extent?

MG: Well, no, he was involved in politics this— As far as they were concerned and Mario—to them the main thing about politics was to protect the Cigar Makers' Union. But, they would have friends, and they would help other friends from time to time that they thought might be helpful to them. You want to remember that back in those days that people would be looking for a lot of help in politics. I mean, some guy might need to get into the hospital or something and couldn't get a bed, or another guy couldn't pay his rent, and he'd say, "Well, let me go see your landlord."

LH: Well, those were Depression days.

MG: I mean it was those things, you know, and it was just a matter of survival. For instance during—old man Charlie Wall, what did he do?

GM: Christmas.

MG: Yeah, he went all over Ybor City with big baskets full of food, you know what I mean? Turkeys and all. Well, hell he was regarded as a very generous fellow. What? But Charlie had that gambling casino, right? He also needed politics to, you know, to keep in power. And he had a multitude of friends. They all thought Charlie Wall was a fine man and he was. There was nothing wrong with Charlie.

LH: Well, how was it possible for an Anglo-Saxon like Charlie Wall?

MG: I'll tell you the answer to that. When Charlie gets into the picture most of those Latins couldn't speak good English. All right? And they wanted to go ahead and take some favors with politicians. They would get Charlie to do the talking for them because he for instance was of the old families here, he knew his way around, and he was a clever guy. And he was able to get these people and surround himself with a lot of Latins, and show them how to make money and how to build up a political organization.

LH: Could he speak Spanish or Italian?

MG: Charlie spoke a little Spanish, not a lot. But he could speak the King's English when he wanted to or he could talk out of the side of his mouth both ways.

LH: Nick Nuccio.

MG: Now Nick Nuccio was really a fellow that's—I don't know how to describe that fellow. But if there ever was a fellow who was a politician, it was Nick Nuccio. No question about it.

LH: Will we ever see the likes of him again?

MG: Not that kind. Here is a fellow who could hardly speak good English. He was tired and mean and runs for mayor. But I'll tell you what, when he ran, he ran at an appropriate time. He could not have gotten elected at any other time. You will recall that Hixon died. The chairman of the City Council is—

LH: J.L. Young.

MG: J.L. Young. J.L. Young was from Sulfur Springs. J.L. Young had gotten involved, if you remember—

LH: Pretty sleazy guy—?

MG: —with something over Safety Harbor concerning a crooked election [and] firearms and they had with—do you remember what I'm talking about? I don't know the exact history, but you probably know about it.

LH: He was arrested during the thirty-five [1935] election.

MG: That's correct. Something like that. And of course J.L. was over at Sulfur Springs, and he had sort of changed his image, but all of that was brought out.

LH: It was pretty rough territory in Sulfur Springs—

MG: That's correct. Do you remember a fellow named—he's dead now too, Doc Rosenthal—ran in that race. Do you remember that?

LH: He was a dentist, right?

MG: Dr. Rosenthal, yes. He used to also be a city alderman, [on] City Council for what is now known as Skid Row, that area.

LH: I had forgotten that he ran in that race.

MG: Yes, he did! Yes, he did. He didn't get many votes.

LH: It was sort of a comeback.

MG: That's correct, that's right. And Doc Rosenthal ran, and of course Nick Nuccio won. And if it had been anybody else running, Nick wouldn't have made it because at the next election he gets defeated by Julian Lane, remember? And then he turns around and he beats Julian.

LH: How?

MG: What?

LH: How?

MG: Well, it's just one of those things. Julian just made a lot of mistakes. He created a lot of problems. One mistake that he made, he got a lot of bad publicity through poor Benny and Tony Gonzala. Remember all that bad publicity.

GM: Benny was his brother and Tony Gonzala was the garage man.

MG: That's correct. The "Wrecker Man" and certain things that they did, I don't recall them all right now, but it created lots and lots of bad order. Remember something about Benny and another guy had a contract to cut all of the weeds of lots, do you know what I mean? And they were charging these exorbitant prices and then something about the wrecker contract that Tony Gonzala got, remember? And then you remember about the time that supposedly Whitey Weiss had the Royal American shows and somebody came to see him who purportedly that wanted to get a political contribution of five thousand dollars for Julian and he indicted Tony Gonzala. And then he was acquitted, and he claimed that they were charging him with extortion, but they couldn't prove it. Remember that? All of those things came out. Remember they had the damn black box when Nick Nuccio ran that was supposed to be the diamond bracelet that Whitey Weiss, who was head of all the Royal American shows, gave to Mrs. Lane, Julian's wife. Don't you remember all that damn stuff? And Julian was an honest mayor, but he was just naïve as hell.

LH: Was he the creation of the *Tribune*?

