

Interview with Judge Charles DeFazio

Interview with Judge Charles DeFazio at his office, 929 Washington Street, Hoboken, New Jersey, on October 25, 1988. Nora Jacobson conducted the interview, which was originally gathered for background for her documentary film on the gentrification of Hoboken, *Delivered Vacant*. The tape begins mid-conversation, with Jacobson asking Judge DeFazio about Jersey's City's notorious Mayor Hague.

Nora Jacobson: In what way?

Judge DeFazio: He knew how to manipulate it, how to manipulate and get around the exceptions, and so on. So civil service didn't hurt Hague. And if McFeely were a smart student, he would have followed Hague. But he didn't.

Jacobson: But Hague, I mean, in other words, Hague was able to get around it and still get his way...

DeFazio: That's right...

Jacobson: .. but McFeely couldn't do it? Why couldn't McFeely do it if Hague could do it?

DeFazio: He was .. He didn't do it because of his arbitrariness and his advisors didn't tell him. They should have been on the ball. His advisors. He had lawyers. He had smart people in the teaching field and everything like that, but nobody dissuaded him. He had to go in there and fight it, right on the nose, because he didn't propose it.

Jacobson: Did Hague oppose civil service at first?

DeFazio: No, I don't think he was anybody, uh.. He was just coming up in the ranks. He might have been in favor.. I don't know. He didn't oppose it though.

Jacobson: He didn't see it as detrimental to his way of working.

DeFazio: I don't want to be.. I don't want to be giving you the wrong information. I don't know. I'd have to research that a little bit, ask some of the old-timer. But I don't know. It didn't affect him. He got around it. Seeing it was new. He knew just what to do. In fact he used civil service for his own good. He only let the people he wanted get promoted. Through the civil service medium. But poor McFeely, he had no education at all, poor thing. Hague was smarter. Hague had good students and he had good advisors and he hired the best. In the higher ranks, like corporation attorney, medical director, and all that business. You know, engineer. Smart, smart. Hague was smart.

Jacobson: I want to come back... (cuts off) I'm sorry, say that again?

DeFazio: December seventh, nineteen-oh-five. So that makes me eighty-two and will make me eighty-three on December the seventh coming.

Jacobson: Uh huh. But are you of Italian descent?

DeFazio: Yes, I'm of Italian descent if you put it that way, but born here. Yeah, I'm the first, I'm the first generation American-born. And now we have two more after me, so we're in five generations, we're five generations in Hoboken. My grandfather settled here, DeFazio. And my pop of course. That was in 1888, that's a whole hundred years.

Jacobson: That long ago! I thought it was only Germans who came to Hoboken back then.

DeFazio: Oh no, no, no. The trickling of Italians started coming in then too. They must have heard from their German paisano there, their landsman over there, that it was a good town, so they started coming over, in the early eighties, I guess.

Jacobson: What did your grandfather do in Hoboken?

DeFazio: My grandfather – both grandfathers – were dock wallops. That was called railroad laborers. Grandpa Malzone, that was my mother's father, worked for the New York Central. And he settled in Bayonne, and then up to West New York. And I have a load of relatives, very active up in West New York, the Malzone family. M-A-L-Z-O-N-E.

Jacobson: It seems as if transportation has played a very important role in Hoboken. Why is that?

DeFazio: Because uh, because uh.. Well, we had a railroad center. We had a terminal, you see, and we had a .. Shipping was very big here. The immigrants came in on our ships. Landed in Hoboken, and were processed from here. Sure.

Jacobson: And they stayed. Many of them stayed.

DeFazio: Yes. See the situation was such that they came there, and then there were what they call these immigrant agents, and they put the immigrants in their hotels. And one of them was Joseph Samperi. Who later on became the owner of the Continental.. (snaps his fingers) the big, uh... restaurant on Sixth and Hudson... The Union Club! Union Club. And he was an agent. He spoke German. He got a lot of German immigrants out of German ships because we had the German Lloyd, you know Hamburg American Line and the North German Lloyd. They got where our present piers are. Where the present Port Authority piers are. Right in that area.

And in fact, Hoboken contributed very greatly in the winning of the war, the First World War, I'm talking about. When all the German ships were declared alien enemy, they were all confiscated, right down there. The seizure was done when most

of the ships were in port. Must have been about twenty of the best transports, trans-shipments, shipment ships, that you could have, right there, in that same site. Of which is now called, Piers A, B, and C of the Port Authority. There were six piers. And they had several fires, and they burnt down several of them, you know?

And there was, that's tying in... I went off on this answer.. I gave you some information. But get me back to the main gist.

Jacobson: It was about the immigrants. Sometimes people...

DeFazio: Oh yes! I was up to the point where I was telling you about Mr. Samperi. That's spelled S-A-M-P-E-R-I. Translated to good grammatical Italian, it means "Saint Peter." You can catch it. He was an agent. But he had the good fortune of speaking German besides Italian. He spoke really three languages.

(Tape interrupts)

And then, when they didn't have any housing to go to, he would arrange to put them in the local hotels, so that they at least they might get breathers as to where their ultimate destination was.

Jacobson: Is that what happened to your grandfather then? Exactly that?

DeFazio: No, they come in, and they were pretty well elated as to what they were doing and where they were going. They had relatives I think, and contacts.

Jacobson: So they didn't settle in Hoboken? Did they dock in Hoboken?

DeFazio: My DeFazio family did settle in Hoboken, yes.

Jacobson: Directly from the ship?

DeFazio: Jeez, now you've got a good question there – directly from the ship? I don't know, they might have come into New York. They might have. I know my mother's family settled in New York. Down at Mulberry Street, the ghettos and

so on and so forth, that's where she had her start. But a very brilliant... my mother... was very brilliant. She had some head. Valedictorian in her class, backed by her sister, who was also valedictorian – the only two Italian American girls in the whole school. There was a school that used to be somewhere along Christopher, maybe Hudson Street, something like that.

Now, that's it, that's how Samperi fit in the picture. Samperi eventually became an owner of the club, as I said before, became one of our best-catered places in the city.

Jacobson: Where did these immigrants live? Was that when there were... did they live in rooming houses? I know there were a lot of rooming houses in Hoboken.

DeFazio: Well honey, in those days they went right into walk-up apartments. Because the rents were very cheap. They always had relatives and paisanos, so called. That were working as liaisons. And they would get habitation. They would.

My people came from Ellis Island, that's the way they used to process them. Ellis Island.

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Jacobson: (tape begins mid-sentence) Seventy thousand people.

DeFazio: Well, World War I, that's right. At least seventy thousand people.

Jacobson: There must have been a terrible housing crisis.

DeFazio: There was a very terrible housing crisis, but they made it. They made it. Course we had to have very rigid control, you know what I mean, of course. They weren't official controls. Something had to be done, because of the profiteering. Profiteering on rentals.

Jacobson: Tell me about it.

DeFazio: Well, in brief, I'll give you an example, right in my own family. We lived on Garden Street one time, I think it was 95 Garden Street, the place burnt down – it was condemned, it didn't burn down. The place got sold; it was so old and decrepit, the department of public safety, the police department, I think, put a condemnation on it. Said it's too dangerous to live here; you better find other quarters. See what I mean.

So, Mom, I think, did most of the legwork. Went around looking for apartments and you couldn't get them. We had four children. Obviously, oldest of the four. They wouldn't take you with children. The First World War was brutal. They wouldn't take you. Because they were profiteering. They were taking all kinds of fancy prices and they were afraid you couldn't match it, young family with four children. Father was a barber, of course, didn't make much money. Made a living, but not much money.

