

**Woodbridge Public Library Oral History Interview**  
**Mr. & Mrs. Milano**  
**WPL01**

(digital audio)

On August 24, 1978, Mr. & Mrs. Milano was interviewed for the Woodbridge Public Library Oral History Interviews. There were two interviewers, one male and one female.

*Female Interviewer:* I think I had explained to you what we're doing. Our project deals with Sewaren and we've accumulated some pictures of Sewaren, the old Boynton Beach and **Sewaren Hotel**. What we're trying to do, as well as collect pictures, is to interview some of the residents who may have been around or who were around in this area at the time when Sewaren and Boynton Beach was in its prime.

*Mrs. Milano:* Well I didn't know about Boynton Beach, I just knew when my uncle bought it when I was about fourteen or fifteen.

*Female Interviewer:* But you had gone to Boynton Beach?

*Mrs. Milano:* Well they called it Boynton Beach when the black people or whoever owned it and the Acker's owned it and then my uncle, Joe Turek, bought it from the Acker's. I only remember it from then. I had never been there before.

*Female Interviewer:* When would this have been?

*Mrs. Milano:* That was quite a number of years ago. I'm seventy now and take fourteen years off of that, or say fifteen years even which would be easier, so that would be about fifty-five years ago.

*Female Interviewer:* Okay, so about 1913.

*Mrs. Milano:* 1908 I was born, no.

*Male Interviewer:* So that would have been 1923.

*Female Interviewer:* Oh right, okay, sorry.

*Mrs. Milano:* It was about 1922 or 1923 because I remember, as a matter of fact, going there when I was much younger. My uncle must have owned it when we were children because I remember walking, well we lived in Perth Amboy on Lawrie Street and I remember my mother pushing the baby carriage.

*Female Interviewer:* You walked to it?

*Mrs. Milano:* And we used to walk it up State Street. When you're children you don't feel walking. We used to go up there with my mother and at that time they had the Ferris wheel, the merry-go-round and whatever that other round thing is, I forgot what they called it. Was it the whip? You went around in the seat; you just had two in the seat.

*Male Interviewer:* Yes, that would have been the whip.

*Mrs. Milano:* They had all that there at the time and I remember I was a little girl at the time so my uncle must have owned it, you know,

quite a number of years.

*Female Interviewer:* Now the hotel wasn't in existence at this time?

*Mrs. Milano:* I don't believe so. There was a house on the corner across from the amusement area that my aunt, the host house, lived in. It was an older home and the house was right on the corner. Right across the street there was a tavern, you had to go down a long flight of stairs and it was right over the water. I remember, after we were married though, my husband played music down there. That was after the beach was not there anymore; the amusement area wasn't there anymore. But while the amusement area was there right next door to it was also a restaurant where I worked serving tables. I was only a kid but I served there.

*Female Interviewer:* Was this a formal restaurant?

*Mrs. Milano:* Well it was more for, you know, the vacationers that came there. As a matter of fact, the funny part of it is that my daughter-in-law's parents used to come from Paterson, New Jersey and rent bungalows down there. It was such a funny coincidence because they got to talking and when they heard what my maiden name was they asked if I knew Elsie Turek and that was my cousin, the one that lives down in Florida. I said yes and she said well we used to go down the beach and I said well my uncle owned that. It was so strange because my daughter-in-law married a divorcee from Avenel and it was her father and mother that used to come down there and rent bungalows. Can you imagine that? What a funny coincidence. Where the bungalows were that was right near the tavern there but a little further down because they built a new dance pavilion there right between the tavern and where the bungalows were. It wasn't really in much use yet because they still had the old pavilion. You had to walk down to where now the oil tanks are and there was a dance pavilion there with a little stand where I worked. You know how we were in our days, we were lucky if we had a nickel for ice cream so I had a ball there. There was nobody there to watch me. I made double dips and would chew a whole pack of gum; when I think of it now. As a matter of fact, I don't know if you know the Patemans, his daughter was killed there. I don't know if Eleanor told you about that. They had fireworks, they used to shoot them out of the water and something happened, I don't know what happened, this Pateman girl, she was maybe about a year older than I was, I wasn't working at the time I was to the dance, and all I remember was there was a lot of screaming and something went wrong with the fireworks and it went right among the people and this one girl got hit right in the head. I started going towards it and one of the fellows pulled me back and said you don't want to see that. She was killed instantly. As a matter of fact, I wrote in **The News Tribune**. You might even find it. I referenced it in the, what do you call that, *The Side Lights*.