MG: The *Tribune* made him. Listen, Julian Lane came to my office to run for City Council. And I get him a political contribution the time he ran for mayor and he went around and he went around—and people said, Why don't you run for mayor if you're going to run for council? Why don't you run for mayor? And he ended up running for mayor.

LH: How would you describe Nuccio's relationship with the *Tribune*?

MG: Not very good, not very good. I don't think the *Tribune* liked him at all, and they never did think much of him. I will say one thing; he did have real strong friends. There was no question about it. I mean he had a lot of cracker friends. I'm going to tell you a little story.

I was a member of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, and the county commissioners were supposed to reapportion the county commissioners' districts from every ten years or whatever it is, to divide up the population evenly just like you reapportion the state. And I was chairman of this committee, and we decided that we were going to get the county commissioners to reapportion the county commissioners' districts. And they paid a deaf ear to us. So I sat down and I drew through the county, and we divided up the vote. And of course the old fifth district—you remember Ruskin and that? I mean they had 2500 voters, and say for instance the Hyde Park District had twenty-five thousand voters, you know, just a lopsided thing. So we took—and I started dividing all the districts and I will never forget the people that started calling me for Nick Nuccio, "For Christ's sake, don't put Nick in Sulfur Springs!" (laughter) "Don't put Nick in Sulfur Springs." They did not want old Nick to go to Sulfur Springs. Well, later on we didn't put him. We drew up the district lines where finally, the county commissioners adopted our district lines. We went and presented it to old man Fred Ball and the county commissioners and they adopted our plan.

GM: What year would you guess that was?

MG: Well, let's see. I was out of law school. I'd say it had to be—

GM: Thirty-nine [1939] or forty [1940]?

MG: Someplace in there. No, wait a minute, just a second, hell no. Let me tell you something. Why no, I believe it was after I came out of the Army in 1946, because I think I was assistant county solicitor at the time. I believe that was when it happened, when I was assistant county solicitor when I came out of the Army.

LH: Do you have any Nuccio stories when he was county commissioner? What was the basis of his power as county commissioner?

MG: One thing is, man, he was up at 4:30 in the morning and he didn't go to bed until 11:00, and he was always seeing people and bent those sidewalks and those benches and he'd put the stamp down there. He was just—he was just a politician from A to Z, from one to one hundred. He would go visit people. Always doing favors, doing favors—and he was the fellow who would do them. If you would come to see Nick Nuccio about something—let me give you an example: You'd go see old man Fred Ball. He was chairman of the Board of the County Commission, and you say, "Fred, I need a load of dirt over there in my backyard. I've got a place when it rains over there in my yard that thing gets full of water. How about getting me a load of dirt and dump it over there?" I remember back in the old days—

LH: That was a particular form of patronage in those days.

MG: That's right, getting a load of dirt. So old man Fred Ball had a yellow pad there and he would say, "Sure!" And he would write, "Manuel M. Garcia, such and such had that dirt." You wouldn't get it. So you would go back to see him. "I forgot all about it." So he would write it down again. (laughter) You wouldn't get it. Go back again. If you went to see Nick Nuccio and you were not in his district, you'd get the load of dirt.

LH: Credits, for free?

MG: Because you know, I've got a pond over there. Or you'd say, "Hey, Nick, I need a light up here." You know, "It's dark in the corner and my kids like to get out there and play at night, you know?" Or, "We need a sidewalk here." Hell, he'd go to fetch us the coal and get the cement from him. And what he would do, he would get the materials for nothing. [He'd get a] contribution.

GM: He was very slick with the Cone Brothers Construction Company.

MG: That's right. He would get all the materials and what he would do, he would use the labor out of his commissioners' districts. You see the commissioners all had districts and they had what was known as a foreman. And they, you know, they repaired roads, and repaired bridges and all of that, and maintained them—county roads. And he would get that crew to go out and lay out a sidewalk. Who the hell could criticize Nick Nuccio for building a sidewalk for little children to walk on to go to school, for Christ's sake? (laughter)

GM: Do you think he got the cement for those benches from the Cone Brothers too?

MG: Yes, he did. I understand that he used to get it—go over there and get it done for nothing. He would go over there and say, "I want you all to do this for me." And I tell you what, he was a very loyal friend.

LH: He could make a living just being county commissioner, I mean he—?

MG: He was never a guy that was a big spender. He lived in a very modest house in Ybor City. That, you know, just very modest, an old two-story house there. And the main thing with Nick is that you ate good. But it was just a goddamn modest house; a sand street. There was sand in front of his house. [It was] not paved.

GM: And even when he was mayor, he said he wasn't going to fool with getting it paved because he figured he didn't want people to think he was throwing his influence around.

MG: That's right.

LH: Describe the morning in Cuervo's.

MG: Well, all I know is he got there early in the morning and my friend, [and] everybody who wanted to see Nick talk about anything, he was there. And he would do favors left and right and it didn't make any difference where you lived. He just had an ambition to be mayor, and he got to be mayor.