What Daddy had to do, as an alternate, was to buy a house. And who gave him that opportunity, but his customer, one of his customers was a lawyer. Name was Edward Stover, brother to one of our Demarest High School super.. principals. Arthur Stover's brother. I eventually was put in Stover's office. Through the contacting of my father and Mr. Stover.

Keep me off the streets. What my father says to Mr. Stover was: Keep my son off the streets. You don't have to pay him anything, just keep him off the streets – inferring that I'd get in with the wrong crowd, you know. That was an example of good parents, they're always interested in the future for their family.

I was employed. I think I got a couple of weeks out of it one summer. It was only a.. what was it? Oh! Some of those houses would rise to five stories. And a lot of people didn't like to go to the top floor. Nor the next to the top. So that left for a margin of rentabilities, because some people didn't care if they had to climb a mile! The only thing is that they had and good roof and good shelter.

Jacobson: Could you talk again about the over-crowding that must have occurred? Back then?

DeFazio: To tell you the truth, I was a little boy during the First World War. What would I have been, let's see, thirteen years. Would have just gone in to high school, perhaps. I never noticed it too much. I wasn't over-crowded so... It's just the emergencies we had to meet. But I did realize what it meant to have housing and to have shelter. I gave you that incident when we were condemned out, you know.

Jacobson: What happened? Where did you go?

DeFazio: That's when my father bought a house, through the help of Mr. Stover. He even financed it for him. He took a second mortgage, a difference in the consideration. But property was rather cheap in those days.

Jacobson: But you must have heard about other people being crowded and having a hard time. Or not. Do you remember stories?

DeFazio: Well, we didn't hear too much about that, most of the, most of the facts on.. well, you wouldn't call it over-crowding, it was the density, the density of communal living, as opposed to by law, they allocate so much space per person. But they closed their eyes to that. But it didn't seem to give rise to too much difficulty because of the emergency, the necessity. People have to live. It's better to live that way, in those walk-up apartments, in those old-fashioned apartments, and many,

many of them were frame, frame structure – frame as against brick, you know, lesser in safety. The alternative was to go to a rooming, to a rooming house, but most of the people were coming over, the immigrants were coming over, family-wise. I think that was one of the accepted conditions: it was for communal families, that was life, that they come over all together. But those who came over singly, for reasons best known to themselves, and didn't make these apartments either walk-ups... you must remember, in those days, we didn't have any elevated apartments, we didn't have anything called deluxe. The deluxe part of it would be the one-family houses; they were up in the Silk Stocking district of Castle Point and upper Hudson Street and down maybe to Fourth Street, St Peter and Paul's Church. Where the whole background of *On the Waterfront* was pictured, you know.

And, incidentally, this is one for you: My wife and I and family lived in their property, at 401 Hudson Street, when they were filming – being your interested in filming – filming *On the Waterfront*. And the alley scenes and the waterfront scenes, are all in my area. From my floor, we could look out and see the alley where *On the Waterfront* was taken. Yeah. We've got all that in our favor. And of course, the waterfront.

Holland America Line, which was a great, great steamship company that brought many people to Hoboken. Especially the Dutch and the Belgians. And the Netherlands, you know. They all came on the Holland America Line. And others who wanted to purchase a ticket, you see. My people didn't have the opportunity to make a choice after how they come; they went steerage. In their days they were lucky. Steerage is the equivalent to cattle boats, or cattle way of life.

Now, if you didn't measure up and get an apartment, of the time I'm talking to you about, the last resort would be what we called "the flophouse." Like built on the Mills Hotel style. In New York. They'd have some big buildings down near the tunnel, near the PATH, cross the street from there, where those restaurants are and Whaley's Real Estate is, they were what we call "flophouses." For twenty-five cents, a night, you could get a little pen. A little pen. And on top of this pen, there was built some chicken netting, so they wouldn't steal from one another, I guess. Twenty-five cents a night. We had half-a-dozen of those. They accommodated quite a lot of people.

Jacobson: Like the Victor Hotel?

DeFazio: The Victor Hotel I wouldn't put in that category. I think that was a little higher. That was a little higher. The Victor Hotel was like the Madison Hotel, like our former mayor's place, 14th Street. It was not a flophouse, it was a, what you might call a modest way of living, but it was kept clean, dependent upon the owners, of course, kept clean and neat. And in there, they would feed you, like our mayor, used to have about 28 tenants. And he was like the godfather to the whole bunch of them. Saw that they kept well, kept well fed, well housed, and many a time, gave them a little shot when they need that for medicinal purposes. And maybe for twenty-eight dollars a week, up to three or four, five years ago. I was very close to the mayor, sure.

Jacobson: Yeah, how to you become close to him?

DeFazio: Well, I was close to his father and mother. We were neighbors. We were friends. We were neighbors and church people together. We all came out of St. Francis Roman Catholic Church, down Third and Jefferson Street. The father had a

place down there. He had one of his businesses down in Third and Madison. And he'd feed 'em. Sometimes he had to force feed them. Take it spoon by spoon or force it into them. Poor little client. And then, if they couldn't walk and they felt a little off-beam, it was nothing for him to carry them up to their rooms.

Jacobson: Was this Tom?

DeFazio: Tommy! Tommy. Just Tommy. Not the family, no. Just Tommy. He sort of became the manager of all that inheritance. Yes. And he did a good job. While he was doing all that, he didn't drink himself, he didn't smoke. He didn't chase the girls much either; he didn't have time for that. He was going to school. He was going to school, and you know, it took him about twelve years to finish a master's degree, but he got it! And he wasn't satisfied, he was still going away for the PhD. But God willed otherwise, huh? He was a good boy. A good man. He had a good heart. And honest. And decent..

Jacobson: Yeah.

DeFazio: And he never forgot the hard parts of his life. Because all of the burdens in the family went to Tom, rested on his shoulders. In spite of his sister's suit.

Jacobson: What did it... You see, you were a supporter of him. Tom Vezzetti...

DeFazio: Of course! We used to work together, we were what you used to call gadflies. We used to the County Board of Freeholders and to the City Council and the City Agencies and make speeches! We were the guardians of.. we were like ombudsman. And Tom, of course, realizing my experience and age, and background, he relied on me a lot. He used to hold me up as a god, and they'd ask him, where'd

you get this one? DeFazio. Tom always told me: He was my inspiration. He was my godfather. And my wife he loved just as much. Oh, he was crazy about my wife. Called her "mother." Yeah. So we became very attached. Very attached. Never took advantage of him.

Now these people here who are getting all his estate took advantage of him, I can't see it. You couldn't take advantage of Tom. It was just the way he felt. If you were good to Tom, that was his way of compensating. It wasn't ingratiating, because he had plenty on the ball, but he did learn a lot from these people. From Della Fave, and Miss Fabiano, and Miss Cunning – he learned plenty from them, and he loved them. He was happy with them. So what are you going to do? He's an independent man, he was single, he wasn't attached to family, to his sister who lives in Puerto Rico. And all the papers fell on Tom, as I told you, and he was trying, something in the family that needed reparations, Tom was always there. You could always call for Tom.

Jacobson: How did he win? I mean, how did he become mayor? What was the sentiment in the city? Why did the people of Hoboken elect him?

DeFazio: I think they elected him because he struck them as being very down-to-earth, common, ordinary citizen, who wasn't over pompous, who was plain. He dressed plain, and he acted – he had some eccentricities, but we all do. And there's nothing the matter with that man's mind, except it was acute and good and wholesome. See?