*Female Interviewer:* Right.

*Mrs. Milano:* I don't know who the gentleman was and it struck me funny because I saw my uncle's name there. He had bought the old dance pavilion

from my uncle and he built a home out of it or something. I was so surprised when I read that. I said oh my goodness and that was the old dance pavilion. They used to have dancing there almost every night.

*Male Interviewer:* That's the original one right?

*Mrs. Milano:* That's the original.

*Male Interviewer:* The biggest?

*Mrs. Milano:* Yes.

*Male Interviewer:* Okay.

*Mrs. Milano:* That's the original dance pavilion.

*Male Interviewer:* So that was the one that Boynton had owned originally and your uncle.

*Mrs. Milano:* He must have, yes.

*Male Interviewer:* I see.

*Mrs. Milano:* I don't know what music used to be there because I don't remember. Maybe my husband would but I don't know because he was a regular dance hound.

*Female Interviewer:* It wasn't local talent that performed?

*Mrs. Milano:* It might have been. I wasn't interested in music at all.

*Female Interviewer:* But you did go to the dances?

*Mrs. Milano:* Yes, I used to go to the dances. We used to take the trolley.

*Female Interviewer:* And what would you have worn? Was it very dressy?

*Mrs. Milano:* Yes, dressy dresses. Like today they only wear the gowns but in those days we wore it for every dance. They were called the sharpies, the ones that dressed with the long gowns and the collegians, the fellows, used to wear full baggy pants and the girls wore skirts and blouses and there's always a conflict between the sharpies and the collegians. My husband was a sharpie and I used to dance with the collegians. When I met him he had a hard job getting me out of it. It was really funny. And then, like I say, my aunt used to have a big affair right in the big old house, that was his first wife, and she had the affair for the firemen and the policemen and that's when my husband music there. That's the first time I saw my husband.

*Female Interviewer:* That you met him?

*Mrs. Milano:* Well we met but he was supposed to take me home but instead the ex-mayor, Greiner, was there and there were two neighbors of ours that we worked there at the tables and we went home with three other fellows. They double crossed my husband, I was supposed to go home with him. About six months later I met him anyhow. It was very funny. And then after awhile they bought the house with the second wife on Cliff Road. Now who lives in that house? As a matter of fact my other daughter-in-law, some relative of hers, bought the house and I think Eleanor might have told you because she wrote it down for me here. They imported the slate roof from France for that house.

*Male Interviewer:* Oh that's the tutor house

*Mrs. Milano:* Yes.

*Female Interviewer:* Governor Newburg?

*Mrs. Milano:* That's right. I didn't even know that. I know my uncle lived

in it with his second wife. It's beautiful in there; it's a beautiful home, real big inside. But he sold that house to the Gorus girl. She was a nurse and she wanted to run a nursing home there but it didn't work out so she sold it to these people who live in it now. She sold that house for only forty thousand dollars including all the furniture. Even then if that house had been, let's say, in town more it would have been worth much more because at that time already there was no Sewaren beach or anything. It's really a shame what they did to it. We used to go down there and they used to have, what they called, Colored Saltwater Day, did you ever hear of that?

*Female Interviewer:* No, I did not.

*Mrs. Milano:* Ferry boats, I guess they were excursions boats rather, they would come in and they would have a special day for the colored people. They used to segregate them more so in those days I guess and they would come in there and it would be all for them that day. They used to have bathhouse, there was a big row of those, and not only that, besides Colored Saltwater Day, they used to have regular excursion boats coming in all the time. That was a regular resort area and look what it is today, it's really a shame. You can't swim in that water anymore.

*Female Interviewer:* How would you describe the people who vacationed in Sewaren?

*Mrs. Milano:* Oh they came from all over.

*Male Interviewer:* We'd like to hear about the sharpies.

*Mrs. Milano to Mr. Milano:* Yes, the sharpies and the collegians. Come over here. I explained to them how the sharpies used to dress and they asked how they dressed.