LH: Before you got here Gary and I were talking about Cuervo's and the Columbia. Do you think Cuervo's ever really had much influence as an in spot other than that one time when Nuccio was there?

MG: Oh, no, Nick Nuccio built that one. Before that it was the Columbia. Always, you take an election—hell, every politician before he went home he would come by the Columbia. [They'd] go down to that coffee shop. The Columbia was, you know, the place to go to see and meet with anybody. But when it came to elections, boy that was the place. Las Novedades also when it operated, but the Columbia primarily.

GM: Casimiro Hernandez?

MG: Lawrence Hernandez for J.P. He was the main—Casimiro ran the restaurant, but Lawrence was the justice of the peace. And he and his brother owned the restaurant. But Lawrence was the real politician. He was the one who made the Columbia. He made the Columbia.

GM: Speaking [of] the ethnics here, Nuccio was the son of a Sicilian. Dick Greco was the son of a Sicilian. Cubans had more immigrants than any other group. Why do you have no Cuban politicians in Tampa?

MG: You got a man named Bob Martinez who was mayor.

GM: He was Spanish though, I think, right? Let's say before 1970.

MG: Well, let's go on back. Let me see now, let's go on back. I'm trying to think. You had a guy named Fernandez one time who was on the county commissioners.

GM: You also had Phil Licata. That was way back.

MG: I don't know about him, but you had a fellow named Fernandez on the county commissioners many, many years ago before my time in the thirties [1930s].

LH: What about Henry Garcia?

MG: Henry Garcia was a city councilman.

LH: He was a city councilman.

MG: Yes, you had him.

GM: Frank Cannella.

MG: Well Frank was Italian. And you had Albert D'Arpa. He was Italian. You had Benny Vigo, that was Spanish. And it's like I said, Henry Garcia.

LH: Benny Vigo was very close to Hixon.

MG: Yes. Well, then you had Lawrence Hernandez, who was justice of the peace.

LH: Julio Palaez.

MG: Julio Palaez was city councilman.

LH: Let me rephrase. Would it make any difference? Would Italians vote for—?

MG: No, let me tell you something. There was always back in those days, a little bit of jealousy between them. The Italian was a real clever fellow. He would come to you and say, "You know we better vote for Scagnioni, why? You know he's a Latin." You see? That's what they would say. But the Cuban would come along and say don't vote for so and so because he is Latin, but because he is Cuban or Spaniard.

LH: Are you saying the Cubans were less likely to vote for Nuccio?

MG: There was a little bit of jealousy there between them, but the Italian was a little more clever. He was more clannish. The Cubans and the Spaniard fought amongst each other. The Italians didn't. They were more clannish. They were sort of like the Jewish people. They were clannish. They would stay with the group.

LH: Do you think the Cuban versus Spaniard business actually had its roots in the Spanish American War?

MG: I don't know.

LH: I guess that would have been pretty far back.

MG: I don't know, Leland—

GM: I bet it would—

MG: But getting back to this thing about the Spaniard and the Italian. The Italian was, I believe, more clannish, you know what I mean? The Spaniard was—not as clannish, but he did have a following amongst people. And I am just trying to think when you say that there weren't any, I know that there were, I'm trying to think. Of course you had D.B. McKay and you had Chancey, and then you had Hixon. And then after Hixon you had Nuccio, and then you got, after Nuccio then we come into, Greco. And then you come into—

GM: Of course West Tampa had Figueredo in there was Cubans—

MG: Well, you had West Tampa; that was municipality.

GM: Right. Until—

MG: One time, old man Hugh MacFarlane—

GM: Right.

MG: —who was the grandfather of the Hugh MacFarlane of the law firms here.

GM: Right.

MG: I'll tell you a story about Hugh MacFarlane. This story was related to me and I had it confirmed by two people, Charlie Wall and old man Howard MacFarlane.

Mr. Hugh MacFarlane was a very prominent lawyer in Tampa, and he was [the] political boss in West Tampa. In fact he was the man who created West Tampa, very, very powerful fellow. And a very intelligent guy, and a very, very good lawyer. But he spoke with a Scottish brogue. Charlie Wall was a young fellow around town and I'm talking about way back. And right after World War—after World War I, say the early twenties [1920s], 1920 or twenty-one [1921], and twenty-two [1922], twenty-three [1923]—right in there. And Wall was sort of a young fellow and Hugh liked him.

Once in a while Mr. Hugh MacFarlane would drive on up to Tallahassee on a case, and he'd have Charlie Wall drive him. And of course you would start off in the morning early and got up there. You had a long way to go. And between Tallahassee and Tampa about halfway there used to be a place you could stop and eat, what they used to call a roadside café. And they had a shelled in parking area, a big plate glass window looking out on the highway. Well, Mr. Hugh MacFarlane had been representing some very famous car thieves here, named Slick Silver and Cannonball Wells. (laughter) That was their names. And back in those days—

LH: I went to school with Slick Silver's son.