Jacobson: What about the development issue and the condominiums issue that he ran on. You know: Help keep us in Hoboken. Was that also why? Were people also concerned about that?

DeFazio: Well, I imagine he drew a lot of his following from that because he was advocating "Don't put people out." Human rights are always paramount to property rights. Condominiums are secondary, right? They come as property rights. We're talking about first human rights. The right to have shelter. The right to live. And the right to exist. But then again, he made exceptions. He said, No, we should have better housing as we go along, affordable housing, it was always affordable. That's part of affordable. They mis-use affordable, the word affordable. Affordable is what your standard calls for. The ability to pay. That's affordable housing. To me it may be less than affordable, to you it may be more. To you it might be tasty, to me it might be distasteful. I mean, it's all a question of what your appetite is. We don't all eat beefsteaks and enjoy it. Some of us like to have fish. Or vegetables. Everybody is not carnivorous. A lot of people are vegetarians. Am I right?

Jacobson: How does that relate to housing?

DeFazio: How does that relate to housing? You pay for what you get. On the law of supply and demand. Don't you see? You should always understand that planning is very, very essential. You must not over-build, see? There's a place in Hoboken for condominiums. We've got a lot of them. We've got over a thousand today. Ten years ago we didn't have any. It was never conceived in Hoboken, about the art of condominium. Never knew it. Even the lawyers didn't know! The ministers didn't know! Nobody knew! But out-of-towners, people that saw a way of making a dollar -- they're entitled to make it their own way if it's legitimate, you know what I mean. They invest. They take risks, and they're entitled to succeed if it's on the level.

But you mustn't sacrifice the human rights of people. Put them right out. Where are they going to go? Where are these people going to go? And where *did* they

go? I know of 28 of them, went to their maker. Died in fires, that should never have occurred. I don't think we should have had those series of fires, a few years back. You know what I mean?

Jacobson: You knew people who died in the fires?

DeFazio: Most of them I did not know, except by reputation. Because most of them were what you call immigrants. They came from other places. They were Indians, they were Puerto Ricans, and so on and so forth. No, I cannot say that I had close friends, or even far friends, near or far. It touched me. It made me feel very, very bad, that 28 people should perish. Innocent people. Now they never had a probe on it. They suspected arson in several of the cases, but they never ran it down. Nobody ever paid the price. Nobody was ever prosecuted. See?

Jacobson: When you talk about supply and demand, though, for housing – what about rent control?

DeFazio: Rent control. I don't know what happened to rent control. Really. I'm a landlord of many years standing. And I never, never saw anything like what happened in these last few years. Since they put that rent control in. We had rent control once or twice before, but it was *real* rent control. There was enforcement; there was prosecution. And, there was cooperation with the tenants and the authorities to make their complaints. We had rent control boards on a city level, on a county level, and even on a state level.

As a matter of fact, one of my public pursuits was a hearer on the state rent control. I used to be a special judge in rent control hearings from Trenton.

Jacobson: That's interesting. There's been rent control twice before? Why?

DeFazio: Sure. Let's see. Roosevelt brought that in one time when he was controlling all prices. Prices of everything. Wasn't excluding anything. See? Foods, shelter, everything. And that's good. If you don't make exceptions – see what I mean? – startling exceptions. This seems to be the exception today, rent control seems to be the only thing controlled. They don't control prices, do they? They don't control foodstuffs. They don't control vehicles. And one time in World War Two, you couldn't get an exchange of a heating plant. I wound up in a house that had coal. I never shoveled a stick of coal in my life and it was a shame. I couldn't get a new, I couldn't get a conversion.

Jacobson: But they say now that the reason for rent control now is that there is a housing shortage or crisis, and in times of shortage or crisis...

DeFazio: It was always that way, honey, that's the reason for rent control. Because of shortage. That was for the last one, too. That means when you don't have the vacancies. See what I mean? At one time, in a good market, you should be able to move whenever you're up to it, and whenever you're at it, the places should be available for you. The selection should be adequate for what you want, according to your pocketbook. But not so in some of these cases. When rent control comes in.

Jacobson: What about the warehousing? When Tommy Vezzetti came in and brought in that new piece of legislation, the Anti-Warehousing Ordinance?

DeFazio: Well yeah, sure, that warehousing as much as I know about it – I've had no experience, haven't had a case on it – but fundamentally, that's a means of forcing people out of their apartments so that they might convert it to condominiums. And why do they want to go condo? They want to get away from

rent control and hike their rents to the level that people can't even afford to pay. Get the point? Get all they can.

Jacobson: The landlords say it's their right. As property owners, to turn a profit. They say that...

DeFazio: Turn a profit, yes, but it should be reasonable. It shouldn't make you a profiteer. You know what a profiteer is?

Jacobson: Uh uh.

DeFazio: Like a racketeer. Squeezing and squeezing and squeezing every ounce of energy out of a person, plus that, flesh, you want his blood.

Jacobson: And you feel that's happened, in Hoboken?

DeFazio: Oh, it has. It has, it has. Until the people got wise, and then of course, they started uniting and getting some legislation in. And today, it's not so easy to get people out. You've got to pay them a nice bonus.

Jacobson: But in condo conversion, they're still out after four years.

DeFazio: Well, four years is a long time. But now, I think they've extended that to forty. For senior citizens.

Jacobson: Only for senior citizens. Right. What about the law that says developers have to give money or build affordable housing, that Tommy, that they brought in?

DeFazio: They were going to comply to that to a certain extent. It's a question of what is a proper, you know what I mean, bonus. Surcharging.

Jacobson: Is that constitutional, do you think? Making the developer contribute money for the privilege of developing?

DeFazio: Oh, I think it's reasonable. I think it's reasonable. It's all a matter of supply and demand. It all comes down to necessity. Always remember this, that I'm – from law school days, and this goes on for 64 years – I've always championed civil rights. And the biggest one in there is personal rights, civil rights come ahead of property. Property comes secondary. You get the point? And you'll never be able to convert me to say that property rights come first. And I've tasted all phases. I have property. I have assets. I have resources. But I've worked hard for them. And I'm glad, I'm glad I have resources. It's no sin to have something, it's no sin. See? But the sin comes when you're cheating, when you're hurting other people. See what I mean?

What is government? What is the public? The public is the majority, people, their lives, they're human beings. You mustn't freeze out people. You mustn't kill them. And that's in line with what you say, if you reason it out properly. Aren't you entitled to do with your property what you want? Well, I've always been trained in that, too. An owner should have a lot of dominion. Should have a lot of dominion. But I've learned, to my astonishment, that down in the course of the years, there's nothing to stop that dominion from being taken away from you, because you are subject to a bigger right. And that's the right of the public. You get the point? They come first. Just like, Why do we have the right to ... That's my sidewalk, the law says I owe from the 78th to the sky, but I have no extra rights to my sidewalk. I can't keep people off my sidewalk. They're members of the public. And that's an implied easement. If you want to conform, if you want to have a piece of property, that's adjacent to a public highway, that's implied that there's easement to the public. What are sidewalks for? For transgression.. for moving back and forth, right? Those are the things that developed. Those are equity principles, see? In the real, real, bland of the

law – if you go by word for word, literally – a lot of these things would be declared, you used the word “unconstitutional”, they would have been declared unconstitutional. If you went literally. People forget there’s a lot of implied powers. We’ve got an implied powers section in our constitution, and that’s where it comes in, that’s where all the gray cases go favor the public.

