

Oral History Interview  
Anthony (Tony) Poos  
WH013  
(written transcript and digital audio)

On August 22, 2008, Anthony (Tony) Poos was interviewed at his home on 356 Oak Avenue, Woodbridge Proper by Brenda Velasco at 1:00 P.M.. In the room was Anthony Poos's grandson, Arthur Wright, who lives at 289 Grady Drive in Woodbridge.

**1. Identify individual-name, section, date of birth.**

My name is Anthony Poos.

*Brenda Velasco:* And when were you born?

*Tony Poos:* 1927, June 20.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, June 20, 1927, and where were you born?

*Tony Poos:* 326 Oak Avenue.

*Brenda Velasco:* 326 Oak Avenue?

*Tony Poos:* I moved one block when I got married.

*Brenda Velasco:* You didn't move very far, did you?

**2. How long have you lived in Woodbridge?**

81 years.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow, so you have a lot of memories for us?

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* And you lived all your life then in Woodbridge.

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, and Woodbridge Proper.

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

**3. Why did you or your family originally move to Woodbridge?**

Well, they came from Hungary, when my mom came out, in 1904. My dad, I don't know, he came out maybe a little earlier; but they came from two different parts of Hungary. They came because things weren't so good in Hungary, like today, and they came here.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, so it was for better opportunity.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, right, right.

*Brenda Velasco:* Better opportunity as so many other immigrant groups have come.

*Tony Poos:* Right.

**4. What physical changes have occurred over the years in the area you lived?  
-houses, streets, services, stores, houses of worship, schools, etc.**

Oh, brother, where do you want to start?

*Brenda Velasco:* We're going to start with houses and this street.

*Tony Poos:* Houses? This street?

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* Well, there are not too many new houses on this street but the physical changes would be like, on this side, I was thinking the other day, that on this side, there are maybe five or six houses, no six or seven houses had chickens, everybody had chickens. We had pigs, chickens and a cow.

*Brenda Velasco:* So this was a regular farm area then?

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* And we're right off of Main Street.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, oh yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* We're only, what, two houses in from Main Street?

*Tony Poos:* I'd say one house, one house.

*Brenda Velasco:* One house in from Main Street. So you had chickens.....

*Tony Poos:* On this side of the street, all the way down, there was about seven people, six or seven people had them; on that side, maybe about five.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* Because we had one cow, two neighbors from us had two cows, they didn't have any pigs though, but we had pigs, chickens, geese.

*Brenda Velasco:* Not any more.

*Tony Poos:* Oh no, but it's coming back that way. It's got to go back that way now, because in the '70s I said, the way this country has got to, you know, wise up is we got to go back to the old days so the people appreciate things. Today, it's too, everybody is, you know, too rich and they don't have any appreciation for things, for other people's property.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, now how about the streets around here?

*Tony Poos:* Well, at election time, they used to come and spray tar on the road and they used to dump a ¼ inch of stone on top of it and what stuck on the tar stuck there and then after, eventually, with the traffic on the street, there wasn't that much traffic; but the ¼ inch of stone used to end wind up on the sides of the street, what would be a gutter, but there was no gutters them days.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, so this wasn't a paved street then?

*Tony Poos:* Oh, no.

*Brenda Velasco:* When did it get paved?

*Tony Poos:* Probably in the '40s some time, I think.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* Early '40s.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, like around World War II then?

*Tony Poos:* Yes, I think maybe just after.

*Brenda Velasco:* After World War II.

*Tony Poos:* I don't remember exactly, I got to think about that one.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, because this was a main thoroughfare; you're right off of Main Street.

*Tony Poos:* Oh yes, oh yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Was Main Street paved?

*Tony Poos:* Let's see, Main Street was a, yes, it was pretty much, yes, it was, yes, everything.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, so Main Street was paved. Did you have the Turnpike at that time?

*Tony Poos:* No, the Turnpike came in, let's see, '51 was the accident, so the Turnpike came in the '50s, '49 or '50, because the train wreck was in '51. So, that's why the wreck was because of the Turnpike. Because when they cut Fulton Street, they had to put in a temporary trestle over

the Turnpike cut, you know, and that's when the train was going too fast and they ran out of temporary tracks and the train, you know that.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, and we're going to get back to that train wreck because that comes up later. How about stores around here?

*Tony Poos:* Stores, they had a corner store. There were a lot of stores. Not a lot, but on the corner here, there was a store. There was one over here that they're renovating now, on Main Street, just before the light on the other side. They're making it into apartment too. Then there was this here house here, on the corner that used to be a store.

*Brenda Velasco:* So you were surrounded by stores.

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* You had three stores within basically a block.

*Tony Poos:* Oh yes, it was all in walking distance, sure.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, and what did they sell at those stores?

*Tony Poos:* Pardon.

*Brenda Velasco:* What did they sell at those stores?

*Tony Poos:* At this one they sold meat, like a deli almost, meat and lunchmeat and canned goods mostly: scratch feed or chicken feed or corn. It was corn; we used to call it chicken feed or scratch feed and, let me see, no ice cream there. So we had to go to the one on Main Street for ice cream.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* Then this one was, this I think, I don't know if they had ice cream, but this one we used to go for the fireworks. They used to sell fireworks there.

*Brenda Velasco:* That's right. They used to sell the small fireworks?

*Tony Poos:* Yes, well, yes, the two inchers or so.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, yes.

*Tony Poos:* The penny ones were about that long, about 1/8 inch diameter.

*Brenda Velasco:* I forgot that they used to sell the fireworks.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow! And that was the one on Main Street?

*Tony Poos:* Yes, this one right here, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, and now a days you can't sell fireworks in New Jersey, it's illegal.

*Tony Poos:* You can't do anything today.

*Brenda Velasco:* You're right. How about the houses of worship, churches?

*Tony Poos:* Well, they were just about where they are now in my time. I know they moved.

You know, St. James Church was right here where Dr. Boyd's office is.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, so St. James was where Dr. Boyd's office is.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, that's in the book though. You know the historian book.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* They moved it down where it is now. Where it used to be, it used to be in the playground across from the new one now. Where the kid's playground is?

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* That's where the church was moved from here to down there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* They used to say that the people wouldn't come to the church, so they brought the church to the people.

*Brenda Velasco:* Because there was a playground there.

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* How about the schools, where did you go to school?

*Tony Poos:* No. 1, across from the firehouse.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* I started there and then, I remember, my poor father, he put me in there and, I'm getting off the track now.

*Brenda Velasco:* That's okay, tell me about the school.

*Tony Poos:* Okay, well, my father put me in there and then, I remember, the doors had big windows on it, and he was looking in to see what's happening. The first thing they did was give you a blanket and they put it on the floor and all the other kids, you know, were taking a nap already but we just started, you know, we just got there, but then I started to talk to the kids in Hungarian.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, so you spoke Hungarian as well as English?