MG: —they could steal—they could steal an automobile, and take it into one of these warehouses, and very promptly paint it and change the serial numbers. And back in those days you didn't have all these secret things that you have today. And in addition to that it was very easy to get to a title somewhere. So a guy could steal your car, you get never get it identified, and never could get it recovered because you couldn't prove it was yours.

So he went representing Slick Silver and Cannonball Wells all over Florida, and very successfully—they had never gone to jail. And when Charlie Wall and old man Hugh MacFarlane came in and they parked over in the driveway, Mr. Hugh MacFarlane had his

Packard automobile. And they got out and they went into this place and they were sitting down and having a little lunch, a big plate glass window there looking out over the highway and the driveway of the parking area. And all of a sudden in drove this car and who was in the automobile, but Slick Silver and Cannonball Wells. And old man Hugh MacFarlane jumped up from the table and ran outside. Charlie Wall looked and saw them talking to him and he came back in. And Wall said to Mr. Hugh, “Mr. Hugh, what did you go out there and see Slick Silver and Cannonball Wells about?” And Mr. Hugh said, “I wanted to go out there to tell them that that Packard out there was my car!”

(laughter) A pretty good story.

LH: That’s terrific!

MG: Oh, dear me.

LH: Dick Greco?

MG: Well, Dick Greco was a nice boy. And he didn’t have much moxie, and he was just lucky. He ran for city councilman here, [and] lived over there on Davis Island. And who did he run against? I forget, but it was somebody—Stribling.

LH: Fletcher Stribling.

MG: Somebody that anybody could have beaten. Fletcher Stribling had gotten in a lot of trouble around here. He had been indicted, been acquitted. But he did a lot of drinking. And at one time he probably had one of the best political futures of anybody in Tampa. He had a tremendous World War II record and [was] a colonel. And [had] all kind of decorations. He came to Tampa and he married Jim—[Pickard] daughter.

LH: Pickard.

MG: Jim Pickard, who was the (inaudible) at Florida Hotel. Never will forget—Jim Pickard called me up—who, by the way, Jim Pickard later became—he was a city councilman, remember?

LH: That’s right.

MG: For a while. He ran over there in Henry Garcia’s district. Well, Jim Pickard called me up one day and asked me if I would come over to the hotel. And he said, “Look, I’ve got a son-in-law who is going to run and I want you to help him.” And I said, “Who is it?” And he said, “Fletcher Stribling.” And I said, “Tell me about him.” And he told me and I said, “Jesus, that boy there could, you know—” And here he was, handsome fellow, articulate, with a hell of a World War II record. And he ran and he won it wide. I mean he ran and got elected just going away. And all of a sudden my friend, the poor devil just turned that corner.

LH: He had been a drunk all along.

MG: Oh, had he?

LH: Yes.

MG: Well, anyway, he got to drinking, and gosh, I mean he got into so much trouble left and right. When Dicky ran against him I mean anybody could have beat Stribling.

LH: Right.

MG: So Dicky gets elected. So Dicky gets over there and he gets—he's a nice looking fellow, everybody likes him. And there's a chance there to run for mayor, and a fellow named Nick Nuccio is mayor. And so Dick Greco decides to run, you know, with a young group of people, and gets the *Tribune's* support. And he just overwhelmed everybody as being, I don't know, just a clean face, a new face, a youth—a something. But he had a hell of an organization. He really did. And Nick had one too, but—

LH: As I recall, Dick Greco had people like Tom McMullen out of Billy Poe's (inaudible).

MG: No, those were Nick Nuccio's men.

LH: Oh, that's right! That's right.

MG: Tom McMullen was Nuccio's man.

LH: Yes. I'm remember that campaign, but Tom was—

MG: Tom McMullen was Nuccio's man when he ran against Julian Lane with the black box, remember?

LH: That's right.

GM: That's right.

LH: I talked to him about that. Would you say that Dick Greco was the first modern mayor of Tampa's history? Whatever that means. Could you comment on that?

MG: Well, I'll tell you what. There was no—I'll tell you what, actually when you talk about modern man, a modern mayor, you've got—I got to ask you the next question. A fellow that—the first man that actually did anything to show progress in the city of Tampa was Nick Nuccio. He goes ahead—even though they called it the “great train robbery,” remember? When we—cause I used to write up all the ads for Julian Lane when he was running against Nick, and that was one of them, “the great train robbery.” And when they bought all that land for millions of dollars that he gave to the railroad,

then it wasn't worth that. What did Nick Nuccio do? He started that little place out there, Fairyland? What is it? Disney—

LH and GM: (together) Lowry Park.