Jacobson: So you would make that exception to rent control, too, and say that in the same way, a landlord can be told how much he can charge for rent?

DeFazio: Yes, yes, yes. Yes, yes, yes. And that’s what the purpose of those laws are. How they ever got around these things here, I tell you, it’s phenomenal. I used to have some property, my God, myself. I never paid more than \$100 for a nice 5-room heated apartment if you please. And the church was my master. Well, that would be the big difference. It depends on who the landlords are. But, today, everybody’s doing what the other guy does. See what I mean? And then, I don’t know who’s responsible for it, but they talk about inflation – I think the prices in properties have gone too far out. See? I used to have an assessment here on this house of \$18,500 that day. Today, it’s near \$300,000.

Jacobson: Right, right. But it’s hard to sell it for that, now, in this market.

DeFazio: I offered to sell it once down in the public address. In front of City Hall. I said look what they done to me with the re-evaluation. \$385,200. I said I’ll sell it for \$100,000 cheaper. Do I have any takers here? I’ll take a deposit right here. I had them screaming. Because they didn’t know whether I was telling the truth or not, but I was. And I’m known to tell the truth, so I left quite a piece there. Do you remember that rally, right down in front of City Hall, about three months ago?

Jacobson: I wasn’t there. I didn’t go to that.

DeFazio: Then they started picket on the fellow that was sponsoring it, Mr. Garcia. The head of CUNA. (laughs)

Jacobson: Here's another question. Was the Stevens family important when you were growing up?

DeFazio: They were less important than they are today. Less important than they are today. They weren't participating in anything functionally. They didn't seem to get along with the administration. McFeely put it out that he didn't like 'em, and they, in turn, they turned their fanny to him. And he was always mad 'at them because he couldn't get any money from them. They froze themselves on a pittance, you know, for an in lieu of taxes – they're all tax-exempt you know. In lieu of taxes, they offered a pittance, in those days, to McFeely, might have been up to \$20,000. For the whole shebogan. You know they own at least a billion dollars worth of property and resources.

Jacobson: Yeah, right. Because the old..

DeFazio: They've want everything for nothing..

Jacobson: The Stevens family?

DeFazio: Yeah. They take that on, what we call, "it's coming to them." For long delayed compensation. They founded the city. They're the Stevens people. They are the fathers of the modern community. And maybe they feel.. they gave a lot of things in the beginning. Oh, they gave parks and they gave City Hall, and they got the city moving. But now they're not of that mind anymore. Now they're looking for compensation, I guess. And they're getting it. They're getting it! Look at how they took that waterfront! Isn't that remarkable? And on the statement that they were going to improve it. And make a research center, and educational center, and a

community center. All along there. Bought the air rights and sold the air rights and everything.

Jacobson: But that's the college, that's not the Stevens family!

DeFazio: There's no Stevens family actually interested in the city.

Jacobson: No more?

DeFazio: No. They're all gone. Basil Stevens was one of the Stevens... he died a few years ago. Mrs. Fenwick, she was a Stevens.

Jacobson: She's alive!

DeFazio: She's alive but she has.. she does nothing except maybe on a reunion, every once and a while she comes down. She's from Bernardsville, that's where she's improving, Bernardsville. In fact, she opened her mouth the other night, as a result of this campaign. Lautman (?) who beat her, you know. Dawkins, and of course, she came out for Dawkins. She is by nature – the Stevenes are – by nature, Republican. By profession, anyway.

Jacobson: Weren't they big land owners, real estate people, they owned a lot of...

DeFazio: They owned everything.. Everything that the Applied Housing has today, was Stevenes.

Jacobson: Ah! As apartments?

DeFazio: Applied Housing renovated them. But they owned them all. They were beautiful. You can see the brownstones up here. I mean the yellowstoners. They're still in beautiful condition. Applied Housing did nothing externally on them. But they rehabbed them inside. They made nice housing conditions there.

I haven't heard much of a complaint about Applied Housing. Their tenants seem to be satisfied. Well, they're government controlled. You see what I mean? They're watched. They're entitled to make a profit, but the profit they make must not be exorbitant. They must make enough money from the properties to pay off the debts, pay off the obligations, and pay off the interest and so in, and give them a little return. Maybe 11 percent, which isn't bad. Right?

Jacobson: Yeah. When you were growing up, did you hear of .. who were the people that developed property? Who were the people who put up housing? That built? Were they big guys like today, or...

DeFazio: No, for a long time, there was no developments. There was no housing development. It was dead. It was dead. All they were doing, most of this property in Hoboken, is over sixty years, so in between that there was very little development. You had an isolated case of building a house, the Mazarra house, up in 9th and Castle, 8th and Castle, I think, that was built I think 25 years ago.

Jacobson: Why was there no development?

DeFazio: Well, I don't know the... I think, capital must have been.. the banking industry and capital must have been ... put an onus sign on the city, that it's not a safe place to invest. See what I mean? We had a depression. And the depression losses were a thousand foreclosures. See what I mean? And most of the mortgages were held by banks, and so they wrote it off. They didn't' want to take any more chance. And that's when the prices were nothing. So small. People lost, a thousand people lost their houses.

Jacobson: What years?

DeFazio: In the depression. The depression came starting around, what 32, when Roosevelt came in.

Jacobson: So, did the banks redline Hoboken until recently, then?

DeFazio: Well, comparatively so, yes. They wouldn't give a mortgage. They wouldn't even take an application, or go past Park Avenue, for instance. They put a mark on it. Don't bother us.

Jacobson: You mean Ernest Bataraco? From Elysian?

DeFazio: Well, Ernest Bataraco wasn't until a few years ago. He only come up since this condominium business come in. Yeah. I happen to be a depositor down there in the Elysian. And he's not there anymore. He's gone. He's gone with the wind.

Jacobson: I know. Why did Hoboken go through a depression? You always hear people saying: Well, we had to have this development. You should have seen Hoboken twenty, twelve years ago; it was a slum, it was nothing. Is that true? Was Hoboken really a slum?

DeFazio: We never had a slum. We didn't have... The people, the private people who owned their properties, they did everything they could to maintain, at least the interiors, for habitation. You can't say we had slums. We had poor people, yes. Unemployed. It would be like the unemployable class, you know. For, you know, being up against it. We did have a big, big, exceptionally big welfare problem. That we used to call "the poor master's office." Our welfare director at one time was constitutionally called "the poor master."

I don't know if you heard this story. One of our poor masters was killed on his job, because he insulted a client. A little woman went in, a pretty girl, of course,

but that didn't give him any, this old man, privilege to start making bad remarks. You come in to me and I'm going to start making bad remarks? He tells her: You don't look like a lady who needs any relief! Go out and wave your little hand bag, or something like that. Tells her. Play the streets. And, the husband got wind of it. He went down there and he wanted a reckoning. He wanted to know if it was as related to him. And if so, what's the explanation. Before the interview was over, the poor master was lurching over his – what do you call that thing, where you put your used files, where they put their papers and so on, a pick, where you pile your papers, the old-timers used to do that – and it was in his heart.

Jacobson: That's amazing.

DeFazio: And the man said that he fell over it. Stumbled over it. Had to go to trial, had a big trial over it.

Jacobson: So there were a lot of poor people in Hoboken.

DeFazio: Yes.

Jacobson: Is that because the rents were low and it attracted them?

DeFazio: Well, I don't see the... what's the reference point? Attracted them how?