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes, but the kids wouldn't talk back to me. I said, what the heck, they don't want to be friends, so came recess time, I came home.

*Brenda Velasco:* You walked home from recess? What did your father say?

*Tony Poos:* I don't remember. I remember I walked home; I don't know how I got home myself, but I remember I walked out.

*Brenda Velasco:* You managed.

*Tony Poos:* Five years old, from No. 1 School to here.

*Brenda Velasco:* And you had to cross Amboy Avenue?

*Tony Poos:* Yes, yes, yes. There used to be cops when I came home, you know, but like recess, you know, there were no cops there. There were only cops going to school and coming from school.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, so your first language was Hungarian that you spoke then?

*Tony Poos:* Yes, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* And did you also speak English at home?

*Tony Poos:* Well, no, we didn't speak it, not with my mother, not my parents, but my sisters. I guess they were speaking English but I don't remember, you know. But they probably were talking both ways because, like I said, I just remember talking Hungarian to the kids because I didn't know there was another language, I guess, you know. But my sisters used to, like I said, play with me. They used to put me in a carriage and, you know, push me around the block here. I guess they must have spoke English to me, I don't really remember.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, now, how many sisters did you have?

*Tony Poos:* I had, let's see, three. There were six of us: three girls and three boys.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, were you the youngest?

*Tony Poos:* I'm the baby, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* You're the baby.

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* You're the baby, okay.

*Tony Poos:* I got a sister in Sayreville, 91.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow!

*Tony Poos:* She drives yet.

*Brenda Velasco:* So you have good genes in your family then?

*Tony Poos:* It looks like, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* How many grades were in School No. 1 at that time?

*Tony Poos:* Let's see, three. It went up to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and then from there we went to No. 11 School, 4<sup>th</sup> grade I started there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* Then we went to 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, to 8<sup>th</sup> grade at School 11 and then from there did you go to the high school?

*Tony Poos:* No, I didn't want to go to high school.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, we're not going to let Arthur hear this, maybe, you just close your ears Arthur.

*Tony Poos:* No, I went to vocational school.

*Brenda Velasco:* Oh, okay.

*Tony Poos:* I think that's where a lot of kids should go today instead of pushing them into college because some kids, in my day too, some kids were college material and some weren't. I mean, even lot of people could afford it, and some couldn't, so, like I mean, in my case, I would never make college whether I wanted it or not. My parents couldn't afford it.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, now where was the vocational school?

*Tony Poos:* In Perth Amboy.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* The one that just closed on New Brunswick Avenue.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, and what trade did you learn there?

*Tony Poos:* Industrial electricity.

*Brenda Velasco:* So you became an electrician then?

*Tony Poos:* No, because what happened, I was 17 at graduation time and I was going to get drafted and I joined the Merchant Marine.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, so at graduation you joined the Merchant Marine.

*Tony Poos:* Well before, before like in January '45, I graduated in '45, June, you know. So in January I joined the Merchant Marine.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay and how long were you in there?

*Tony Poos:* Four years. So, that's what happened. That's why I didn't become an electrician because when you graduated, and things were normal, they used to get you a job in a plant. There were a lot of factories around in those days and they'd get you an apprenticeship there and you'd serve your apprenticeship in the factory. But what happened, I wasn't even at the graduation because I was already in a training school and my mother went down, my parents, my family, my brother and my mother and father went down to get my diploma.

*Brenda Velasco:* Without you.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Without you, okay.

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

**5. What public buildings/property were there?-post office, library, parks, firehouse, schools, etc.**

The Town Hall, of course.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, Town Hall. It was still on Main Street at the end. It was the old Town Hall though. How about the library?

*Tony Poos:* Not this one, the old one was there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay and where was that located?

*Tony Poos:* Barron Avenue, not Barron Avenue, Rahway Avenue.

*Brenda Velasco:* Rahway Avenue, it was the Barron, old library, his library, from the Barron Estate then, right?

*Tony Poos:* Yes, right.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, now it's called the Barron Arts Center.

*Tony Poos:* Right.

*Brenda Velasco:* How about a firehouse?

*Tony Poos:* Let's see, that was rebuilt, that was rebuilt. They tore the old one down.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, in the same location?

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* I got movies of that when they were tearing it down.

*Brenda Velasco:* You have movies of it?

*Tony Poos:* Yes, because I belonged to the First Aid Squad, you know.

*Brenda Velasco:* Oh, well that was my next question, where was the First Aid Squad?

*Tony Poos:* Where the building is now.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, where the building is.....

*Tony Poos:* Yes, by the firehouse there, on Brook Street.

*Brenda Velasco:* So you were a member of the First Aid Squad then? Now, you have those movies?

*Tony Poos:* From the firehouse?

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes, sure.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* A friend of mine, in fact, worked there. My neighbor down the street he worked down there. He was into construction, you know, and then Almasi got the job. He worked for Almasi at that time and he ripped that down.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, so it was Almasi?

*Tony Poos:* Almasi, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Almasi.

*Tony Poos:* It was trucking.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* They were the contractors that were taking it down. I had some artifacts from there too. They were throwing everything away, you know. I got a mirror that was by the bar. I got a fire extinguisher too. I still got it, what else did I get from there? I forget, but I used to cut the kids hair down the basement so I put the mirror on the wall. It was like a barbershop.

*Brenda Velasco:* They must have loved it.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, it was a big mirror. It used to sit behind the bar. Now and then they call it the dugout.

*Brenda Velasco:* Were there any experiences that you had with the First Aid Squad?

*Tony Poos:* Sure, everyday. Every call was an experience.

*Brenda Velasco:* Did you go everyday because you also had a job?

*Tony Poos:* Sure, yes, but that was all voluntary. During the daytime I used to work up in, where the houses, you don't even know about that. You see, that's the trouble, that's what makes me mad, they tore that down and not even one word was in the paper about it. It was a

brick factory. They made hollow tile. It was right here across from the entrance to Lowes like, where you go into Lowes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Oh, by the clay pits. You worked over here.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, right here.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, and then Woodbridge Shopping Center is where the clay pits were too.

*Tony Poos:* Well no, the shopping center is where the sand bank was. There used to be a sand bank there: maybe over 50 feet, maybe close 100 feet high - but it was all sand.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* It was a mountain. We called it a mountain because it was big. Sunday afternoons a lot of guys used to ride motorcycles up it to see how high they could go on the motorcycles.

*Brenda Velasco:* This was before it was Woodbridge Mall?

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes. Oh, yes. The good old days it was.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, but you worked at a brick factory.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, no, no, it used to be a brick factory. My father worked at it when it was a brick factory. But I worked there, like, after the war, you know. A friend of mine was working there. It was called General Coating, and General Coating was a company that came from Wisconsin. They had a special paint, they called it aerosol and they used to coat tanks out of it, that's how they got started; and then the jeeps during the war, they used to refurbish them, you know, and then send them back out. But anyway, after the war then, they were doing a lot of coating of tanks for, you know, pharmaceutical outfits. Then I used to hang around with a guy, a guy that lived down the street here, we used to hang out down by, it used to be Caesars, it was the second store down, I think, on the left hand side.