MG: Lowry Park and all that stuff out there. He cleared up all of this here and he put—

LH: Called the Riverfront.

MG: And that's right, and he put the Curtis Hixon Hall in there. He started the library and he started doing things—the bridge to Davis Island.

LH: The Brorein Street Bridge.

MG: The Brorein Street Bridge. He started progress! Nobody was—when Hixon was in there, Hixon was very tight with money. Man, you wouldn't think of floating the—oh, no! Nothing like that to raise any money. They didn't want to have the city in debt. But old Nick did, and oh, boy, he just expanded. And he was the one that really did more.

LH: Different styles, is that the bottom line?

MG: What?

LH: The difference then between Nuccio and Greco, [was it] style?

MG: Oh, I would think so. Nick, he was an old man that could hardly speak good English. And here was [Greco] a young attractive guy, that although he was a Latin, he'd been raised over here on this side of town, you know what I mean?

LH: Spoke with a Southern accent.

MG: That's right.

GM: Skeet shooter.

MG: That's right, and all that. But as far as being a politician is concerned he couldn't compare with Nick. I don't know enough about that damn race, really, to tell you too much about it, because I didn't get involved in it too much.

LH: I think what I'd like is to visit the modern era. I know you were involved in the fifties [1950s] Smathers [and] Pepper race right?

MG: Oh, God, yes, up to my ass. (laughter) I was backing Fuller Warren's forty-eight [1948] campaign for governor, and [later] Smathers' 1950 race, yes. And we did a lot of bad things.

LH: How about—is the story apocryphal? The famous Smathers story in the Panhandle about that Claude Pepper was celibate and—

MG: He practiced celibacy before he was married and that his sister was a thespian. (laughter)

LH: In wicked New York?

MG: In wicked New York. All those things, that's true. And those are all things that are true. (laughter) There is no question about it. They were saying those things and these people were buying it up. They didn't know what they were reading, and they didn't know actually the connotations—

LH: Manny, who cooked that up?

MG: What?

LH: Who cooked that up?

MG: I don't know who cooked it up, really. I'll tell you what, there was a Griner Hotel in Jacksonville and the Griner Hotel down on the lower floor. In other words, I don't know if at one time it might have been a cellar or something, but anyway that's where Smathers had an apartment down there. And about two blocks away we had this two story white house we ran the campaign out of. And Bill Jeb had a lot to do with the campaign. Dick Danner had a lot to do with the campaign.

LH: Had Dick Danner been in law school with you all?

MG: No, Dick Danner was head of the F.B.I. in Miami. And what he had done, he was—George Smathers got to be an assistant U.S. attorney in Miami, and he prosecuted the county solicitor down there in the famous Paloma case where they were supposed to have had—

LH: Is this the Paloma gambling club?

MG: That's right. And where they were supposed to have had these women and have debauchery and all that stuff and prostitution and convicted that fellow. What the hell was his name? Anyway, and that made George. And then he ran for Congress. And he ran against the—that fellow—

LH: Pat Cannon?

MG: Pat Cannon. And that after Pat Cannon he served in Congress and then he ran the United States Senate against Claude Pepper. And of course all those things—it was a very dirty campaign. Everybody knew—up to this day—that Claude Pepper was not a communist. What Pepper was was a real liberal. And actually [what] he lost sight of was

the fact that he lived in a conservative state. And everything that he practiced is what a guy would do in New York, you know, or Chicago, or something like that. He advocated what we called at that time socialized medicine. But my God in heaven, the doctors raised money for George Smathers coming out of his ears. You remember the psychiatrist here, Sam Gibbs?

LH: Yes.

MG: He was the chairman of the doctors' division here. I could call up Sam Gibbs in that campaign and say, "Sam, we've got to have some money and we've got to have it by tomorrow at five o'clock."

[Sam:] "How much?"

[MG:] "Five thousand dollars."

[Sam:] "You'll get it." Those doctors gave Smathers money coming out of their ears. Why?

LH: Did you ever get reported in those days?

MG: No, it wasn't like it is today. I don't think there was any limit on what you could give and you know.

LH: Right.

MG: But if there was, I am sure they handled it, you know, legally.

LH: There were ways to conceivably—

MG: Oh, yeah. Well back, I know [when] Fuller Warren ran I said, "All that was was a man could not spend more than 3500 dollars." Of course the candidate would say, "Well, I didn't know who was spending this money for me." And nobody said anything about it, you know. And that wasn't only Fuller Warren, hell, all the rest of the candidates. Everybody was that way. But Smathers and Pepper had this very, very, very knock dang drag out.

Now I'll tell you a little story, and I have never been able to preserve these letters, but George Smathers had an uncle named William H. Smathers, who was the United States Senator from New Jersey. He was a "Hague Man." You've heard of Hague.