*Mr. Milano:* Just tell them you were the collegian and I was the sharpie.

*Mrs. Milano:* And you had a hard job straightening my back and making me dance straight up, let's put it that way. Well he worked music there, at the tavern, and he also worked the day they had the big affair for the policemen and the firemen. He's been a musician all his life so I don't know what else I can help you out with.

*Male Interviewer:* Could you tell us what it was like to be a young girl?

*Mrs. Milano:* Oh, in those days it was fun not like today.

*Male Interviewer:* There are a lot of differences that are.....

*Mrs. Milano:* Oh, we had good times. We didn't look for anything fancy. We dressed nice I know that, at least I know I did. I was the only girl among four boys at first until I got a sister when I was nine years old so my mother sort of made sure she dressed me nice. She made all my own clothes for that matter and I enjoyed life even though I had to go to work when I was fourteen and a half.

*Female Interviewer:* Oh, I worked first in **Vaseline Works**, Cheeseboro Manufacturers. I didn't like it there and then I went to **The Cable Works** and worked in the fine wire mill. Then after I got married I worked as a dress maker in **Bams**. I didn't like working in a factory, it was hard work but I still enjoyed life. We found simple things as fun. When we went to

the dances everybody was friendly, you know what I mean, just the collegians and the sharpies. The sharpies always thought they were better and collegians thought they were better and stuff like that. But still there were never any fights; nobody ever fought like you find today. When we were kids we really had fun playing on the corner playing children's games even though I was fourteen. We had nothing like they have today. I remember when the first cars came up my street and hit my sister.

*Female Interviewer:* She was hit by a car?

*Mrs. Milano:* Yes, a taxi, a big taxi. I had to call her in for supper, I'll never forget that, and she started running across the street and I started yelling at her not to come because this cab was coming down and it hit her so I got a whipping because she got hit.

*Female Interviewer:* Was she okay?

*Mrs. Milano:* Oh, yes, it wasn't very bad. He gave her fifty cents and.....

*Female Interviewer:* Oh my!

*Mrs. Milano:* Well don't forget that was quite a number of years ago. Fifty cents in those days was a lot of money. But we did enjoy going to Sewaren quite a bit because my uncle owned the guys to get on to get the free rides and that was fun.

*Female Interviewer:* Did you know any of the Boyntons?

*Mrs. Milano:* No. I imagine my cousins, I don't know if they would even know anything about the Boyntons because they bought it from Ackers. Acker owned it after Boynton.

*Female Interviewer:* I guess because so much of the Sewaren beach area had been called Boynton Beach you just assumed that the Boyntons had a monopoly on that.

*Mrs. Milano:* Well they did. From just hearsay that's all I remember saying it was called Boynton Beach.

*Female Interviewer:* But Mr. Turek did have an investment in the property.

*Mrs. Milano:* Oh, yes, then it was after Boynton Beach it was called Tureks Beach.

*Male Interviewer:* Now there's an enormous tract of land there, when you say it was Ackers you mean all the way down to say Woodbridge Creek, that whole stretch in there?

*Mrs. Milano:* I'm trying to recall now, let me see. Where the house was, like I said the tavern was across the street and then there was the loop of dance Pavilion that overlooked the water and then from there we used to walk down, let me figure how long that would be, I'll say about two long blocks you had to walk down to the dance Pavilion and that's where they used to run the dances. Now the trolleys would stop there on State Street and let them off and we had to walk in about a block and a half or so. But that was the dance Pavilion. Still that had some of the bathhouses a little past the dance Pavilion. It was quite a large beach.

*Male Interviewer:* And your uncle had owned all the way down to that?

*Mrs. Milano:* Yes.

*Male Interviewer:* So then he did own the whole stretch in there?

*Mrs. Milano:* Oh, yes he did. He was pretty well off, let's put it that way. He really owned quite a bit of property. He sold a lot of it to the oil companies after, little by little. I wasn't always on the beach but otherwise it was a beautiful resort area.

*Male Interviewer:* Had you ever gone swimming there?

*Mrs. Milano:* Oh, yes, I'd gone swimming there. Even after I was married it was still not too bad. Just for about the first year or so.....

*Male Interviewer:* When the oil companies came in?