*Brenda Velasco:* On Main Street?

*Tony Poos:* Yes. No wait, not the second because there was a new one put on, two new stores there, maybe the third store down. You could see that the front of it is different than the first two. The first two are new and then after that there are two old buildings like, I mean, fronts, they were fronts. Well, anyhow, we used to hang out there, so this guy was working up there and he said they're looking for maintenance men up there. So I wasn't working, I just got out of the service, so I went up there and got the job there anyway.

*Brenda Velasco:* And how long did you work there?

*Tony Poos:* Thirteen years, but then I got married and needed more money so then, and then I had ulcers too, so.....

*Brenda Velasco:* That's not good.

*Tony Poos:* While I was home, you know, recuperating, I saw in the paper, I found a job in Carteret. It was Hudson Pulp and Paper. They used to make paper cups. It was a good job. The whole plant was air conditioned; well it had to be for the paper, you know.

*Brenda Velasco:* Right.

*Tony Poos:* When the humidity hit the paper, it wouldn't cut right. Then from there I went to General Motors. I thought I was going to stay there. It looked good, I said, it's a new place, it'll be good there for awhile, you know. The job lasted two years. I don't know what happened with them. They went to Florida, I think, Hudson Pulp. Well they still make stuff but, anyways, they closed this place up.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, and then you went to General Motors after that.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, I retired from there. I had 31 years there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow! So you were able to get a pension when you retired?

*Tony Poos:* Yes, oh, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* I'm collecting now.

*Brenda Velasco:* Fine.

*Tony Poos:* I'm lucky though because now they're taking a lot of that stuff away, but they can't take it away from me because it's locked in.

*Brenda Velasco:* You're very, very fortunate.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, I'm lucky.

*Brenda Velasco:* I don't know if your grandson, Arthur, is going to be so fortunate with pension.

*Tony Poos:* No, they won't have no jobs left. You can't get a job today that you're going to stay there, maybe, 20 years even.

*Brenda Velasco:* You're right. You're right.

## **6. *What did you do for recreation?***

I used to bowl. I used to roller skate.

*Brenda Velasco:* Where did you go bowling?

*Tony Poos:* I used to bowl, well I guess it used to be Amboy Avenue, this one. This is down by the Medicine Shoppe, that's where this one came from, and that used to be, I forgot how many alleys they had; they had, well that was all renovated though when I started bowling, but before that the brook used to flood when they had big rains.....

*Brenda Velasco:* Oh, yes.

*Tony Poos:* And then it used to ruin the alleys that were in there. So what happened, they took up the alleys, this guy, what was his name, Hospedor, Hospedor they bought the place and he put in the alleys that was down there and we bowled there. We used to bowl, in, what do you call it, when I was in the squad, I used to bowl in the Craftman's Club (Masonic Building) on Green Street: four of those alleys from Amboy Avenue went over there and two of them went over there in the Hungarian hall.

*Brenda Velasco:* The Hungarian hall on.....

*Tony Poos:* Amboy Avenue, the Catholic Church. The other one was Hungarian Reformed.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* I used to set pins there for a penny a game.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow!

*Tony Poos:* Well my father belonged there so I got stuck on a school night. I was down there until 11:00 P.M. That was not automatic, you had to set them by hand, you know.

*Brenda Velasco:* Right, right, right. That was before everything was automatic.

*Tony Poos:* It was a lot of fun though. They weren't sanctioned because the building wasn't quite long enough to take a full alley, so they had to cut the alley and they made it shorter, so it couldn't be a sanctioned league anymore. Well, still a lot of guys got together and made up teams and they called it the Peanut League. They used to bowl and they used to have a lot of fun there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay and you also did roller skating you said.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes, we used to go to Twin City and Dreamland, up in Elizabeth.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, I remember.....

*Tony Poos:* The night of the, what do you call it, that's where I was going, that's where I went: the night of the train wreck. My one sister was visiting from Chicago and my mother's sister was living in Carteret. I heard the whistles though, you know, the sirens and whistles, everything was blowing around 6:00 P.M.; the fire whistle was blowing. I didn't know what it was though,



you know, what was going on; but anyway, my sister wanted to go see my other sister in Carteret. So I was driving down and I said, Jesus, when I got down to Main Street I see all the commotion there by Fulton Street and I said, holy smoke, maybe this is where the trouble was. So I parked over by the train station lot, you know, off of Main Street the one block, and I walked over the where the, what do you call it, it looked like there was trouble, so I looked over and I said, Jesus, it looked like a train wreck but it was so quiet. It was so quiet there I couldn't believe it, but pitch dark, you know. I couldn't see anything and it was after rain and the side of the tracks were just filled up, that back fill; it was all muddy. Like I said, I was dressed up. I was going to go skating, that was my skating night, Monday night. Let's see Monday night, yea, Monday night, I forget now, Monday night was; one night was skating, the next night was bowling, we used to go. So anyway, I walked into, what street is the name, let me see that's Berry, not Berry.

*Brenda Velasco:* Pearl Street?

*Tony Poos:* No.

*Brenda Velasco:* Fulton Street?

*Tony Poos:* Off of Fulton. I walked in Fulton, but the first street there, Legion Place.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* Legion Place.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* And I see this car was across the, you know, walls, retaining walls.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* There was a car right across that and I remember it knocked the wall out. The top of the wall was knocked out. A big gunk was knocked out but the car was sitting in that, the thing, where it knocked the concrete out. You could still see the mark there because they patched it but you could still see the mark.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, were you still a member of the First Aid Squad.

*Tony Poos:* No, I wasn't in there then.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* I joined in '64, I think, I joined.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* But a lot of guys I went to school with were in the squad. I didn't know that until after I got in, you know.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, alright, so that must have really shaken you up and your family to see that?

*Tony Poos:* Well, you know, you really didn't see anything in the dark. The one car that was over on Legion Place, it looked like somebody's intestines or maybe it was clothes, I don't know what it was, because it was kind of dark. But, it was so awful quiet I couldn't figure it out and I said, well, it was just a train wreck, you know. So then I brought my sister to Carteret and I went roller skating and then, up there, I found out it was a big train wreck.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, it was the worst train wreck in rail history.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, 84 people.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* But I could have stayed there because the friend of mine that was in the squad, right, I went to school with him, he was manager up in Airpotter's up in Iselin, and they used to sell oxygen, you know. Anyway, they were bringing it down there. I could have stayed there

because I used to do that when I worked in General Coating so I could have stayed there and helped them. But like I said, it was so dark, it didn't look like anything.

*Brenda Velasco:* And it was so quiet.

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* That's what it was, eerie quiet.

*Tony Poos:* Yes eerie, well I'm telling you, not a peep, not a peep.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow!