LH: Boss Hague?

MG: Mayor Hague or "I am the boss" Hague.

LH: "I am the boss" Hague.

MG: That's right. That is correct. He was William H. Smathers from New Jersey. He was the U.S. Senator. Claude Pepper was a U.S. Senator at the same time. Through George Smathers's uncle, Claude Pepper, they arranged for George to become an assistant U.S. attorney down on the lower East Coast. But I want to tell you something here that few people know. In 1938, I guess it was, Claude Pepper was running for the U.S. Senate. Mark Wilcox was running for the U.S. Senate, and Dave Sholtz was running for the U.S. Senate. At the University of Florida we all had three campaigns going. I was campaign manager for Dave Sholtz. Ben Crinsmon was campaign manager for Mark Wilcox and George Smathers was campaign manager for Claude Pepper. (laughter)

LH: Is that right?

MG: How do you like that? That actually is the truth. So anyway, George gets to be a U.S. attorney and he gets the Paloma case and it catapults him up front. Dick Danner at that time is head of the F.B.I. in Florida, and actually he works with George in that damn Paloma case because it was a federal case. And then after that when he ran for Congress, Danner quit as an F.B.I. agent and he was George's campaign manager for Congress and later was his campaign manager for the United States Senate. And he was the boy that Ribauld Ribozzo gave the one hundred thousand dollars to Dick Danner for Howard Hughes. That later comes out.

But anyway, we put on that campaign and Danner used to come up here and we'd meet. And I'll tell you who the fellow was who really strong for Smathers was: old Major Thomas Seller. Remember Major Thomas Seller from Polk County, who was head of the lobby of truckers for years? Whose brother was at one time Peter Thomas Seller, who was Speaker of the House?

Well, they used to come up here and we used to talk about it. And then old Major Thomas Seller says to me while Danner and I were sitting there and he said, "You're gonna need some money down here for George, aren't you?" And I said, "Well, I don't know what I can spend it on." And he said, "Well, why don't you let me give you some money and see what you can do with it." And I won't forget it; he gave me four thousand dollars. Well, I remember spending four hundred dollars with a little labor group down here, which I knew wasn't going to do a hell of a lot of good because they didn't like Claude Pepper—although Claude Pepper had all the labor unions. And I never will forget when I sent that 3600 dollars from Major Thomas Seller back. The major came up to my office and I told him I had his money and he said, "You know, I'm a son of a bitch, but you're the only fellow that ever gave me my money back." In fact, I got a call from Smathers and Smathers's brother Frank, who was acting down there as treasurer for Smathers. He just couldn't believe it, that I had given back the 3600 dollars. But that was a dirty campaign. Claude was not the man that should have been subjected to that.

But I am going to tell you what I'm getting to, some letters. And I know I have gotten them. Jack Simpson one time had these letters, and goddamn, he was looking for them. I

tried to preserve a lot of things that have happened. I still got the nose and the glasses that they're printed on.

LH: The Pepper Campaign.

MG: The Pepper campaign, I still have that. But when Claude Pepper was running against Smathers and Smathers' putting out all of this propaganda about him being a pinko and about Stalin and having his arm around Robeson—the black, you know—and the picture of Mr. and Mrs.—

LH: That was Paul Robeson.

MG: Yeah, and have a picture of Claude Pepper and his wife with Joe Stalin, which was a set up picture. They set it up, you know, and fixed it where she was there.

LH: That was a long time—

MG: Yeah, and she had the mink coat on and Stalin gave her the mink coat and a lot of garbage. When Claude Pepper finally had some letters that George had written him. And George was in the Marine Corps during World War II and wanted to get out when the war was over. And you know a lot of people were being held in there, because once you started releasing troops—the commander of that area, you know, his troops got down he'd drop from a general to a colonel, or from a colonel to a lieutenant, and everybody was trying to hold everybody in. Smathers was trying to get out. And he was sitting at one of those islands in the Pacific and he kept writing Claude Pepper these letters in his own handwriting. And of course he was writing, "My Dear Senator" and "My Dear Friend," and of course he would flatter him very much about what fine job he was doing as a U.S. Senator and blah-blah-blah, and this, that, and the other, but always the main purpose and mood of the letter was trying to get out of the Marines Corps, and always, "I want to get home," and "I wish you would do what you could for me," and blah-blah-blah. And Claude started printing all these letters that Smathers had, and running them in the paper.

But the one thing about that letter, each one of them, although [they] flattered Claude about what a hell of a senator he was and about George trying to get out, when he ended that letter he did not end it "Cordially" or "Sincerely" or "Your Friend." He ended every one of them "Devotedly." (laughter) Every one of them was "Devotedly." That was the dirty campaign.

LH: Who won Tampa?

MG: What?

LH: Who won the Tampa area? Pepper or Smathers?