Jacobson: That the rents were so cheap, it attracted poor immigrants who could afford to come here. In the fifties?

DeFazio: Oh yeah, yeah. We had cheap, what you might call very, very modest rents.

Jacobson: The thing is, in my historical research, it almost seems like Hoboken, in the 1920s, say, was a very prosperous, well-thought of community. And then, in the fifties, its reputation was a very depressed community.

DeFazio: Well, I can't say that in my case! I always got along, got better as I went along. It's a question of do or dare, I guess. You have to be robust in your efforts. There was always work! For those who wanted to work! Don't forget, when you're talking your time, we had 200 industries in Hoboken. The best. Manufacturing, coffee manufacturing, Chase & Sanborn was here, Franklin Bacon was here, and we had two dry docks, and we had the railroads and shipping. We had plenty of work. People used to come in from outside! To seek... They didn't all settle here. They used to commute. No sir.

Jacobson: Now it sounds like the opposite. People live here and they commute to work.

DeFazio: That's correct. That's the new, that's the new, that's the new avant garde. They're called them yuppies. I don't know what yuppies are myself, but they give them a title. What does yuppie mean?

Jacobson: Young, urban.. no, young, upwardly mobile, professional.

DeFazio: Oh.. professional?

Jacobson: Because they work in the professions in New York.

DeFazio: I see. But a lot of them in Wall Street, I suppose, stock brokers office. You call that a profession?

Jacobson: (laughs)

DeFazio: They do.

Jacobson: You don't.

DeFazio: Well, I never knew they got the status of professional, you know what I mean, except through accountancy. You call accountancy a profession.

Jacobson: Weren't there always people who lived in Hoboken but who commuted to New York?

DeFazio: Sure. Sure. Lots. Plenty. And had big jobs over there. And would change them, because they were good. They were lucrative jobs.

Jacobson: People didn't talk, didn't say bad things about them, they didn't call them "New Yorkers" ...

DeFazio: No, because they were native. You know, second generation and on, I suppose. Just that they wanted to.. instead of using the word "carpetbagger," maybe. They come up with this "yuppie." Which would you prefer? I like "yuppie."

Jacobson: (laughs)

DeFazio: Carpetbagger insults me.

Jacobson: Why? What is a carpetbagger, really?

DeFazio: Carpetbagger is a fellow that takes his carpet and goes wherever he wants to and settles down for the best. That's a carpetbagger. That expression came from post-Civil War. When our northerners, after the northerners won the war, they were going, they had a carpet bag – carpetbagger – and they were going to go south to make their fortune, at the expense of the vanquished.

Jacobson: Ah. So couldn't you draw a parallel and say that all these people who are moving to Hoboken are, they're buying up cheap, or at least they did, they bought up the cheap properties...

DeFazio: I wouldn't say cheap. I don't think they're getting any bargains, believe me. You don't see any native Hobokenites going for condominium. They don't. They just avoid it. Unless they build them themselves, you know what I mean? They would rather go for individual ownership. Two family, three family, four

family, you know what I mean. So they'd have enough for their own, for their own families, like. See, it was all family. In this... I had a thought and I was going to express it.. carpetbagger, what was the subject?

Jacobson: Condominium.

DeFazio: What are we addressing right now?

Jacobson: Profit taking, cheap property.

DeFazio: Taking advantage. Well I don't know that those souls know.. they're coming in for the papers, you said. Your expression was, they were coming in to improve themselves, economically, I guess. Because the things in New York went so badly, so bad, they couldn't stand it anymore. And they said they were paying too much. It was real profiteering over there. So they sought another arena. And Hoboken, being so close, they had heard stories, and transportation being so good, accessibility was nice, and maybe they.. They were satisfied they were going to get a better break. They compared, they compared.

Jacobson: Do you think Hoboken residents then became greedy and realized they could sell off their properties for a lot of money and sold out?

DeFazio: I don't think it's the owners themselves. I had nothing to do with my price going so high, I just was willing to use it. So long as I got use out of it. A property is as good as the use value you can get out of it. Get the point? Take my case. Rentals to me means nothing. I don't even rent anymore. This whole thing, this office, and two apartments above, I occupy. I had tenants on the top floor, but for Christ's sake, it's not worth it sometimes. I'm not talking today, when I could get six or seven hundred bucks, now, with my eyes closed, all I'd have to do is make a few little additions here. Dress up the bathrooms. There's no doubt about it, because

they're getting it around here. You know what they're getting for that Chinese store? That's a client of mine! Sixteen hundred and fifty dollars!

Jacobson: Whew!

DeFazio: For one little store!

Jacobson: Wow. Is that Big Chef?

DeFazio: Yeah!

Jacobson: Wow. Amazing.

DeFazio: Where the laundry is, I think the last price on that was ten-seventy-five. But I don't know if they hiked that, you know what I mean?

Jacobson: So do you think all this development has been good for Hoboken?

DeFazio: I don't know where the good comes. The more money they take in, the more taxes they collect. The hierarchs are a cost of government, becomes. Do you want a little comparison. And here I use it as a good selling point. When we had our contest with Mr. McFeely, Bernard McFeely, the boss, in nineteen-hundred-and-forty-seven, May, he had a budget that year of a little over 5 million dollars. And I used to say: That's a terrible budget. I mean, and I'd compare it with other communities. I made a study; you know, a lawyer will try to be prepared when he's going to a court trial, and that was like a court. Today, the last budget is near to 30 million dollars, honey! In those days, you had ten thousand in our public school system! Today, we only have four! Expenses for the board of ed may be five times more! Now how do you justify this? Is that the people's fault? What is it? The politicians' fault? Where are these moneys going? With all these assessments. The higher the tax, the more money that comes into the treasury. But where's the

accounting for it? Did we lose so many good tax payers, because of our commission, we don't have those 200, I told you, we're down to maybe less than 50, huh? They didn't care what the taxes were; they'd pay whatever, because there were things that they probably compromised on, and if they weren't molested or bothered in pursuit of their industry, they didn't mind that. They wrote it off as a cost, as a cost of operation. But today, they're not carrying the burden. They used to carry the burden.

(Tape ends)

(Side 3)

DeFazio: (mid-sentence) Condominiums and sell it for a big, big price. Condominium, make a deal with the developers and all of that. But what can a one-family, two-family, and possibly... Well, the two-family, anyway. Fixed income. And usually in one or two families, you've got family. You don't rent a private house to strangers, much.

Jacobson: You know, I wanted to ask you something. You talked about how it goes back to an earlier question about the immigrants. Because people own them. They were all attached.

DeFazio: I don't know about hitting the upper class, because of a lot of moderate people lived in there. Nice, good, people who were in the school system for example, school teachers, like you say, would be like these people here. They weren't upper, they didn't have fantastic incomes. The fantastic has come recently. My god, did you ever hear of paying a chief of police and chief of the fire department something like \$60,000 a year in a mile square city?

Jacobson: That's what they get now?

DeFazio: Yeah! Compare that with others. I think we're way out. We're paying New York prices.

Jacobson: But they say if we have more development, it will lower taxes.

DeFazio: Well, "it will." It hasn't! We've had more development. We've had plenty of development. I tell you, if we didn't have what we called the low cost housing, built by our Hoboken Housing Authority and Urban Redevelopment, and of course, in parenthesis, my brother Edward, a lawyer and teacher, was executive secretary, executive secretary for twenty-five years and he knows all about accumulating that land and contracting with the developers and building these units. I think there was 16 or 1700 built under Edward. You remember Edward, you'll hear about him. He's not living here anymore. He's down surf city, way down. Have you ever been there?

