

MATHESON HISTORICAL CENTER
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Interviewee: Borris “Zero” Mazo

Interviewer: Ray Jones

Transcriber: Ruth C. Marston

September 9, 1998

J: My name is Ray Jones, and I am interviewing Borris Mazo today, September 9, 1998, for the Matheson Historical Center. Will you please state your full name, birthdate, and birthplace for the record.

M: Borris Mazo, and I was born on April 6, 1923, in Scriven, Georgia..

J: Tell me how did you get your nickname

M: There used to be a fellow who worked for my aunt at the old Orange and Blue. In grammar school, I used to do fairly well. In those days they rated by the numbers -- 98, 99, and 100. I brought a lot of papers home with 100's on them. For some reason, he kept seeing those zeros on them and just being funny, I guess, he started calling me Zero. That's it. It's that simple.

J: Shall I call you Borris?

M: No, Zero. I'm in the phone book like that.

J: Please tell me about your family and their background.

M: I don't know much about the foreign country, but they both came to this country as young folks. They both came through Ellis Island at different times, naturally. What we call Russia, I used to hear them talk about a county or country called Minsk, wherever that is. It didn't mean anything to me then. They were sponsored by other folks, cousins, and came down on a boat to Savannah, Georgia, and they settled in Savannah. That's where the family was.

J: That's your grandfather and grandmother?

M: I guess so. I don't really know. My uncle put up the money for their passage, as I heard stories about. He had become successful in South Georgia. He put up the money for his family to come over. I always heard that my daddy didn't want to go into the Russian Army and he managed somehow to get out of there. My mother I don't know about. I guess it was her brother who became very influential in Georgia and sponsored them and put up money for passage. That's as much as I can remember.

J: For the record, what is your father's name?

M: His name was Meyer. I never heard a middle name. My mother's name was Annie Gilmore. They settled in Savannah.

J: When did you as a family come to Gainesville?

M: September, 1932.

J: Was there a special reason for that?

M: Of course, at nine, you didn't know what was happening, but over the years you can look back and see that that was right after the Depression and we lived in Waycross, Georgia. Looking back, I can see that things weren't going well at all. My momma had two sisters here -- Mrs. David Rabinowitz, who is mother of the Robbins boys -- that's what most people know them as. The name was changed, but she and her husband kept their Jewish name. Legally they changed their name to Robbins. Aunt Sadie Singer was mother's sister. Her husband was Sam Singer. My mother went in business with Aunt Rose, who had a boarding house, and she fed them meals and that way everybody got to eat.

J: Were they Kosher meals?

M: Not in my aunt's house. Later on my mother established her own boarding house. She rented two big houses and rented rooms. She fed Kosher boys, who wanted to keep Kosher. In those days there were no restaurants around except out on the campus. The College Inn was there, I think. She fed them two meals a day except for Saturday and one meal on Sunday. They came to the house, which was nearby campus, and had two meals a day. Then she rented rooms. That's how you survive.

J: And your father?

M: My daddy opened a small second-hand store with used clothing. He did that for many years downtown on one of the side streets. I guess he made a living; never did get rich out of it, but you do what you gotta do, I guess.

J: The 30's were difficult times.

M: Oh yes, looking back I can tell that. We were poor. Everybody went to work, even the kids. I remember everybody was paid in cash in those days on Saturday. Everybody kicked in some of their salaries for food and resources.

J: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

M: I have three brothers and three sisters. I'm the fifth in the line of six of the children that survived. There were eight actually. Two of them didn't survive, but I never knew them at all.

J: Tell me about Gainesville.

M: It was very small. There were about 2000 students, as I can recollect. I didn't know that at the time, but looking back I read about it and there were about 10,000 or 11,000 people in Gainesville. Of course, the railroad track ran down the middle of Main Street and where the First Union Bank sits was where the railroad station was. Did you know that?

J: No, I wasn't here at the time.

M: Where 8th Avenue is, going east and west, that was the end of Main Street and the railroad track went on over Burnett's Lake up to Jacksonville. Everything revolved around the Court House Square. All the businesses. That was the downtown.

J: Was your father's business off the square?

M: The second street off the square. In those days it was right back, when Sears used to be downtown and Belk-Lindsey used to be downtown, their back door was on Union Street. His little shop was in that row, which is now the city parking lot.

J: Can you tell us something about your schooling.