MG: I think—Pepper; Pepper carried Dade County over Smathers by a thousand votes. In fact, Bill Pierce lost—Bill Pierce won a bet on that. Bill Pierce, in my presence—

LH: He was a Tampa lawyer.

MG: —bet Seth Deckle 2500 dollars that Claude Pepper would carry Dade County. And old Seth Deckle immediately took it. You know, what the hell? Smathers is from Dade County. Damn, Claude beat him by a thousand votes in Dade County. I forget who carried who carried this. I believe George might have carried it. I'm not sure.

LH: And I believe that the *Tribune* supported Smathers.

MG: Oh, yes! That's what—you know about the TV station, don't you?

LH: Oh, yes.

MG: Smathers went to bat for them and got the TV station. The *St. Petersburg Times* caught him. And the two competitors here for the TV station, for WFLA-TV, was the *Tampa Tribune* and the *St. Petersburg Times*. *St. Petersburg Times* was Claude Pepper.

LH: However, wasn't that a little before—I mean, the competition for the TV station really didn't come until two or three years later.

MG: Oh, it came after that! Yeah, long after that. It's true.

LH: So it wasn't really part of the campaign.

MG: Oh, no!

LH: But in the aftermath—

GM: Right.

MG: Yeah, in the aftermath.

LH: The *Tribune* went to Smathers for support and its TV bid, and the *St. Pete Times* went to Pepper.

MG: That's correct. That's correct. Since *St. Petersburg Times* endorsed Claude Pepper, but—

LH: And I can remember when Pepper was running again in 1956, trying to regain his Senate seat against Spessard Holland.

MG: That's correct, and I supported Claude.

LH: Why on that occasion he was just really chagrined when St. Pete supported Holland in that race—

MG: That's right.

LH: —because by then they were competing for Channel 10.

MG: Exactly.

LH: And they figured that Holland would help them in that.

MG: That's correct.

LH: And they lost out again.

MG: That's right. That's correct. Well, anyway, Claude got a bad deal in that 1950 election. But he was coming down; you know, every time you look at those races with Claude, he starts to get less votes every time. Remember that fellow in Jacksonville that later became president of Stetson University's accounting judge?

LH: J. Ollie Edmunds.

MG: Right. He ran, and he ran one hell of a race against Claude.

LH: That was in the war.

MG: That's correct. He ran one hell of a race against him and Claude should have beat him, you know, just going away. By that, I mean he got a lot of votes. And Claude's votes started coming down all along because—

LH: Well, he had veered from what was essentially a conservative state.

MG: That's correct. You know he went for—everything that we got today that you can't repeal like Medicare and like Social Security, Claude was a champion. You want to remember that when Claude Pepper went up there, he became Roosevelt's weather man, and I will never forget one time in *Time Magazine*—no, *Life—Time Magazine*. They had a picture of Claude Pepper down there, and over there in the corner they had a little weather vane. And it said, "Roosevelt's weather vane."

LH: Well, I can remember a picture of Claude Pepper being hanged in effigy in Washington in about 1938 because he was considered a warmonger and tried to aid the British.

MG: That's correct. On the Land-Lease.

LH: That's right.

MG: That's right. Well, I'll tell you what. He got a very bad deal. George Smathers told me that when he got elected to the U.S. Senate and he walked into the Senate chamber for the first time, the man who greeted him was "Mr. Republican" Senator [Robert] Taft of Ohio. And he embraced Smathers as if Smathers, you know, was his lost long brother. And he was congratulating Smathers on beating Pepper. And Smathers told me this, that Taft told him, "Of all the men I've served with in the United States Senate, [the one] that I feared the most on debate on the floor was Claude Pepper." And he was, man. He was a tremendous orator.

LH: I wonder how George Smathers felt about that—about Taft's saying that to him.

MG: Oh, I don't know.

LH: Because I am sure he felt terrific irony in all that.

MG: Yes. Well, George for some reason never did think that, you know, he did anything wrong in running against Claude and a lot of people have—

LH: He was able to rationalize it.

GM: Did McCarthy ever come down to Florida in that particular campaign?

MG: I don't remember.

LH: No, it was too early for him. He had not achieved as much influence by 1950.

GM: How about John Kennedy? Did he help Smathers in that particular election?

MG: Oh, no—

LH: That was before the—

MG: Oh, no; see, Smathers—no, I'll tell you what. I remember Harry Truman coming down here when there were U.S. Senators speaking for Claude Pepper. And that was before Claude made his famous speech that Truman was not qualified to be President of the United States. I remember Pepper trying to get to be president at one Democratic convention there.

LH: I think that was 1948.

MG: Yeah. He said that Truman was not, you know, qualified to be president. Not fit to be president of the United States.

LH: In that particular election issues and ideas—

MG: What was it?