*Mrs. Milano:* Yes, because I was seventeen when I got married so like I say there was still a little bit of beach area there yet at that time. That was about in 1925 or 1926. But then after that you couldn't go there. My uncle still had, right where the whole amusement area was, a stand there after awhile selling hotdogs, candies, and soda, stuff like that, because the other end was starting to get a full of oil tanks. There was only one section that people still came and swam but then the oil tankers kept coming closer.

*Male Interviewer:* Do you remember the fire of the oil tanker? I think it exploded out in the harbor. It might have been the first year they were there sometime in the winter I think.

*Mrs. Milano:* I don't think I remember that.

*Male Interviewer:* I think it was around November or December.

*Mrs. Milano:* Of what year?

*Male Interviewer:* The first year that the tanks were in. They came in 1924.

*Mrs. Milano:* '24?

*Male Interviewer:* I think it was '24.

*Mrs. Milano:* Because I still worked there for a while.

*Male Interviewer:* How about the prohibition era? Was that a little bit before your.....

*Mrs. Milano:* I'm trying to remember. I think it was in '54. I remember it but I don't know if my uncle had the tavern at the time because I remember the tavern more after I was married. I don't remember it before that because like I said I worked in the restaurant and also at the old dance Pavilion and I think after he closed down the amusement park that's when he opened up the tavern. Like I said I don't recall otherwise.

*Male Interviewer:* You say you worked in the restaurant, where.....

*Mrs. Milano:* The restaurant was right there where the new dance Pavilion was. It was like their house was here, not the tutor house this was an older home, and of course here was the tavern and here was the dance Pavilion and this was the amusement park. Again the restaurant was in that vicinity.

*Male Interviewer:* So it was a full fledged.....

*Mrs. Milano:* Pretty big restaurant, yes, because I remember waiting on tables there.

*Female Interviewer:* Was the **Sewaren Hotel** the only hotel in Sewaren?

*Mrs. Milano:* I think so.

*Female Interviewer:* Do you recall anything about the Boyntons owning the hotel?

*Mrs. Milano:* I don't recall anything about the Boyntons. I must have been

quite small at the time because like I say what I can remember now let me see my mother was pushing the baby carriage and my sister, she's fifty-six now, and I don't know if it was her or my other brother, Bill, that my mother was pushing in the baby carriage. So that was quite a number of years ago. I must have been about ten or twelve that I recall. I don't think I could remember anything about the hotels or anything.

*Female Interviewer:* Have you ever done any fishing?

*Mrs. Milano:* I wouldn't put a fish on a hook if you paid me. I won't even clean the fish.

*Male Interviewer:* You lived in Perth Amboy, I think, until the time you were married?

*Mrs. Milano:* Yes, I was born and raised there.

*Male Interviewer:* How was shopping at that time?

*Mrs. Milano:* It was nice. As a matter of fact we remember the Hall Avenue district.

*Male Interviewer:* What was down there?

*Mrs. Milano:* Today it's a rough section but we used to go shopping there when we were children with my mother. That was a good shopping center besides going down the Smith Street/State Street area. We always worked. We never took the bus or anything. I never rode a bus until after I was married. I used to be backward. I was very sigh when I was first married. My husband always says where's the sigh girl he married? I said she emerged some place; she left behind.

*Male Interviewer:* What shops were down in that area?

*Mrs. Milano:* One was like a department store, there were shoe stores there.

*Male Interviewer:* Do you remember **Wedeen's**.

*Mrs. Milano:* **Wedeen's**, yes. They were on Amboy Avenue in Perth Amboy.

*Male Interviewer:* Yes, they weren't in that area.

*Mrs. Milano:* Yes, they were on Amboy Avenue. As a matter of fact I was working in **Bamberger's** as a sales person in the sportswear department, misses sportswear, and this woman came up to the counter, Mrs. Nevin, I recognized her, and she couldn't get over it. When I mentioned my maiden name, Turek, then she remembered. She used to remember us going there shopping. That was a nice place Perth Amboy to shop. My mother was only in this country six weeks when I was born; just made it. No, Perth Amboy was a beautiful place to shop.

*Male Interviewer:* What were the stores like at that time? Do you remember ever being in them shopping?