M: When I came here, I was in the fourth grade. All my schooling was done at G.H.S., which was up where the 720 Building (the Ayers Medical Center) is now. Strange as it may seem, my back yard backed up to the playground at the school. All I did was climb the fence and I was on the school grounds. At that time, there was a grammar school there; also Junior High and the High School. As time went on, they built J.J. Finley and moved the grammar school children on the west side out to J.J. Finley. As I went into the 7th grade Junior High, I think they utilized the up and down west wing. Then Senior High was there, so all my schooling was done in that one building, which at that time was G.H.S. Then after they built G.H.S. on 13th Street, it was Buchholz High School at one time and Santa Fe Junior College used it. I don't know who else used it. Then it was torn down and the 720 Building, as I call it, was built.

I remember some of my school teachers. Mrs. McDaniel was one of my grammar school teachers. Miss Gresham and Mrs. Lang (Jimmy Lang's mother -- he's a lawyer here) and there was Mrs. Mizell. She was the mother of Bud Mizell, who was a prominent Gainesville man. One of my fondest teachers was my bookkeeping teacher, Mrs. Naomi Stephens. I wasn't stupid, but I didn't study too much and she wasn't going to let me fail. Many times she made me come to her house and do my homework at her dinner table. Her husband, Billy K., was a faculty member at the University in the Physical Education Department. I got by. I had only one bad teacher, but Prof. Buchholz was there. I never gave him any trouble. He was very stern, but he was a Rhodes Scholar and he didn't put up with any what we call crap today!

J: How about social activities?

M: I didn't date too much. I was fat and ugly. But I was a very good dancer and I had a good social life. Went to all the dances, and they tell me I was the best dancer around.

J: How did you learn to dance?

M: I don't know. It just came naturally. I was big and had a good sense of rhythm. In fact, I was just talking about that with someone this morning. We used to dance on the school stage. They had a record system, what they now call stereos. During lunch hour, they would play music.

J: Did they have many dances?

M: Oh yes. In those days they had high school fraternities and sororities, which are illegal today, and they would have dances on Friday night. Most of them were held at the American Legion Hall, which is where the Matheson Historical Center is. Angus Merritt provided the music with his records. For fifty cents you could have a dance. The Little Women was a group of daughters of women who belonged to the Women's Club -- I think that was the way it started but I don't think that was the only criteria -- had dances at what they called the Women's Club, which was right across the street from G.H.S. at that time. Many years later that building was moved out on N.W. 16th Avenue, and is now where the Little Theatre is. Of course, it's been remodeled but I've never been in it. It was moved during the war, I believe. I don't think I was here when it was moved.

The University used to have functions and dances. Of course, the older kids crashed the fraternity parties and all that.

J: So they were crashing the social events right at the University.

M: Well, you say "crash". There wasn't any problem. You just moseyed in and around and that kind of stuff. I guess the usual dating went on. Courting grounds around Gainesville were the Washington Woods, which was an area that was all full of trees and there was a lot of parking going on out there, which I am sure every town had that.

J: Where was that?

M: Washington Woods would be N.W. 15th Street, I believe, and ends at 5th Avenue, which was Seminary at that time. They called it Washington Woods because I think that street was named Washington Street. About five blocks down it was woods. That's where Gainesville hadn't grown. There was Colclough Hill, which was out here on South

Main Street. Courting grounds, as they say, with smooching and parking. Then at the end of Newnan's Lake, believe it or not. You know, the typical small-town stuff.

J: Did you go to the University?

M: Yes. I finished high school here and went one semester at the University and quit. I worked for a couple years and then went into the Navy. I was drafted and spent two years in the Navy.

J: Where were you stationed?

M: I did boot camp at Bainbridge, Maryland. I don't know if it's in existence now or not. Then I went to Storekeeper Service School in upper New York at Sampson. I don't think it is there any more. It was on one of the Finger Lakes. After three months there, I was assigned to the Tampa Shipyard, waiting to be commissioned. I finally got it but it was too late as the war was over. We were in Tampa on VE Day and were three days out in the Gulf when the VJ Day came and we went on through the Canal to Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, stayed there three weeks and came home. I was lucky I didn't get shot at.

J: When did you get released from service?

M: 1946. I did it for about two years.

J: Were they difficult years?

M: No, looking back, I enjoyed it. I had a good time. I don't regret it a bit, believe it or not. I learned a lot. I learned how to be on time. It's very important.