*Tony Poos:* So I said, well, it's just a train wreck, you know. I didn't see anybody; didn't hear anybody.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, yes.

*Tony Poos:* My wife, she happened to be at her friend's who lived down towards where the Turnpike is now, on Fulton Street. Well she was friends with everybody, but, she was real friends with these people; and anyway had to stay overnight because that's where the engine rolled down, right in front of these people's house. She couldn't go home. She lived in Amboy at that time.

*Brenda Velasco:* That was quite an experience.

*Tony Poos:* It was, it was. There was a guy in the squad by the name of Al Hamilton, he lived up across from Almasi up in the park there. What the heck is the name of that, I forget the name of the street he lived on but he's gone too. He was a detective for the railroad, Pennsylvania Railroad, but he was a hell of a nice guy, real good talker, but he worked in New York. So anyway, I remember, like I said, I worked up there in General Coating at that time and the helicopter was flying around, not helicopter, planes, no helicopters at that time, it was just a single engine, single wing planes, flying around and taking pictures, but anyway he got all those pictures, all the film from them. We had a big film, you know, a big reel. It was after the news and they didn't want it, so they gave it to him anyway. Somehow it got lost, after I got out of there, somebody borrowed it and it never came back. But it was all pictures from the news, the *Daily News*, from New York.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, so the *Daily News* was one of the newspapers that was down here.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes, oh, yes, they had a lot of pictures in the paper; a lot of pictures. I got a piece of brick because over there in the store, I had to break out a window, the Town required, actually that's the window for the bedroom, so when they knocked the wall out I got some bricks out of there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Oh, wow! Look and you even have the name there.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, that's the name, that's the name of the company, Annes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Annes, okay.

*Tony Poos:* Do you know where they used to live? Do you know where the abortion thing is on Main Street there?

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* Next door, down towards town, a beautiful house, a red brick house, nice green, that European style roof.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* That's where he used to live, and then these guys tore it down, the one that got the property there. That was such a nice house.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, you had a lot of beautiful homes on Main Street that have been lost.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, man.

*Brenda Velasco:* We have an Historic Preservation Commission right now and they are fighting against all these removals of beautiful homes. This is heavy.

*Tony Poos:* That's a couple of pieces there that I salvaged. I've got a small piece but I couldn't find it.

*Brenda Velasco:* But that's the kind that you used to make?

*Tony Poos:* Like today it would be cinderblock but these are better than cinderblock because they're hard because they baked them. But these were like a rectangle block where they would have six or eight holes in it and then I used to just stack them up.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, now, were there many other Hungarians who worked at that brick factory?

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes, the whole place was loaded. This was all a Hungarian street. Let's see, there's a couple of Irish, we had Irish across the street here and, let's see, down the end of the street there were people, the Stones, oh, that was her married name but her maiden name was....

*Brenda Velasco:* Irene Stone and Bill Stone. They used to live here, yes.

*Tony Poos:* Right, her in-law, the woman, Billy Stone, the husband's mother, used to live down here.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* That's another story. They're Irish, right, so we lived, like I told you, one block down, and my sister used to play with Irene, I mean, the mother. Wait a while, yes, Irene. Was the mother's name that?

*Brenda Velasco:* I don't know, I don't know. I just know Irene and Bill Stone because Irene was a former Councilwoman.

*Tony Poos:* It slipped my mind now. But I knew the mother real well.

*Brenda Velasco:* Her mother-in-law then?

*Tony Poos:* Her mother-in-law, yes, Billy's mother. Oh, you knew her?

*Brenda Velasco:* I knew Billy's wife, Irene Stone.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, you didn't know Billy's mother?

*Brenda Velasco:* No, no, no.

*Tony Poos:* Okay, but anyway, my sister used to play with his mother, because they're about the same age. But anyway, she used to come over the house a lot and my father used to put her on his knee and he used to talk Hungarian to her.... This is years later, I don't remember what year, but my bedroom was over the kitchen and I hear my mother talking to somebody in Hungarian and I couldn't recognize the other voice. I come down and it was Mrs. Stone, Billy's mother. She talked like a trooper, you know.

*Brenda Velasco:* Hey, your mother taught her well; your father taught her well.

*Tony Poos:* It was unbelievable though. They used to sell eggs, you know. Her father used to, well they had, down the end of the street, the nice house that they fixed down there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* Did you come this way?

*Brenda Velasco:* No, I came down Main Street from Fords.

*Tony Poos:* Okay, well down the end of the street there, let's see, about four houses in from Bunns Lane, the nice old house it was, it's all fixed up now. It's all modern. But that's where she used to live, Billy, the mother, used to live there and then they used to raise chickens, for eggs though. They used to go around, her father used to go with a bicycle with the eggs, he had a route that he used to go on.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, this was quite rural back then.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, oh, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* What a difference, what a difference from today. What else did you do? Anything else for recreation?

*Tony Poos:* Are you kidding?

*Brenda Velasco:* You had the bowling; the roller skating.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes, that's later though. But the early days, when I was his age, this was our playground from Amboy Avenue to Fords up to the St. James Cemetery. That was our playground. We used to run through the thistle all the time.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* I used to go up the dumps. That's where I used to get all my toys. Behind the Forge Motel, there was a dump there, where that pond is now.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* Well, that pond used to be a nice swimming pond a long time ago. Well, it was a clay pit. All the ponds around here were all abandoned clay pits. Where the Hess building is, there was one. A neighbor's kid drowned there about when he was 12 years old, I think he was.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow!

*Tony Poos:* Nice kid. I learned to swim where Wegmans is. There was a clay pit there, right near the street, right near Main Street. There was a dog patch, we used to call it a dog patch and then a little further in, where Lowe's is now probably, there was another pond there that was Lacines. All these tiles, like my grandson just showed you, from the factory, because the factory was right there, so all the broken pieces that they didn't want they just threw it over there in that big hole. It was a clay pit, so we didn't go swimming there too much because when they break they're sharp.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* They're very sharp. So they used to throw them over, so we didn't go swimming there too much because you couldn't walk on it barefoot, you know.

*Brenda Velasco:* No, you would cut yourself, right?

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes, yes, very sharp.

*Brenda Velasco:* It was dangerous.

*Tony Poos:* So we used to go through the woods. I went to school with a kid, his father used to buy and sell horses. He lived on Bunns Lane right where that turn is where these trucks catch fire over there on the Turnpike where the curve is right across from the pond on the Turnpike. That's where he used to live and after school I used to change and go up there and ride the horses.

*Brenda Velasco:* So you rode horses on Bunns Lane?

*Tony Poos:* Oh, are you kidding? We used to ride them all over, all over, sure.

*Brenda Velasco:* That's great.

*Tony Poos:* Between Bunns Lane and the Turnpike it was all woods and we used to ride through there and then through Cutters Bank.

*Brenda Velasco:* Right, Cutters Dock Road?