*Mrs. Milano:* Oh, I always used to go with my mother and my mother was a fighter. She was the one who was always trying to cut down on the price. I can still picture her doing that. Well they had men's clothing stores there, there were quite a few of those, and department stores, the ice cream parlors they had about two or three of them. They were nice to go to, I mean, that's were the fellow took their girls to sit down and have their ice cream soda and then they'd go down to the waterfront. Perth Amboy had a nice beach

too. We used to have simple fun but I would enjoy my girlhood.

*Male Interviewer:* Were the two areas, Perth Amboy's waterfront and the Sewaren waterfront rivals or were there different types of people that would go there?

*Mrs. Milano:* I think there were different types of people. Down in Perth Amboy they were mostly Jewish. Like down near the waterfront there were quite a few Jewish people that lived there where this here area was mostly people, I think they used to come down from Newark, Paterson and even some of them used to come from Staten Island. I think some even came from New York because there used to be a ferry, I think, that used to ride up from Carteret into New York if I'm not mistaken. I just barely recall that though. Then after a while, we were discussing at one time my husband and I, and they were talking about the Carteret ferry or sometime. Then we used to take the ferry from Perth Amboy all the island. We used to go there quite often.

*Male Interviewer:* Could you tell me about your parents? Where were they from and what you remember of them.

*Mrs. Milano:* Well they came from Austria, Hungary. It's now all divided; here they came from its now Czechoslovakia. All I remember on the letters, when she used to write to her brothers, the town Klukno. My father was a carpenter.

*Male Interviewer:* What did he do when he came here? Did he work as a carpenter?

*Mrs. Milano:* I think he did because he does what he did over in the old country. My mother was more of a housewife.

*Female Interviewer:* And you lived on Lawrie Street?

*Mrs. Milano:* Right across the street from the new Holy Trinity Church is right now because I was married in the old Holy Trinity Church on Penn Street. As a matter of fact that's why my father landed in Perth Amboy because his three brothers lived there. One had a tavern on New Brunswick Avenue, two of them as a matter of fact, where the **Triangle Café** is now, one of my father's brothers owned that one and Paul Turek owned the one right next to **Fullertons**. There used to be a produce market there and then my Uncle Joe. He owned a hotel there also on Smith Street, the **Remington Hotel** because I was born in the house right in back of it. It's still standing there.

*Female Interviewer:* Who had owned that?

*Mrs. Milano:* My uncle, Joe Turek, owned the **Remington Hotel**. He was always in business.

*Male Interviewer:* So your maiden name was Turek then?

*Mrs. Milano:* Yes.

*Male Interviewer:* So the three boys came over together?

*Mrs. Milano:* No, my father, I think, was he the last one to come over? I know that his brother Paul was here and his brother Steve was here. I think it was my father who came next and then my other uncle, Joe Turek was the last. He was the youngest.



*Male Interviewer:* Oh, I see. Do you remember anyone having mentioned what he did when he was in Europe?

*Mrs. Milano:* Who, my uncles?

*Male Interviewer:* Your uncle.

*Mrs. Milano:* Gee, I don't remember that.

*Male Interviewer:* So when he came here he was working as.....

*Mrs. Milano:* As a carpenter.

*Male Interviewer:* Okay.

*Mrs. Milano:* That was his trade.

*Mr. Milano came into the conversation.*

*Mr. Milano:* I remember we used to do a lot of crabbing down by the beach. In fact my brother-in-law, there was a float here and he was swimming and he lost his false teeth.

*Mrs. Milano:* Oh, Patty?

*Mr. Milano:* Yes, Patty. Right in there; that's where it was.

*Mrs. Milano:* Oh, is that where it was?

*Mr. Milano:* Yes.

*Mrs. Milano:* See, I don't remember that. They called it Acker's park, do you remember that?

*Mr. Milano:* Well it's the same thing; it's the same beach.

*Mrs. Milano:* See, I don't remember that at all.

*Mr. Milano:* In fact your uncle bought it from Ackers.

*Mrs. Milano:* I know. Maybe I never took notice of these things.

*Mr. Milano:* If I'm not mistaken I think these are the battleships that were retired there right after the war.

*Mrs. Milano:* And they started rusting?