Jacobson: No.

DeFazio: Well that's called Long Beach Island, that's twenty-five miles this side of Atlantic City. At Barnegat Bay, on the Atlantic Ocean.

Jacobson: You said they if hadn't built that housing, but you didn't finish.

DeFazio: We'd have had anarchy here.

Jacobson: Why?

DeFazio: Where would those people go? How could they pay these fantastic prices demanded here, on the outside?

Jacobson: Well, they might not be here in the first place. The thing is, that the Housing Authority and Applied Housing are already full. They haven't taken up much of the slack.

DeFazio: Well, they've taken up, what am I going to say? That's almost two-thousand units, honey.

Jacobson: But they're already full, in other words..

DeFazio: Yeah, they've got waiting lists. You can't get an apartment, except.. there are some exceptions. Like in emergencies and things like that, they do make a point. Always hold a number for emergencies.

Jacobson: Some people say we have enough affordable housing, subsidized housing in Hoboken. Do you feel that?

DeFazio: I can't agree with that. I can't agree with that. But maybe from the standpoint of, well, they might be talking about... They've got waiting lists. That would have to come from your welfare office, to see how many are in poverty. Those are usually the first ones given opportunity.

Jacobson: Why did so many people leave Hoboken in the fifties and sixties? People say that a lot of people moved away. Is that true? I mean you didn't.

DeFazio: Well they moved away for various reasons and it was.. they had a right to move. Like the children get big, they graduated from their schools and colleges. We educate them, brought them up in Hoboken, but when it came time to get married, they were marrying spouses from other communities. Not that we had many substitutes for them. You know what I mean? We're not that type of a city. We've got the benefit of that plane. There's a Hobokenite on any part of the globe. Go to any part of the world and directly or indirectly you will bump into a person who knows Hoboken, has relatives there, or has had some business there, and is very familiar with the city. Especially now, it's getting bigger and bigger. Because our new class people, they bring all their new contacts, and they've got kin and kith and they

haven't all come over, I'm sure of that. See what I mean? Maybe some of them have come over as scouts, to see what they can find. See how they like it and then report back.

Jacobson: This kind of goes back to another question I asked about Hoboken having been a slum. I wonder if the people who say that use it as an excuse to justify the condominiums and the development. I've heard that.

DeFazio: That would be people who are trying to push the train.

Jacobson: What do you mean?

DeFazio: Push the train of realty. Sell the properties and condominiums. They can't sell condominiums when the place is occupied by a lot of middle-class people or low-class people. You've got to get vacancies, then the developer will come in.

Jacobson: But I've heard, say, Steve Capiello say: You know, Hoboken used to be a slum. Look what we've done! Look at Hoboken now!

DeFazio: He said that for political reasons, perhaps. He's done pretty handy, he's done pretty handy with this new deal. He's got his hands.. he's put his hands in everything, our little mayor.

Jacobson: Our ex-mayor, Capiello.

DeFazio: He's the fellow that engineered, winding up with the Madison Hotel. With one of the Roberts, the Roberts family, for \$37,000, including a bistro license!

Jacobson: Wow!

DeFazio: That beautiful piece of property, there?!

Jacobson: So he had a direct interest in redevelopment?

DeFazio: I certainly do believe it, and in anything worthwhile, he had something to say and do. Some kind of investment, I don't know what it was. That's what he's in now. He and his wife. They're with that, I think, that firm down on River Street.

Jacobson: Which one?

DeFazio: By the river side. I don't know, one of those places. McKenna, is there a McKenna down there? Maybe he's with them. He's been seen coming in, and so has a former councilman, secretary to the board of education. Romano.

Jacobson: Frank.

DeFazio: He and his wife are dealing with realty. So there must be something to it.

Jacobson: I see. So all these politicians, then, it was to their interest to justify the development.

DeFazio: That part of the community, yes. Not all of them. You don't take, you don't take Della Fave, and Newman, and you take... who were the others?

Jacobson: Cunning.

DeFazio: Cunning. Miss Cunning. Miss Cunning. They've never been accused of secret dealing or anything like that. Developing. And Rainieri. Boy, did he go. He went with that outfit on First Street.

Jacobson: Westbank.

DeFazio: Westbank.

Jacobson: His son works for them.

DeFazio: His son works for them. Where did he get the idea to try to freeze his brother out of the property that's commonly owned, that the brother had to bring him to litigation?

Jacobson: Oh really?

DeFazio: Yes, ask him for an accounting. Is that nice?

Jacobson: No.

DeFazio: That was all published, at length.

Jacobson: And now he comes out against Cappiello and Pasculli. He's come out against Pasculli now.

DeFazio: Well, he wants to be mayor himself. But he's got to say something.

Jacobson: Do you think he's got a chance?

DeFazio: No, I don't.

Jacobson: Who do you think's going to win?

DeFazio: Well, it's between Pasculli and Della Fave. People's choice, they can't complain. They've got a choice. They can have the "ins" and the "reformers" and they've got a clear choice of you'd like to lead the city. And they're certainly not pulling any punches. The papers are full of, full of information. I haven't seen this in sixty years. That I've been practicing law. I've never seen such a press.

Jacobson: I know, it's amazing.

DeFazio: When we were out, as reformers, to get a new administration, we couldn't get ten lines against a million for McFeely, in the local papers, which were – they had no *Reporter* then – we had *Jersey Journal* and the *Hudson Dispatch*.

Jacobson: Who was your candidate? DePascale?

DeFazio: No, no, no. He was not. I'm going back to 47 now. I'll give it to you. DeSapio administration. DeSapio, Grogan, Fitzpatrick, Mongiello, and Barelli.

Jacobson: I see. What was the big issue you used?

DeFazio: The big issue we used? Oh, we had a beautiful platform. We had about ten planks on it. We felt that .. uh.. there's wasn't equal opportunity to start off with. You just couldn't have a job in the school system or in public life for the asking. There was no, what you call, take a civil service test. You know? They had no civil service. That's one good thing civil service brought in; anybody can take a test and you can't be excluded! If you're excluded, you've got a cause for action. Right away.

Jacobson: So your big issue was patronage?

DeFazio: Yes, yes. And cronyism and what's the other one, that's in the family?

Jacobson: Nepotism.

DeFazio: Nepotism – aw. We had the best nepotistic republic in the country. Mayor McFeely had about eighty relatives on his pad. He had from the mayor, then came the chief of police, deputy chief of police, lieutenant of police, all the way down the line like that. Superintendent of schools. All McFeelys. And if they didn't bear the name McFeely, they bore the inter-marriage names, and friends.

Jacobson: So you brought reform. Did then the city suffer a setback?

DeFazio: There was no harmony and there was no quality of life to speak about. Everything had to be done through the hall. Everything!

Jacobson: What do you mean by "the hall"?

DeFazio: "The hall" means City Hall. The administration. That's how he ran his organization. Giving favors, favors. Favors. You had to go in and see the mayor. Sit down and tell him your sad story, you know. And there were a lot of people who know how to tell sad stories. I was one who wouldn't tell a sad story.

Jacobson: Did he make you give money?

DeFazio: Sure, you had to contribute to the campaign. Campaign funds, sure.

Jacobson: And they say that in Jersey City, there was a little drawer he would push and it would come out...