J: When you came back, what was your family life like? Was it any different?

M: I came back and went to work with Joe Silverman and stayed there until 1988, forty-two years later.

J: Silverman's was an important store for many years, wasn't it?

M: I found out how big we were after I left. People told me that.

J: Can you tell me something about Silverman?

M: I was walking down the street one day, and Joe called me from across the street. We talked and he told me he needed somebody to work. I don't know whether I was doing

anything at that time, so obviously I agreed to it. The rest is history. He was a very good, Joe Silverman. The best. A good merchant, honest, and very successful. He and his wife, Fay, are still in business. The daughter is running it.

J: How did you start? What did you do for him?

M: I did everything -- swept up, mopped the floors, washed the windows, learned what clothing was. You just don't know it until you learn.

J: It was all men's clothing?

M: At that time it was.

J: When did they add women's clothing?

M: We moved across the street in 1959 or 1960. Fay, his wife, wanted to be in the lady's business, so the store was big enough that she took part of the store and opened a lady's department. It was small to start with and it was downstairs. That store had a second level, sort of a balcony. It became successful and she needed more space, so they swapped, put her on the balcony. It just grew and grew. She was very successful.

J: Your sister Libbye also worked in retail?

M: My oldest sister, Libbye, was in the retail business as a saleslady for many years in a store called Brownstein's, which later became Ruddy's, on the south side of the square. She worked for them. At one point she wanted to have her own shop so she left Ruddy's and she and I opened Libbye's, right next to the Florida Theater on the west side. Mostly sports wear.

My brother at one time worked for another men's store in Gainesville, and my older brother worked for Canova's Drug Store downtown. Canova's was at that time on the corner of Main Street and University Avenue. Now there is some kind of restaurant there.

The other two girls married and moved away, so we were mostly in the retail business. My brother was a pharmacist at Canova's.

There were two major men's store. We liked to think of ours as one of the majors, and then there was Mr. Liebowitz, who had what was called the L&L Men's Shop, which was on University Avenue very close to Canova's. Right across the street from the Woolworth Store, which was where Joe Dunlap's Chestnut's was. Then Otto Stock had a small shop. I think those were the three men's stores -- two majors and one smaller

shop. He was successful in what he did. Glenna's Retail I don't know anything about. There were a lot of lady's shops. But everything revolved around the square and University Avenue at that time.

J: When did Silverman's begin?

M: Joe opened his first store in 1936, actually across the street at the corner of what is now 3rd Street and University Avenue. He called himself the Collegiate Men's Shop. Of course, he catered to students. That was the main collegiate men's shop. In 1942, he moved across the street in the building next to the old Primrose Grill, which is not there any more. The building is still there. Do you remember the Primrose Grill?

J: Yes.

M: When he moved across the street, he changed his name and he changed the image slightly to the Men's Store. Eventually he changed it to Silverman's, The Men's Store. In 1959 when he moved across the street to where we were for many years, he dropped "The Men's Store" and called it Silverman's because Mrs. Silverman had put in the lady's department. Both departments were very successful.

J: He had a good group of clientele.

M: Yes. When he moved across the street from the Collegiate Men's Shop, it was still a lot of students but when we moved over to the big store in '59 or '60, we became everybody's store.

J: Did the change in the University affect its size?

M: Business was really good because students dressed in those days. As I understand it, in fraternities when you went to dinner at night you had to wear a shirt and tie. Jacket was optional, I guess. Business was good and in later years -- I don't remember when the trend started -- but the sloppy look didn't help.

J: Silverman's was recognized as a fine store by its customers.

M: They still do, by the way. Everywhere I go, people will open to the label and say, "I'm still wearing a coat you sold me."

J: Did you wait on many of the senior professors?

M: Oh yes. Dick Johnson was Registrar for many years. E.B. Salt, who was the Dean of Physical Education, comes to mind. Wayne Reitz was a customer. Joe usually waited

on a lot of those folks because they were a little older than I was at that time. A lot of the professors came in.

J: Can you tell us some of the things that were going on at that time and why you retired?