*Tony Poos:* Yes, all the way up. Not Cutters Dock Road, right here in the street, down the end of the street here, Bunns Lane, yea, and then the woods and then just go down where the Turnpike is by the Turnpike. That was all clay pits. That was all clay banks there. We used to go up there and get some petrified wood because these guys used to dig, you know, like shelves, you know, like steps.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* That's how they used to bring it up. They'd throw it up levels like that, the clay, when they used to dig it. Then we used to go up there wandering around and then they used to have a lot of petrified wood in there and some wood had crystals on it. I saved some but I don't know what the heck happened to them.

*Brenda Velasco:* Well if you ever find it we can use it for the Historical Museum.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay Arthur, you remember that, alright? Anything your grandfather has with the clay and everything because right now Woodbridge is the only one on the whole eastern part of New Jersey that has a kiln. We still have a kiln on Pennval Road.

*Tony Poos:* Where is that?

*Brenda Velasco:* You go down Sewaren Avenue.....

*Tony Poos:* Oh, okay, I know where you mean. By Valentines?

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, yes, yes

*Tony Poos:* Okay, a friend of mine worked there until the end. He had some pictures.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow!

*Tony Poos:* He's gone now. I just saw the daughter on Sunday. He passed away now a couple of years, but he's got pictures there.

*Brenda Velasco:* If they want to get rid of any pictures before they throw it out, check with us. Okay?

*Tony Poos:* Alright, yes. I'll mention it to her. My brother used to work there too. Of course, my brother worked behind the Hess building now. Do you know where Mutton Hollow Road is?

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* Well, if you go down off of Route #9, then you make that curve in where the curve is that's where the factory was.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* That's where the factory was. I used to take his lunch there. So sometimes I used to go up through the pond behind my friends and come out where the Hess, what the heck is there, the Hess, I don't know what the heck is there now, maybe the, down this way from the Hess building anyway, there used to be a gas station there. I used to cut through there and go down through the banks and come out by the factory.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow!

*Tony Poos:* And I used to go through the factory. Not like today, they'd never let you in the factory.

*Brenda Velasco:* No, no.

*Tony Poos:* So I used to watch.....

*Brenda Velasco:* Be a spy.

*Tony Poos:* Sure.

*Brenda Velasco:* They wouldn't let you do it.

*Tony Poos:* And they had a big wagon wheel; that's how they used to work the clay. They'd add water to get the right consistency. There was a big wagon wheel going around in a circle in the pit, a round pit, and it was just rolling around there, rolling around and it worked the clay until they got the right consistency to take it out and make bricks out of it. Then they used to mold them, you know, and then my brother worked there, all the guys on this street, all the young guys here, they all worked up there.

*Brenda Velasco:* How long did it take to make the bricks because you not only had to get the clay, make the clay, and have it the right consistency, but you had to put it in the oven?

*Tony Poos:* First, you had to let it dry, you can't just put it in wet, and they used to put it in a brick but that had to be set a certain way, too. That had to be a space between them all because when the kilns, you saw pictures of them how round they are next to....

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* They used to be about, maybe, 30 feet round, maybe 40 feet or something. But they had to be a certain way, you know, so the heat could go through them. Then they had little, about that big, little ceramic was made out of the clay. What the heck would you call them? Just a holder, I guess, you would call them. It was round like that but a flat bottom and the metal was about a ¼ inch whole and they put it on a glass rod about that long, they put the glass rod in there and then they put them in strategic places so that you could see up, like from the outside you could see those rods. So that was my father's job to keep the fire going. That's why we lived so close. See it was in walking distance; you didn't need no car. Let's see, around then there must have been about, maybe, eight fires around. They were like small fireplaces, about eight of them around the kiln. But they were all hot, you know, and then, anyways, you'd have to run about, I think a week, they used to bake them for, about a week, but you keep looking up in there and you could see the glass rod. When the glass rod would come down like that, then you know you've got enough heat up there. The glass would melt.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* But that's how you got to check the temperature.

*Brenda Velasco:* And you had to be very vigilante with it.

*Tony Poos:* Sure, that was a skill like today, you know; nobody thinks about it but that was a skill, you know, in them days. I remember I used to ask my mother when I was going to school what my father did for a living. She said he was a fire man. I thought he was a fireman like downtown but he was fire man up there. He kept the fires going. Because he'd go check it, come home, sleep, and go back a certain time and check it again.

*Brenda Velasco:* And it was handy because you were all within walking distance.

*Tony Poos:* Well, that's the idea.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* Over there, where the ramp is coming down to this light here.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* Well the grassy part, I think exactly about where the grassy part is, the company used to have buildings there, buildings, like a condominium, for people, people that worked in there, you know, they lived there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, so there were houses, they were worker's houses?

*Tony Poos:* They were apartments like, they were apartments that the companies built because they don't have to travel, you know, they'd be right here, close.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* Behind all those apartments, the row of apartments there, in the back was a big bank and on top of them was all outhouses.

*Brenda Velasco:* You needed outhouses. There were no flush toilets then.

*Tony Poos:* Sure, oh yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* But I know on Woodbridge's logo you have the kiln.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Because this was the big clay center.

*Tony Poos:* Sure, they had them. Let me see, where the heck would it be, well it would be down, like I said, in that loop, down the bottom where Mutton Hollow Road goes around. That

was about the center of the factory. Like I said, I used to watch them, because these young guys they used to, like my brother, from the inner tubes, they used to make, like pads that slipped on their hands because handling those bricks.

*Brenda Velasco:* That's rough.

*Tony Poos:* Rough, are you kidding, it used to wear the skin off your hand. So they had inner tubes, they were made like pads, that fit on their hand. A pad so they could catch them. They had one on their thumb and one on their fingers, and that's how they used to throw the bricks at each other. Some guys would be up high. The young guys, they used to throw them up to them.

*Brenda Velasco:* You had to be young to work there then?

*Tony Poos:* Oh, sure, or in good shape, anyway.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* You didn't have to be young but in good shape.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright.

*Tony Poos:* But the bricks weren't heavy, you know, the red brick, they weren't heavy. But you know where, behind that there old health thing that was, remember, where the light is for the center, on the left hand side of the road, there used to be a .....

*Brenda Velasco:* Oh, the health club.

*Tony Poos:* Health club, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, yes, yes. Jack La Lanne or.....

*Tony Poos:* I don't remember, but right behind that, where that road comes around, makes that turn.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* I remember there was a little old shed like and they had rails, mine rails they called them because it was a small rail, like 3 inch rail, that they used to have, that's what ran through the factory. That's how they moved the bricks around. But anyway, when they made the bricks, like the fire brick, I know, they put them in these here sheds like, whatever they were, you know, you would call them.

*Brenda Velasco:* Drying sheds?