DeFazio: I don't know anything about the way it was done, but, I had some taste of public life. I had some twenty-seven years serving the public, part time. Jobs. I never sacrificed my law career. Even if I only practice an hour a day. Five hours a week. I always wanted to maintain my independence. And I made good with it. And that's why I tell my family: Don't ever take a full time job. You're really excluding a good part of your life. You can't maintain independence if you've got a full time job. And you're subject to your master, subject to your boss. Subject to your superior. If you don't strike him right, and your eyes don't meet with his fascination, you're out! I would never put myself in that position.

Jacobson: So that's why you worked for yourself, as a lawyer, as an attorney.

DeFazio: Yes. I had a firm. I had several firms. Sixty years long. I had DeFazio and Barone. I was with a young man, Veronio (?), he eventually became an assemblyman. He became a lesser court judge.. and then.. (cuts off)

You don't have a strong boss. Bossism potential that we had then. One man ran the show. Today you wouldn't say one man runs the show. I think there's a good

many running, plus those who would like to run. You know. So it's not a monopoly. Not a monopoly. But there's favoritism. There's no doubt about that, I guess. I mean it. Expect some of it. Expect some of it. You expect some of it, what are you going to do? You've got to trust the people you're helping too, right? You gotta have faith. It's a question of faith. But that's subject to fairness and justice and equality. You've got to spread the wealth, just like Roosevelt. Reason why he was such a popular man, such a strong leader, he believed in the redistribution of the wealth. Didn't believe in concentrating in the hands of a few. He tried to spread it out. Did you read up on FDR?

Jacobson: Not really.

DeFazio: Well, that's what he was made for. Had a heart. A man with heart. Wasn't a greedy man. Wasn't only for money. Because there was plenty of money in the Roosevelt family. They were always wealthy. He was a humanitarian, you know why? Because of his physical condition. Look at what he did with the polio..

Jacobson: Well, it's because of him, then, that we have things like public housing, and..

DeFazio: Yes! Yes! I would say so. And banking. Guaranteed. One hundred dollar protections. Under Roosevelt. The RFC and he had the Noodle Soup*brigade. All this business here. He always had a mind to make the quality of life better for poor people.

Jacobson: Before that, they didn't have things like subsidized housing?

DeFazio: No.

Jacobson: Or housing projects?

DeFazio: All they had was the poor master I told you about. And that was begging.

Jacobson: Where would people go when they didn't have a home? Before the New Deal era?

DeFazio: What we did then, I don't remember too much ever, ever, there was, as I say, there was always a good work market. There was a market for work. And the whole principle of life is you've got to have a job, you've got to work for your money. And there was availability, that's why a lot of people came to Hoboken. There's an answer to one of your questions. Why they were magnetically brought to this community. The ability to get work! Hoboken always had a good workable market.

Jacobson: Even in the fifties when the shipping went out and industry started to leave?

DeFazio: Didn't go out as early as fifty. It was lesser than that. It's not thirty-eight years we're without ships. Nooo. The American.. We had great shipping there at one time. We had the American Export Line, we had the Four Aces, we had the Independence, we had the Constitution, we had beautiful ships coming in there.

Where'd you get that figure?! (tape pauses)

You know what started it all? Containerization. That's the thing! When we didn't have the uplands. You see, there's very little upland down there. By uplands we mean the land adjacent to the main buildings, see? That's the land on River Street which would go west, huh? You didn't have any storage space. You needed a lot of storage room for containerization. You've got to have a lot of acreage. And that's why we starting losing out. To Newark! See? And other ports, I guess, but most of it

went to Newark. All our.. Don't forget, we had plenty of work for the longshoremen. And anybody we wanted to pay his way, could become a longshoreman. You needed brute force, you know what I mean. You had to be able to handle cargo. And with the...

That was a great thing. First the Germans used to go to the holds. Then the Irish would go to the holds. Then finally the Italians would go to the holds. And after the Italians, the Slavs would go to the holds. Holds of ships. That's tough work down in the pit.

Jacobson: Why one after the other?

DeFazio: That's how the developments come in. The Irish were here first, the Germans were here first, and then the Irish. First the British, I guess, and the Indians.

Jacobson: Oh, I see. As the poor immigrants came in, they were sent down...

DeFazio: To the hold. They'd take anything. What the hell did they know? So long as they got a job! And to them, laboring is laboring! They wouldn't put them in prison, but they wouldn't give them much comfort. If they'd do their job, they'd let 'em up after a while. They'd make nice money. They developed that beautifully. They had one of the strongest... The truckers and the longshoremen have two of the strongest, most powerful, profitable unions in America.

Jacobson: That's right. It's amazing. It's true. What about animosity between newcomers, the different immigrant groups. Was there always that animosity?

DeFazio: No, not much. There was always a time and place for everything. You'd get a crazy guy here or there, you know what I mean, go on a lark, he got in trouble, he was tamed.

Jacobson: I heard that when the Italians first came they were considered second-class citizens and they all had to be downtown.

DeFazio: Now that was true, that's a true statement. But that's not as bad as the first statement you made, you know what I mean. They were maltreated in that regard that they were discriminated against, that's the point I made earlier. There was no real quality of life. If you were a friend of the boss, you could get anything you wanted. If you were not his friend, and he didn't like you, you're out on a line. No matter which you turned. And when the time came and he felt up to it, he thought he had a chance for you, then you could be reckoned with.

I had to fight for everything I had, but I was a fighter. That's how I was able to sustain myself. If you were a fighter, you could live.

Jacobson: Sounds like Hoboken was a pretty tough place.

DeFazio: Hoboken was a tough place. You couldn't be a Pollyanna and live here. You know what you mean. You had to be able to hold your ground. And meet a challenge. It was a challenge. You had to be up to it. But you could only go so far because they had the strength, they had the resources, they had the police, the fire department, the majority of favor. So you had to go carefully. See what I mean? If you tried to fight them physically, it was unfair competition. You didn't stand a chance. You know? But nothing like this terrorism we have today. It never came to that.

Jacobson: What do you mean?

DeFazio: This worldwide terrorism. Bomb throwing and weapons and things like that. But we were always what you call a lively community. That's why I think a lot of people like the place, because it was always lively. And friendly. Lively and friendly. And people understood one another. And people didn't get angry with one another to the extent, you know what I mean, some areas do. You know what I mean. We always had things going, in our community.

We all went through Prohibition. And we didn't go through as saints. I had to .. not me, nobody in my family participated in the craft, but I understand, from what I could hear and observe, and come into contact with in my practice, people thought nothing of Prohibition except that it was a nuisance. It wasn't a crime. It was in violation of the law. Never heard of it. It was a chance, a golden opportunity to make a dollar, and they thought, in their own opinion, it was an honest dollar.

Jacobson: You know, I saw an old newsreel of a rally or a demonstration against Prohibition, in Hoboken.

DeFazio: They were raiding, there was a raid going on where they were breaking up the barrels? And the equipment and everything? Yeah, that went on. They had to come in once in a while, you know what I mean, to look good. To look good. The agents had to come in and make grades. They padlocked a lot of places here. You know what the padlock was? The padlock would go on a place that was raided and it would stay closed. They would stay closed for a year. And they would arrest one person, as in charge. And they never got the proprietor. It was always somebody for a buck and a vacation was willing to be a stand-in, a surrogate. That was it!

Jacobson: Another question about industry. Why did industry, why did so much industry leave Hoboken?