M: Well, I retired in April 1988. I was going to be 65 then, and I gave two years notice. I told them at 65 I would have had it because that would have been forty-two years in one place. April 6th was on a Wednesday, and that Saturday I was through. We had to have cake and punch and took pictures, you know the whole routine. Mr. Silverman had passed away two years before that, and when you lose your big gun, things are not the same. I and a fellow named Ed Smith, whom most people knew around Gainesville, ran the store with Gene and Mrs. Silverman and it stayed open about a year after I left. Nobody wanted to run it, I guess, so they closed it up. Ilene, their youngest daughter, who was in the business, opened and still has her own shop out on 16th Avenue at Millhopper Shopping Center and she has a very successful shop. She will always be successful because she knows exactly what she is doing, like her daddy. Very outgoing, gracious. You've probably seen her on Channel 5. She will always be successful. Her husband, who has his own things going, has always been very helpful to her business-wise. Her son and brother Gene, who is a CPA by trade -- I guess he was what you call the money man, who watched everything, but he never practiced in private practice because of ill health at that particular time.

J: During the time when you working what hours was the store open?

M: I can remember when we first started working, on Saturdays we stayed open until 10 o'clock Saturday nights. I don't know at what point that stopped, but the hours after that were to 6:00 o'clock.

J: You actually had customers after 6 or 7 o'clock on Saturday nights?

M: I assume so. I can't remember that, but what you have to remember is that everybody stayed open until 10 o'clock on a Saturday night -- all the grocery stores, everything around the square -- because the farmers came to town on Saturday and did all their shopping for the whole week. They had one car perhaps. You look at the so-called farmer today and he has four or five trucks sitting out there and they can go and do what they want. In those days, everybody came to town and did everything on Saturday. During the war for a time, they closed on Wednesday afternoon. I don't know how that started. That kept up for a number of years and then, of course, it just doesn't make sense to close on Wednesday afternoon any more, so we stopped that. Generally, it was 9 to 6, the normal hours.

J: And you worked on Saturday, but not on Sunday?

M: No Sundays. Six days a week. We usually got half a day off during the week sometime.

J: How did you learn the clothing business?

M: I can tell you. I had a good teacher. Mr. Silverman was probably the best merchant that ever was. He grew up in the business in Jacksonville, working in stores in his high school. He was the best salesman you've ever seen in your life. That's a fact. He knew it. I would listen and learn how to fit clothing by trial and error, I guess.

J: Is it a different world now as far as fitting clothes?

M: I haven't worked in a new store, but having been in them, though, I would say yes. When you walked into Mr. Silverman's store, you were greeted, regardless of whether you bought or not. If you were going to look, that was fine, too. Each one was handled individually. When you go into a store today, nobody knows you. You have to fend for yourself, and Mr. Silverman wouldn't put up with that. You had to help people. They came to expect that, and that's the way it was done.

J: They also expected you to help create a wardrobe.

M: Oh yes. We just didn't sell a suit. We sold an ensemble. We just didn't quit with the suit. We wanted to sell an ensemble. We showed shirts and ties with it and put it together for people. Most people really didn't know, not that they were stupid or anything, but color-wise we tried to put it together as an ensemble, and people liked that. They liked attention, and that's the way we did it.

J: That was the concept.

M: Absolutely. That's exactly right. It was a successful way to do business.

J: I read an article in the paper where Ilene was interviewed, and she indicated that another reason for closing the store was the fact that senior personnel were unavailable.

M: I've heard that and she told me that. It was very much appreciated. Her husband had his other business. He helped run it for a year or so, but he had so many other things in the fire that he couldn't continue to do that, and Gene, the son, was not well and did not have the energy to put to it. I guess they made a family decision. It was two years after I had left. They had a big sale and closed it out.

J: And you retired on what date?

M: My last day in the store was April 9, 1988.

J: Tell us for the record some of your interests and some of the activities you are involved in.

M: I am an athletic man, which I didn't get to be when I was working. Now I go to the basketball games. I have season tickets to that and baseball. I don't go to football games any more. It's a little too hard to climb those stairs. There's basketball and volleyball. Sports I like and it takes up my mind. I don't hunt or fish. I don't require a lot really.

J: Do you meet regularly with friends?

M: Oh yes. In fact, I had lunch today with seven others. There were eight of us, and we went up to the Rebel House for lunch. That's in Alachua. Last week we were at Country Kitchen, out somewhere on the Williston Road. Next week we'll go to some different place. We all like the same things basically. Sports minded people. The only thing I don't do is windows or lawns. I let somebody else do that. But I'm content. That's the main thing. I'm 75, old and fat and stodgy, but in pretty good health. The best word is that I'm contented. If you're contented, things go well.