*Mr. Milano:* Yes.

*Mrs. Milano:* That I remember.

*Mr. Milano:* They put some mothballs there.

*Mrs. Milano:* Do you remember the **Sewaren Hotel** honey?

*Mr. Milano:* The **Sewaren Hotel**?

*Mrs. Milano:* Let me see, where is it? I remember this, do you remember the bathhouses?

*Mr. Milano:* Yes.

*Mrs. Milano:* Do you recall that?

*Mr. Milano:* No.

*Mrs. Milano:* I don't recall that either.

*Male Interviewer:* You played in a band?

*Mr. Milano:* I still do. Music has been my whole life.

*Male Interviewer:* What instrument or instruments?

*Mr. Milano:* Well I used to play banjo mandolin during the vaudeville days. Then we did radio, when that came out, that was my brother and I and Sammy made the three of us. While we were playing in New York City, we doing stints over the air in between, we always went from one show. Like, for instance, we were up in New Bronx one day and we had just gotten through

the one show and of course we had our makeup on and our tuxedos and my brother said grab your instrument, so I said we just got through and I thought maybe he wanted to rehearse a number or something. He said follow me, so Sammy and I grabbed our instruments and he had his and he walked out of the theatre, we followed him, he hailed a cab, we got in the cab and went downtown into the building and did a fifteen minute stint I think it was, fifteen or twenty minutes over the air. Then we had to rush back and just got back in time to do a second show. It was a rat race all the time that we were doing all this but it was beautiful.

*Male Interviewer:* What time was this? Was this in the '30s or pre-'30s?

*Mrs. Milano:* You were on the road when I was pregnant with Darlene and my daughter is going to be fifty-one next month.

*Mr. Milano:* I was just going to say before Darlene was born; over fifty years.

*Mrs. Milano:* That's right. Because I remember I was pregnant and I used to be so upset. I said the baby is not going to have a daddy.

*Mr. Milano:* Sometimes you'd live on cake and donuts two times a day and other times of course when we hit it good we lived it up. There was a choice there for a Broadway show, I forgot what it was, between the Ritz Brothers and us. We were the Sunshine Pals. The office was bickering as to who was going to go into the show so they beat us; they went out. Well they were booking out of the same office that we were booking, **William Morris**, but we booked out of three offices at the time. It was the **GAC, General Arts Corporation; MCA, Music Corporation of American** and the **Morris Agency**. It's been like that all the time. Then again the big bands came in and we had the opportunity to play with **Franklin Farmer**. There were twenty-six people in the show and we had eight men in the band, it was a stage presentation. They had eight girls in line, they had Annie Hill and Prima Donna, they had two comedians there and we traveled with them in the bus. We played quite a few theatres. It was very good; it was nice.

*Mrs. Milano:* Again The Depression, the WPA Project when they had it he had the biggest orchestra. How many did you have?

*Mr. Milano:* Well we had four dance units there, small units and a concert Band.

*Mrs. Milano:* And your unit played for President Roosevelt.

*Mr. Milano:* Well my unit was picked out of the State of New Jersey. President Roosevelt was coming through New Jersey and he was going to go to New York City and on his way he stopped at the Robert T. Note in Newark. The supervisor was located in New York City. He came out to Jersey and he auditioned quite a few bands throughout the state and I was called to take my band into the YMCA in New Brunswick one morning and we got up there and there was Mr. Core, the supervisor, and we played a little bit of everything. We mixed everything up for him and at that time I had Spots Esposito on first trumpet. He was terrific. In fact he's still around here but he turned out to be a bum. It's a shame because alcohol got the best of him, he started drinking. Well I'll tell you they took Spots to New York City, Mr. Core did that, and he played with all the name bands, all

the big bands that came in New York City. He always played the first chair and then he round up with the NBC Studio band and that's when he started drinking. He's been back home here in Fords ever since.

*Mrs. Milano:* It's really a shame that he did that because I mean he could have gone far.

*Male Interviewer:* Did you know the Farringtons? There was a Farrington in Amboy.

*Mr. Milano:* Bobby Farrington was my lead sax man.

*Male Interviewer:* That's my uncle, Robbie Farrington.

*Mr. Milano:* Yes, he played clarinet and tenor sax.