DeFazio: Because circumstances changed. The location was beautiful. But the surroundings were limited. And they didn't have, they were mostly all vertical buildings. They weren't the horizontal type that you have today, with a lot of land. They'd have a big, fifteen story building, like Lipton's, Remington's, up there, at the other end of the town, 14th, 15th Street. And they were coming to the point, where they had to expand horizontally, not vertically, and they needed LAND. Lots of land. And that's why they started, one by one, leaving. And several of them went up to Englewood Cliffs. If you go along that 9W, you'll see a Lipton, the beautiful place they have there. They probably have there, ten times what they had down there. They needed land and they needed space, and they needed modernity. And they needed accessibility.

Jacobson: What's the future then, for cities? What's Hoboken's future?

DeFazio: You should look at what Hoboken's future is. Look at how many places are being converted into residences. And what they're building – office buildings. Commercials. There's a spot of them going up. And what they're building is nice. I'd like to see more of them. Take that Baker Building down there, is a charm. You take what they're doing to 77 River Street, which the Elysian owns by the way, coming back to your friend. Did you know that Ernie? Did you meet Ernie?

Jacobson: He gave me a contribution for my film. He was very generous.

DeFazio: Did he?

Jacobson: I want to interview him actually.

DeFazio: I don't know where he is.

Jacobson: Fort Lee or Englewood or something.

DeFazio: Probably spending a lot of time down the shore.

Jacobson: He was kind of intimidating. He kind of attacked me. He said: Now, in your film, you're going to show the good part, aren't you? You know, he didn't want me to show development as being bad. He was one of the people, who would have said, by the way, Look at Hoboken twenty years ago. It had to go down.

DeFazio: Ernie would say that. They've always been privileged. And preferred. They're electrical contractors, you know. They're in line with the party. With Hague and McFeely, made some beautiful money. Out of public contracts. I guess Ernie didn't want anything that would bring back the past. He did get into a couple of things where he had a lot to be explaining for, let's put it that way. And I like Ernie. I always did. But I'm still there in his association, though he's gone. I never thought that day would come, this way. I thought he was cleverer than that. But the eagerness and the over-zealousness. I guess you found him such. Caught up with him. And then plus, a part of the affara amore, you got to watch out for such things.

Jacobson: What's that?

DeFazio: I'm not going to explain any more. You look it up.

Jacobson: Affara amore. Well, amore is love.

DeFazio: Affair, affare. Affair.

Jacobson: Oh, affair!

DeFazio: But I don't know too much about Ernie's, you know, home life, except that his daughter, Barbara, who at one time was president of that association, was my godchild. She's a Veronio. Remember I mentioned Veronio?

Jacobson: I've heard of Peter Veronio. (tape breaks)

DeFazio: Did you interview Mr. James Lanzetti yet? He's a very interesting person.

Jacobson: I wanted to...

DeFazio: Did he turn you down?

Jacobson: He turned me down.

DeFazio: Yeah.

Jacobson: I talked to him. He's very friendly, but he turned me down, he didn't want to talk to me.

DeFazio: Oh. Ninety-three and he still has his marbles. He's retired, but he goes to the City Hall everyday and he doesn't want that relationship disturbed. Get the point? No matter what you say sometimes, it always looks a little dubious to certain people, know what I mean? He's not that independent, I can see why he turned you down. That's why. That's why I asked you did he turn you down.

Jacobson: (laughs) Right.

DeFazio: He's a great guy though. Very knowledgeable person. He goes way back. He could give you wonderful background. He was formerly an officer of the old Steneck Trust Company in Hoboken. And that goes back to the time that FDR declared the Banking Holiday. Figure that out, 33? Now let me say, would you mind telling me a couple that you've interviewed? (cuts off)

Jacobson: (mid-sentence) And you gave a great speech.

DeFazio: Where?

Jacobson: City Hall.

DeFazio: Is that right?

Jacobson: You gave a great speech.

DeFazio: Did I?

Jacobson: Yes, and I filmed it. I have it on film.

DeFazio: You did? Where is it? Can I see it some time?

Jacobson: Yeah, if you come over... (tape breaks)

DeFazio: (mid-sentence) I don't remember any other mayor, and it seems to me Tom is the first to be laid out in state in City Hall. I could be wrong because there've been mayors before Tom, mayors before, they go way back.

Jacobson: Mayors that died in office, though? Who died in office, no.

DeFazio: No, he's the first. I guess you're right. I don't know any one else who died.. and I can go back to 1915. Yeah, no one ever died in office.

Jacobson: That's why.

DeFazio: That's correct. From commission government, on. Yeah, 1915. That's when... The first mayor on the commission government was Patrick R. Griffin, Honorable Patrick R. Griffin.

Jacobson: Did you go and see him in state? Did you pay your..

DeFazio: Sure! Sure! I did. Yes, and he had a good group of, escort of honor. They were all there.

Jacobson: Could you describe what that was like? Because I wasn't able to film that. Could you describe what that day was like, what it looked like?

DeFazio: Well, it was right in the rotunda there, right in the main entrance, as you go up the steps on Washington Street. You hit the rotunda. He was laid out and there was a crowd around him. He was in, he was laid out, what they call that? Nothing concealed, from head to foot, he was stretched out beautifully. He made a

good, he made a wonderful impression. There was a good crowd. The sister was there, the sister was there in the background, with Della Fave and Cuning and some of the friends. A lot of people, it kept on going, as far as I was concerned. I was there about twenty minutes. It was crowded.

Jacobson: Were people upset?

DeFazio: Some of them were. Some of them were crying. Some of them were shedding tears. You could see them with their handkerchiefs and all. And, it was lodge of sorrow, there was no doubt about it. They felt bad. Felt bad. I felt bad, myself, gee whiz. I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe it. But I had a notion something might come out of it, just when he fell off that platform and hit his head and they saw some marks on his head. I says: Tommy's hurt. Maybe they got him up too fast, and then he, then that shock on election day. That really set it off. When Helen, when he learned that Helen lost. He thought that was going to be a win. They had all hepped him up, too. They all thought Helen was going to win, believe me.

Jacobson: She almost did.

DeFazio: Yes. What she come out with a tie? Is that where the tie was?

Jacobson: No.

DeFazio: The tie was with the other two.. (tape cuts off)

It was never anticipated, I can assure you. All new and novel. Things anticipated nor contemplated.

Jacobson: I know. History is interesting.

DeFazio: I like history.

Jacobson: Yeah. Do you think in my film I should go as far back as the Indians? Where do you think I should start?

DeFazio: Oh, I think that would be – not that you have to devote too much time – I would take that as a starting point. On the trip up the Hudson of the *Half Moon* by Henry Hudson in 1609. That's when he saw the Indians, Henry Hudson.

Jacobson: Why should I go back that far?

DeFazio: I don't know. Because you're talking Indians. That would take you back. We didn't have any Indians at this stage of the game. I haven't seen one of the descendants of my 82 years in Hoboken. There's not a one left. American Indians. Are you talking about American Indians? Yeah, we've got a lot of Gandhi Indians. I don't mean gandy dancers, either. I mean followers of Gandhi.

Jacobson: Right.

DeFazio: He was a great man. Tom strikes me of having a lot of the qualities of Gandhi. Peace. He wanted peace. And he wanted people to be happy. And he hated, you know, the sharpshooter. And he didn't want to get pushed around, and he didn't want people to get pushed around. But Tommy started very late in life in his, you know, political business. Mind you. He was age 58 when he died. So 55 when he decided to take a shot. But lots of people didn't know who Tom was until he went out there to tell him. And he had a wonderful military record. So what are you going to do? The good die young. So look out now, Nora.

(Tape ends)