J: Can you tell us something about the Jewish community when your family arrived in Gainesville?

M: When we got here, there were ten or twelve Jewish families. There was a little synagogue, which is a little building just on the back side of Ralph's Hamburger Store. That was the first little building. My daddy was a very religious man. I must say I belong to the synagogue but I don't attend. I'm kind of an outlaw I guess, but I'm still Jewish and I'm a member and pay my dues every month. The continued to grow and they outgrew that little place. At that time they had no rabbi or leader because of the smallness of the community and as I understand it, in the Jewish community anybody can lead services. If you're learned and can read the Torah and know the Torah, you can lead the service. This is the way it was when Mr. Frank Grossman, Sidney Grossman's daddy, was a learned man and lead the services on Friday evenings, and special holidays. My daddy was a learned Jewish scholar although he wasn't a college man, he was a religious man. They built the first building out on 16th Avenue close to that elementary or junior high school off of 34th Street and 16th. It was there for a long time, and then they finally had so many families to warrant hiring a rabbi. I don't know at what time that was. They outgrew that and built where they are now further out on 16th Avenue. They bought ten or twelve acres out there and they still have plenty of room to build. That's where they are now. I am a paying member but unfortunately am not learned in

the Jewish religion, although my brother and sister are. I keep kidding them and saying I'm one of those outlaws, but I'm a good man.

J: Was it a very close community. Did you have certain activities together in addition to religious life?

M: I don't remember a lot, but they always had get-togethers, fund raisers, like they probably still do today. There was always something in somebody's home. It wasn't easy in those days paying the bills, I've heard. Of course, anytime the bigger you get, the more proliferated it becomes.

J: How many Jewish families were there when you came here? Do you remember their names?

M: Oh, about ten or twelve. There was the Robbins family, the Singer family.

J: Weren't your aunts living here in Gainesville?

M: Those two ladies and my mother were three sisters, and the Buns family -- Abraham Buns, I think, was his name. The Grossmans and the Koplowitzes came in two or three years later. They moved down from New York and went into the junk yard business here and became very successful. Most of the old-timers will remember Max Koplowitz and Sidney Grossman. Sidney's father was cantor. He was the cantor because he knew the Jewish history and the Torah. Oh, the Edelstein family -- Marcus and Hyman and Willy. This family was very big in the Jewish community here. There weren't too many of them, but it continued to grow as long as the University grew. People like Sam Proctor came to school and stayed. That's the first one off the top of my tongue. It grew as the school and the town grew.

J: I believe that Sam Proctor was very close to your family.

M: Absolutely. Sam was very close. One of the best people there is. In fact, I might have told you that Sam did the eulogy for my father's funeral service. What can you say, if you know Sam, you know the best. He and his wife, Bessie, were very active in the Jewish community as they stayed on here.

J: Of course, the University expanded.

M: Yes, and as I have mentioned, my mother fed Jewish students who wanted to keep Kosher. She could take only twelve or thirteen at one time because that was as big as this dining room would hold.

J: You say you're still a member of the synagogue.

M: Yes, I still am. They get my money every month, whether I'm as active as a regular attendee, I wanted to continue, so I do my share. My family is buried here in the cemetery. My mother and father, brother, and sister, and I expect to be. The Jewish cemetery is on East University Avenue. You know where the railroad track is. Where you turn left to go to Waldo, you go straight and it's right across the railroad track on the right. That's where the Jewish cemetery is and my family is buried there. I hear stories that they didn't have any place for Jewish people to be buried and at one time the city or somebody gave the Jewish community this land with the stipulation that they would get a few dollars a year but they had to take care of it. That's the story I've always heard. They did maintain it and still do. I don't know if they still get funds or not, but they maintain it themselves. It's about to be outgrown.

J: Do you have any other area you would like to cover?