*Tony Poos:* Yes, yes, that's what it was. They used to dry them right behind that thing, what do you call it? That's the last one that was there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, I didn't realize that.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, the road cut right through it. Like from there now, if you're standing right behind it to the left, that's where the factory would start. And the guy down the street, Mr. Kish, I remember he used to work there. They had the forms, you know, and then with a mallet he used to pound the clay because the fire bricks were made different, you know.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* They had a lot of broken up scrape like, you know, dried brick pieces like. They would pound them in there and then they'd put them in there to dry and then they would bake them. They get baked different, you know.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* They were fire brick.

*Brenda Velasco:* There were different procedures then.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, sure, that was fire brick.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* But the forms, I think, he made like about four or five at a time. That was like a, I don't know how to explain it but, a side here and a side here, and this way there was like five

spaces for bricks; I mean for molds for bricks, and they used to pound it in there. They had like a bow saw with a wire across it, like a cheese cutter. That's how they cut the thing off to make the tops all even. Then they put sprinkled like broken up brick.....

*Brenda Velasco:* Quite involved.

*Tony Poos:* Crumbs, like you would put flour on there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, yes.

*Tony Poos:* That was keeping them from sticking together.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* I was never involved with it. I know it's part of Woodbridge's history.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* But it's very involved.

*Tony Poos:* I used to take my brother's lunch up there and the guys used to give me clay. I'd be hanging around over there, had nothing to do, and I'd make a house out of the clay and they would bake it for me, they threw it in the oven. Then the next day I would come back and it was done.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

### **7. What was the focal point of your community at that time?**

Survival, I think. Because like I said, everybody had their own, you know, life style here.

*Brenda Velasco:* It was their home; their home and family.

*Tony Poos:* Sure, sure, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Did people congregate or meet anywhere?

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes, sure, more than today. That's what I was going to say, you don't have any, what do you call it, communication today anymore. The churches, they used to have picnics on Florida Grove Road, where that, what is it, Holy Spirit Church is there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* It used to be Pfeiffer's Boulevard, they called that. What do you call it, I can't think what you call that, a place where we had the dances and stuff like that, you know? There was a picnic ground, like Varady's. Our church used to go there....

*Brenda Velasco:* To Florida Grove Road?

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes and the other one was Varady's Grove, we used to go, just before, I don't know what the name of that last street is before Route #1 if you're going down Ford Avenue. (Lafayette Street)

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* The last street before Route #1, and to the left there, there was a big, big building and there was a bar, and that was permanent, a bar and, I guess a restaurant. I never was in it but all around it was all trees, picnic grove, and they had a pavilion there and that's where we used to go most of the time for picnics. We used to, you know, load up everybody and load the trucks that we had. A couple of people that had small panel trucks used to take all the dishes and everything from the church hall and take them up there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, what church did you belong to?

*Tony Poos:* Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

*Brenda Velasco:* Our Lady of Mount Carmel right on Amboy Avenue?

*Tony Poos:* I got baptized there. I think that was built in '24. Before that my family used to walk to Amboy to the Hungarian church. They used to walk down and follow the tracks. Then



the church was on Cortland Street. Imagine that today! You can't get the people there with a car. To make them walk in the rain or the snow to Amboy, Jesus.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, it was basically survival.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yea.

*Brenda Velasco:* It was the family, it was the home and the live stock and the churches really organized the picnics.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes. The get-togethers, you know, the socials. But that was it, you know. Otherwise there was no socializing, only through the neighborhood. We used to sit on the porch and yak all the time, you know. Not me, my parents, you know.

*Brenda Velasco:* You were too young.

*Tony Poos:* Yea, sure. But we were playing on the street though and they were on the porch, you know.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, yes.

*Tony Poos:* We were playing on the street.

*Brenda Velasco:* Which you can't do today really either.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, no. That's different and if any kid did any harm to any neighbor, or their brother, as soon as *your father found out about it, brother, you better get ready.*

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, okay.

*Tony Poos:* Then, of course, we had the pond, they just filled it in and put this monster thing back there, what is that assisted living or something there?

*Brenda Velasco:* Right, in back of the Forge?

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* That's senior housing, yes.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes. Well, that was the pond; that was the duck pond. My sister used to take the geese down there to wash themselves, you know. Wash their feathers and my mother used to take the feathers and make featherbeds out of them and pillows. Then there was a small round behind that northbound Hess station. We used to call that the fish pond. We had a lot of fun there, too. We spent a lot of time there. Ice skating in the winter; we had the clamp on skates. You used to pull the soles off your shoes. The duck pond, when I managed to take my brother's lunch, I used to go up through there, you know, and the pond had all white sand like down in down like, probably, the Virgin Islands or something. White sand like that.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow!

*Tony Poos:* It was like on the beach. Imagine that!

*Brenda Velasco:* This was the duck pond that had the white sand?

*Tony Poos:* Yes, behind the Forge.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* That was a nice pond. People used to come from downtown. You'd think it was Asbury Park or something. Everybody come from downtown to swim over there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow! That was very nice.

*Tony Poos:* Nice sand.

#### **8. *What did you like about living in your section of Woodbridge?***

Well, it was relaxing. I'll tell you, relaxing, you never had to worry about anything. I mean actually.

*Brenda Velasco:* You felt safe?

*Tony Poos:* Are you talking about my early days or now?

*Brenda Velasco:* No, past.

*Tony Poos:* Past, yea, well living here was relaxing. Relaxing because you could go where you wanted and you could do almost what you wanted. Like I said we had plenty of room here. The field, the ball field down the street too, that was a couple of guys, let's see, two guys, one family, the neighbors down there had five boys and anyways they decided one time they were going to make a ball field over there. They wanted to make a place to play ball. There was all weeds there growing. So we went up there with a pick and shovel, about four or five of us, and, well I was younger than them, but I used to go up there anyway and help them repair the big area. And then, we got the bed spring, like I told you, the dumps was right there where the Forge is.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* The pond, on the Bunns Lane side. That's where Almasi had that garbage contract. They used to just dump it in the pond. They ruined the swimming. That was the end of the swimming.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* But anyways, well that's where I used to get a lot of my toys because my parents couldn't buy toys. I used to roam around in the dumpster all the time looking for stuff. I'd find paint and I'd find, maybe, six roller skates and would make one pair out of them and trucks I used to find. If I found paint I would paint them up. Well, anyway, that was my shopping place.

*Brenda Velasco:* Cheap.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, no tax.

*Brenda Velasco:* No, it was great exploring it though.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* You never could tell what you'd find.

*Tony Poos:* I'm telling you. That's true though, that's true. That's when my friend lived there who had the horses. Imagine that, just across the street from the dumps. Imagine that today, people would be complaining about the smell and every damn thing.

*Brenda Velasco:* They would.

*Tony Poos:* I'm telling you. But they had some property there but the front of the house was looking at the dumps. We had a lot of fun up there though.

*Brenda Velasco:* I'm sure you did.