GM: Fifty [1950].

LH: —ideas and issues seemed to play a role, but would you say generally in Florida history, in Tampa history issues never really played a role, it was all personalities?

MG: Well you take, locally?

LH: Yes.

MG: You're about right.

LH: Party? Was party ever really strong here?

MG: Oh, well, everybody was so Democratic. There were Democrats, you know what I mean? You wouldn't vote for a Republican if a Republican was nobody. You know, nobody paid any attention to the Republicans. They were a minority party.

LH: Right.

GM: Very minority.

MG: Oh, God. God, yes. They were a minority way, way, way down the line.

LH: In fact, I guess the only Republicans who were around were those who were patronage Republicans, who would wait for the president who could—

MG: Right, on a presidential basis like—what was the name of the fellow, the tall lawyer of the First National Bank that ran for the United States Senate against Claude on the Republican ticket?

LH: I know who you're talking about.

MG: You know who I'm talking about?

LH: Yes.

MG: The hell, he ran a pretty good race each time. Draper! Miles Draper.

LH: Yeah.

MG: Miles Draper, but you know the Republicans never really did count. It's only a recent thing that they started coming.

LH: Right.

MG: But you didn't have anybody right here that was much of a Republican.

LH: I certainly would like to thank you. Do you have anything else you'd like to tell us? You have been very generous with your time.

MG: Well, hell I'd be glad to tell you anything else that I know.

LH: Posterity will benefit.

GM: Well, we are fresh out of questions today.

MG: Well, anytime you want to talk about it a little bit more, I'd be glad to—

Pause in recording

LH: This is the Mugge² and the prostitute story.

MG: Yeah, okay. The story was that Mugge was going with this lady in town here who he was purportedly being very liberal with her by giving her some very nice gifts. And a lot of people were telling Mugge that you know, you should not be throwing your money around with this lady, she doesn't give a damn about you. Mugge wasn't a very attractive fellow. He was sort of corpulent and he had a big gut. He wasn't a very attractive fellow. But he took the position that this lady here really cared for him, and gave them a deaf ear, to all of them. One of the people that told me the story, I remember, was old Bob Jockens, who was a very good friend of Mugge's and went to Mugge and told him, "You know, this girl is not true to you. She's running around with other people." And he gave him the names of the people who was running around with. Mugge is still giving everybody a deaf ear.

Well, one day Mugge went over to see his attorney. And he told his attorney that he wanted to go ahead and convey—have a deed drawn up because he was conveying this piece of property to this girl. And everybody knew that Mugge was building a house out here, and everybody had told him, "You're really going to do this?" [Mugge:] "I'm going to give the house to the girl." [Mugge's friends:] "Man, you're crazy. You're going to give her a house, what are you talking about? You lost your mind?" And trying stop him, but he still gave them all a deaf ear.

Anyway, he went up to this lawyer and the lawyer told him, "You mean to tell me that you want me to draw up a deed to the house out there?" And he [Mugge] said yeah. And the lawyer said, "Well, wait a minute. Now why do you want to do that? Do you know the story about this girl?" And Mugge said, "Look, if you don't draw it up, I'll get somebody else to draw it up." So the lawyer did draw up the deed, and he gave it to Mugge with the description and everything. And turned it over to the lady and boy before

² Robert Mugge was a German immigrant who owned several businesses, including the Bay View Hotel, a cigar factory, a bowling alley, a Budweiser beer and wine distributorship, and a saloon.

it was recorded at the courthouse, you know a small town back in those days it got all over town that Mugge gave this house to this girl.

And the story goes on that Mugge goes over and knocks on the door to the girl's house. Back then they had a screen door and a regular door, you know? And he went by there apparently on a Sunday and out of the porch, on each side of this house were houses where other people lived, Latin people. And all of a sudden they heard this conversation where this girl was saying to Mugge, "What do you want?" And he said, "I wanna come in, honey." And she said, "Hit the street." And she just told him under no uncertain terms, that she didn't want to have anything else to do with him. So Mugge left and it got all over town. All the neighbors all started telling everybody what happened. And it got all over town that this girl had run him off and let's teach him a lesson. We told him not to give her the house and this, that and the other.

So Mugge goes up to see his lawyer that had drawn up this deed. And he said to his lawyer, he said, "I want you to—that house over there with that woman I was going with?" And the lawyer said yeah. And he [Mugge] said, "I want you to go ahead and do what you have to do legally to proceed to get her out of the house." And he [lawyer] said, "Wait a minute," he says, "you already committed that house to her. You can't get out of that." And he [Mugge] says, "Yes, I can." And he [lawyer] says, "Well, how are you going to do that?" And he [Mugge] says, "The description I gave you to that house is the vacant lot next door." (laughter)

LH: Oh, great!

MG: That's old Mugge.

End of interview