*Male Interviewer:* That's right.

*Mr. Milano:* He lived on Washington Street.

*Mrs. Milano:* What is your name?

*Male Interviewer:* Robin Balog. He was a Farrington and my grandmother is a Lorentzen.

*Mr. Milano:* He used to play fiddle too.

*Male Interviewer:* That's right.

*Mr. Milano:* And he sang a song, Father Hung the Paper on the Wall, with the fiddle. Do you know anything about that?

*Male Interviewer:* My grandmother used to sing that song to us. Wow, what do you know.

*Mr. Milano:* Many a time he used our house.

*Male Interviewer:* He died a few years ago.

*Mrs. Milano:* Well we lived in Perth Amboy, Convery Boulevard, for a while when he had that group and he used to come to our house a lot.

*Mr. Milano:* The Wonder Boys we had were all very serious minded musicians.

*Mrs. Milano:* They used to congregate in my house because I used to bake pies and homemade bread. I'd get up in the morning and there were no pies or no bread. They used to eat it up. They used to fall asleep on the floor; I'd find them there in the morning. We enjoyed it.

*Mr. Milano:* I want to finish this story about Newark. Mr. Ford auditioned bands throughout the state and then like I say we went to New Brunswick and we played everything and that's where I lost my trumpet player, they took him right out. Then of course we came back and I think it was about a week later we were told to go to work and that President Roosevelt was going to be there and we were supposed to play Hail to the Chief and whatever.

*Mrs. Milano:* He said that was so thrilling.

*Mr. Milano:* He had more FBI men around him than there were people in the city of Newark I think. The streets were all lined up of people waiting for him. It was a nice affair. All the projects throughout the state, the arts and what not, they were presenting the things they were doing at that time. Also we represented the musicians, the music.

*Mrs. Milano:* Do you believe in those days the salary they only received, ninety dollars a month.

*Mr. Milano:* I started out with eighty-five and then they gave us a big raise,

five dollars a month.

*Mrs. Milano:* Well you got ninety but the other men got sixty.

*Mr. Milano:* I'll tell you I never want to see the Depression come back; never, never. We were lucky with the projects. That's what made music.

*Mrs. Milano:* Well in those days.....

*Mr. Milano:* You made it work.

*Male Interviewer:* Do you recall the comedian by the name of Steve Maskowitz?

*Mr. Milano:* Yes, he worked in a hospital.

*Male Interviewer:* Right.

*Mr. Milano:* Yes, I know Steve well. He did maintenance in the hospital; he was the maintenance man there.

*Male Interviewer:* He was kind of a later vaudeville.....

*Mr. Milano:* Yes, in that vein.

*Male Interviewer:* He always wanted to break in but I don't think his wife wanted him to.

*Mr. Milano:* Oh yes, I know Steve. I'll tell you we had a lot of good entertainment around this town at that time in this area. At that time there were quite a few minstrel shows at the different churches and the clubs. It was like a common thing. They'd have a minstrel in Port Reading one week, the next week it would be in Woodbridge and the next week it would be in Perth Amboy. I mean it was a great thing to have minstrels at the time. We used to work a lot of hours.

*Male Interviewer:* I've heard this term and maybe you can explain it to me, what was a sharpie?

*Mr. Milano:* Well the sharpie wore bell bottomed pants.

*Mrs. Milano:* They were tight at the knees.

*Mr. Milano:* And the girls wore long skirts.

*Mrs. Milano:* We used to wear skirts with blouses and like a little vest they called it. Just three little button and the girls wore gowns.

*Mr. Milano:* They used to hide their ankles. The dresses went right down to the ground.

*Mrs. Milano:* No, the sharpie girls wore the dresses down to the floor. We wore the skirts.

*Mr. Milano:* Well anyway, I know I had bell bottoms. The collegians they had wide pants. They had to take two steps before the pants would move one. That's what I always used to say.

*Mrs. Milano:* He used to make fun of the collegians and then we got to go with one another the girls went backward a little. Every time I danced with him he used to take his arm and say stand up straight.

*Mr. Milano:* I get a kick out of these pictures though.

*Mrs. Milano:* See he recalls them.

*Male Interviewer:* Okay, we'll finish now. Thank you for your time.