*Tony Poos:* A lot of horseback riding. We used to ride through the woods there, Cutter's Woods, and they had a horse that they raised from a colt. It was only three years old. You're talking about three years old, they're a little dumb, you know. I was riding that son of a gun, no saddle. The back was nice and round. That son of a gun, we were going through the woods and, I don't know, something spooked him but he stopped short and I went right underneath him. I thought for sure I was going to get trampled. I closed my eyes but somehow he just jumped over me.

*Brenda Velasco:* You didn't. You didn't.

**9. *Did you experience any significant happenings in Woodbridge-construction, accidents, sports events, riots, discrimination, etc.***

Construction, oh sure, the Hess Building here went up. They put that up there, Almasi had, across the street there where the Lowe's is in that area, that shopping area. Mr. Almasi had a lot of dirt piles there. He was just storing the dirt there. Then the Hess, I remember, he used to complain about all the dust from there, you know. So Almasi told him, he said, why didn't you build in New York? He said the only reason you didn't build in New York is because it was too

expensive. Over here, he builds over here cheap and he's complaining about the dust. I remember that with Hess he had only about a 500 gallon tank truck or something. He used to go down in Port Reading....

*Brenda Velasco:* In Perth Amboy?

*Tony Poos:* No, in Port Reading.

*Brenda Velasco:* Oh, okay.

*Tony Poos:* When I was in the squad, there was only one house way the heck down by the water, I remember, and anyway, a woman was having a baby or something, I forget, miscarriage or whatever, and that's the first time I was down there. It was way the heck down in the back. I didn't even know that place was there. But little by little Hess bought that all up, you know, and then all of a sudden when they had it all, there goes the refinery.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, added to the other refinery that we had.

*Tony Poos:* Right, right. But the buildings going up, I don't remember any buildings going up so much. Not the buildings that were here. A lot of factories were there. Well California Oil, I saw that going up.

*Brenda Velasco:* Which building was that?

*Tony Poos:* California Oil, well, Chevron.

*Brenda Velasco:* Oh.

*Tony Poos:* It used to be Chevron. I saw that going up. My brother-in-law worked there. He was in the powerhouse there. But him too, my sister used to be so mad; he used to watch the stacks all the time; what kind of smoke is coming out of the powerhouse? You could tell what kind of smoke is coming out and how the burners are going. So my sister was always hollering that he didn't want to leave home because he was always worried about the factory there. He used to bring her down to our house, you know, and he used to go watch the ballgame, down there on DeSota Avenue and Grady Drive.

*Brenda Velasco:* That's down here.

*Tony Poos:* Off Grove Street.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, yes.

*Tony Poos:* So he'd go down there and park his car and my sister would be visiting with my mother, you know. Down there too, you should know that, I tell some people, I don't know how many remember that, the Diamond Ball Field.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, the Diamond Ball Field?

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes, baseball, yes. In them days it was like semi-pro like. It wasn't really pro, I guess, I don't know what kind of league it was. I was small, you know.

*Brenda Velasco:* So you were about 8 years old?

*Tony Poos:* 8 or 10 years old, yes. I used to carry water for them. I was the water boy. A nickel a bucket they used to give me. I used to carry from the back of the house on Columbus Avenue over to the ball field. The ball field was by DeSota Avenue. I always wanted to tell everybody. I tell my grandkids now so that somebody remembers because that was my benchmark, the second house on the right hand side on DeSota Avenue; it's a square house with a square roof.

*Brenda Velasco:* That was on the right side of DeSota Avenue?

*Tony Poos:* Yes, yes going down to Grove. I believe it was the second house because I think they built a smaller one since.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, so there went the ball field then.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes, then they started cutting the streets in; not St. James but Grady and then DeSota and DeKalb. But then that second house on the right hand side, the square one, that sat dead center on home plate.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* Dead center.

*Brenda Velasco:* That was center for home plate.

*Tony Poos:* Dead center.

*Brenda Velasco:* Dead center.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, I remember that because I used to go down there with my nephew. I mean, we used to go to play and they had the foundation dug, dead center on home plate. I remember that, they say that was my benchmark, because they used to have circuses there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow!

*Tony Poos:* A lot of circuses, because they had a grandstand on this side. Let's see, the grandstand would be like on the third base line and then there was some on the first base line. That would be the first base line was like towards Grove Street. That would be, like I say, you could judge from where the house is now, how far in the stands were. So behind the stands, I remember, they used to tie the elephants there when they first brought them.

*Brenda Velasco:* Was this public property or was this just...

*Tony Poos:* Town, it belonged to the town then, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, it belonged to the town?

*Tony Poos:* Yes, sure, it belonged to the town. As far as I know it belonged to the town. Nobody said anything. We used to go down there and play all the time.

*Brenda Velasco:* Wow!

*Tony Poos:* But I used to cut through there because, like I told you, I lived down one block so I used to cut across this area and then come out by Columbus Avenue: before Columbus Avenue. There was a house missing there and there was an empty lot and I used to cut through there to get to Main Street and then down Main Street and then cross by (inaudible) to get to school.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, yes, when you went to school.

*Tony Poos:* Okay, yes, when you went to school.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, down through there, sure. The circus was just coming, you know, during the night they'd come in there but they were just unpacking and then when I'd be coming home from school everything was up already.

*Brenda Velasco:* You know, I interviewed somebody else, Judith Vince Quinn, who lives on Main Street and she remembered the circuses too.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, sure. I remember then.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, she lives right on Main Street.

*Tony Poos:* Quinn, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* My wife would probably have known her.

*Brenda Velasco:* Your wife probably would have.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, she knew everybody in town here.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, yes, yes.

#### **10. What do you like about Woodbridge today?**

Not too much.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright.

*Tony Poos:* Not too much. I mean, it's still good. I mean the location's okay but, I mean, what are you going to do? You got your stakes here. You can't just pull up and go now; too late.

*Brenda Velasco:* You have family here too, right?

*Tony Poos:* Sure, sure.

***11. Do you have family members still living in Woodbridge?***

Let me see now, my family is gone already except for my sister and me.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, and your sister lives in.....

*Tony Poos:* Sayreville.

*Brenda Velasco:* Sayreville. She's 91 years old?

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Well, how about your son and daughter?

*Tony Poos:* Oh, yes, well I mean that's different though.

*Brenda Velasco:* Well, they're pretty important family.

*Tony Poos:* Well, they're family, sure.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* Well, my daughter lives down there on Grady Drive.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* Well, my sons live up on, what the hell is the name of that street?

*Brenda Velasco:* In Woodbridge?

*Tony Poos:* Yes, behind the high school.

*Brenda Velasco:* We're going to ask Arthur.

*Tony Poos:* I can't think of the name, imagine that.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* And then both of my other sons live with me.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, other sons.

*Tony Poos:* Chalet Drive.

*Brenda Velasco:* Chalet Drive, okay. So you still have a lot of family members, you know, your children.

*Tony Poos:* Well, there are just three of them. I mean, I got three kids, yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, so you still have three children living here.

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright, so that's good and they live close to you.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, I tell my friends too, like guys in school, they were all so happy that their kids were going to college and were in a different state, you know. I could never see that because once they're out of the state brother, good bye, you ain't going to see them anymore. I had a nephew, we grew up like brothers, down the street; that's the nephew I told you about, when we played down the ball field there and he's gone now, too. His mother used to travel around, they were in the USO during the war, so they were going different places and they wound up in Chicago. Then from there, he went into the service, came back and married a girl in Chicago and stayed out there and that was it.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* That was the end of that. So I could never see that. I tell my friends, I wasn't raising kids for statistics, you know, I want them to be around for me.

*Brenda Velasco:* Well they are and your grandson is here.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, sure, that's what I want. They ain't no good to me if they're in another state where you got to take a vacation to go visit them.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, yes, yes. You're very fortunate.

*Tony Poos:* My friends are in Florida and some of them are in California

*Brenda Velasco:* Very fortunate.

*Tony Poos:* My friend is in Florida now. He's in bad shape. We went to school together. 7<sup>th</sup> grade I met him. Then we became friends, in the squad too, when we met again.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* It wound up I was godfather for one of the kids. We got close but now he's in Florida, the kids are up here and he's in bad shape. Both of them, the mother and the father, you know.

*Brenda Velasco:* That's too bad.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, sure.

*Brenda Velasco:* You stayed close and your family stayed close. You're very, very fortunate.

*Tony Poos:* That's why I could never see why they're pushing these kids into the colleges. Some have and some don't. They'd be better off if they go to vocational school and learn a trade. When I was still working, they couldn't get any trade people. The guys were coming from Europe, the trade's people.

*Brenda Velasco:* And if you're a trade's person it's brick and mortar, usually.

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* They're not shipping those jobs overseas.

*Tony Poos:* That's true. That's true.

*Brenda Velasco:* They're staying here. That's a good point to make.

*Tony Poos:* My son, when he came out of high school he didn't know what to do so I told him to go for a trade, you know. So I know, after working in GM, the toolmakers they had it really good. They had a clean job. I mean, I was a millwright, but the jobs I was doing it was always greasy and dirty. That was a lonely job for me. Man, oh man, I never had it so bad. It was tough work but I wound up with a good job there and I didn't tell them until after I left though but I would have done that job for nothing in the end. Really, I enjoyed it. I was in charge of all hoist; 150 hoist in the building, in the plant, and the elevators and the bridges and that in there, that was all my responsibility. I liked it. Another good friend of mine, an electrician, we worked together all the time. I would stand on top of the elevator and he would run it manually to check everything, the cables or the guides.

*Brenda Velasco:* That was a good factory job.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, man.

*Brenda Velasco:* Good factory jobs.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, but they were there. A lot of guys didn't want that though no matter how good it was; they didn't like it; I liked it.

*Brenda Velasco:* It was good pay. It was good pay.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, it was good pay too, but I would have done it for nothing. I couldn't wait, a lot of times, to go to work.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright.

*Tony Poos:* That's true, that's true.

*Brenda Velasco:* They're staying here, so that's a good point to make.

*Tony Poos:* My son, when he come out of high school, he didn't know what to do so I told him to go for a trade, you know. So I know, after I worked in GM, the toolmakers they had it really

good. They had a clean job. I mean, I was a millwright, millwright welder, but the jobs I was doing it was always greasy and dirty. That was a lonely job. Man or man, never had it so bad. Tough, it was tough work. Then I wound up with a good job there. I didn't tell them until after I left though but I would have done that job for nothing in the end, really. I enjoyed it. I was in charge of all the hoists, 150 hoists in the building, in the plant, and the elevators and the bridges, I put that in there, that was all my responsibility but I liked it. Another good friend of mine, an electrician, we worked together all the time. I would stand on top of the elevator and he would run it, manually, and check everything, cables and all the guys.

*Brenda Velasco:* That was a good factory job?

*Tony Poos:* Oh, man.

*Brenda Velasco:* Good factory jobs.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, but they were there. A lot of guys didn't want that no matter how good they was. They didn't like it. I liked it.

*Brenda Velasco:* It was good pay, good pay.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, it was good pay too but I would have done it for nothing. I couldn't wait a lot of times to go to work.

*Brenda Velasco:* Alright.

*Tony Poos:* That's true, that's true. I used to do G jobs because I had a lot of time. I used to do a lot of jobs for home, you know. Got to wire something or make something out of steel.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, we've answered all our questions and I thank you very much.

*Tony Poos:* Like I said, I got off the track maybe. That's why I told you to ask the questions because I'd tell you too much of my own stuff.

*Brenda Velasco:* Well, there's a lot to learn from you.

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* And it was interesting and we learned about making bricks which is part of Woodbridge's history.

*Tony Poos:* That's what I'm saying. It makes me so damn mad that not one word was in the paper when they were ripping that down, this Anness place.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* Not one word. Do you know where the gas company is over here now by that propane place?

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* Okay, I think the company that I worked for they sold them that property because that company owned down to that turn. But they took, I think, two bases of kilns there. There's one yet where that new green building is.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* My company built that.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* I put the heat in that when I was working there.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay.

*Tony Poos:* But over there there's still a foundation for a kiln but down this way, towards the gas company, they took out two of those foundations. It was about three foot thick with all concrete and broken brick and everything was in there. That was the foundation for the kilns.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay. Well, I know with our local historians I'm also going to contacting Wendy at the library as well as Jeff Huber who's our Township Historian and our Historic

Preservation Commission because you're one of the few people who are familiar with making bricks in the kilns.

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* Most of those people are not around anymore.

*Tony Poos:* Yes, that's true.

*Brenda Velasco:* So, I appreciate this interview.

*Tony Poos:* No problem.

*Brenda Velasco:* And I enjoyed it very much.

*Tony Poos:* Like I said, the main thing is they never talk about the history. Even the ones that McEwen was writing.....

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes.

*Tony Poos:* Never anything about the ball field.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, I was not aware of it.

*Tony Poos:* Then we used to take the cow down there and tie him in the right field, like where Grady Drive is now. That was all the right field and I used to take the cow down and drive a stack in the ground, you know, so he don't get away. I used to take him out there and then he would eat the grass and I would go out there at supper time, when all the kids were playing, and I used to be mad about that so I used to have to bring him home for milking, you know, about six o'clock. My mother used to milk him.

*Brenda Velasco:* Yes, you got to milk him, right?

*Tony Poos:* Yes.

*Brenda Velasco:* They didn't wait, they didn't wait.

*Tony Poos:* My mother used to do that all the time.

*Brenda Velasco:* Okay, well, we're going to conclude our interview.

*Tony Poos:* Okay, I'm sorry.

*Brenda Velasco:* And thank you very much, Tony Poos.

*Tony Poos:* Oh, no problem.

*Brenda Velasco:* It was a pleasure being here and just learning about your personal memories and the history of Woodbridge. So I thank you.