M: What was downtown at that time. Well, let's see. As I said before, the downtown consisted of where the Court House was. That was where the Administration Building is now. Of course, the old Court House was born down. They never should have torn it down. They should have remodeled it. On the east side of the Court House -- we're talking about the area which they called the Plaza now that was East Main. Baird Hardware was on the corner there. I think there was McCrory's Five & Dime and the Phifer Bank was on the corner, if I remember. Coming across the square on the south side, where Harry's Restaurant is, at one time there was a drug store in there and Uncle Tom Dorsey's Bakery was there, and Chitty's -- oh, I forgot Chitty's -- they were very strong in the men's clothing business here. They were on that corner of 1st Street and West Main, where the Scrugg's Law Offices are. On the west side, Mr. Matthews had the piece goods store, then Benmont Tench's father had a shoe store, and Cox Furniture Store was there, the Thomas Hardware Store. Mr. Prevatt had the barber shop, and Canova's was on the corner and in 1938 the big fire took out most of those places. Did you know there was a big fire? Robert Williams' daddy had the furniture store around the corner on what was Union Street, but most of that block was taken out by the fire.

J: Was your father's business burned?

M: It was on the back side. It wasn't in that block. After that, Cox Furniture moved over to where Harry's was, if I remember correctly, and it stayed there for many years right on the corner. Of course, there was the old Lyric Theater right down close to what is now the Hippodrome Theater. The Hippodrome used to be the Post Office. Did you know that? Of course, they remodeled it when they moved in. Thomas Hardware burned down. Canova's on the corner was spared, but they were damaged. There were a bunch of little stores that faced on University Avenue which were all destroyed, and

when it was rebuilt, a Mr. Miller built those buildings facing on University Avenue. Oh, the Lyric Theater -- I have fond memories of that. That's where all the Western cowboy shows were shown. In fact, it got so run down that all the kids used to call it the "armpit". Well, on Saturday you could go to the movies for ten cents and see a Western and a serial and a comedy! The kicker was that on Saturday morning you had a nickel matinee and you could go to the movies for a nickel, up to one o'clock. A nickel went a long way in those days.

J: How did you get to these various places? What transportation did you use?

M: Walk. My family didn't own a car for many years. I still don't drive today. Most people don't believe it. The first time my family ever had a car, my two brothers came home from the service and neither one of them drove. They went down and bought a car together and my sister, as I understand, went and picked it up and took them out and taught them to drive. They bought a Studebaker. Louis Burkham's Studebaker place at that time was actually in that building across from the Matheson Center, which I understand has been remodeled into offices.

J: You know you could walk to work.

M: I walked to work all those years every morning. We lived close enough by. Sometimes I got a ride, but most of the time I could walk to the store in ten minutes in those days, which was nothing.

You know where the railroad track that they were taking up on 6th Street, when they built the First Union Bank (the Atlantic Bank at that time), they built the railroad station on 6th Street, which is now the Santa Fe Junior College system. Right up where the railroad tracks went by University Avenue and 6th, there was a railroad station called the T&J, which meant Tampa & Jacksonville. Trains came through here for the T&J.

J: Did you take any of those trains?

M: I never did on the T&J, but I remember riding the train to Jacksonville one time. In those days I think it went close to Alachua up to about what they call Burnett's Lake and then it curved back around to Jacksonville. I remember riding it one time.

J: How long did it take?

M: I don't recall. I really don't it's been so long ago. There by University Avenue and 6th Avenue, which was called Alabama if I'm not mistaken, Gainesville Laundry was there on the north side, and the peat moss factory. I lived in that neighborhood. Mr. Evans had his bakery right across the street there. The main thing, I guess, at the corner of

what is now S.W. 7th Street and University Avenue, was my first job at Thrasher's Drug Store. My first job I was a car hop. In those days, a car could pull up at the curb and the car hop would go out and bring out your tray of cokes, like you see in the movies, put the tray on the side of the car. They paid ten cents an hour. That's when I got my Social Security card in 1936. I worked my way in to working on the fountain and became a soda jerk, making twenty-five cents an hour. Big money! The high school was right there in the next block, in that neighborhood, so it was a nice place to work.

I say I like Gainesville, and in fact every time I go away, I'm always glad to be back even today though it has become too big. I mean so many new people that I don't know. I have a saying that I tell my friends that everybody I know is old, but I don't know any more of the new people anymore. In those days I knew everybody in town practically. The fact is that I ran into some young lady the other day who told me she spoke to somebody. She said she was married to Tommy Evans. I said, "Is that Billy's brother?" She said, "Sir, I knew your granddaddy, Bill Evans, who had the soda shop right next to the Lyric Theater downtown."

J: You were certainly part of the community.

M: I like to think so. I like Gainesville. I think it's too big. I'm glad to be here, enjoying decent health and the comfort of a home. I live by myself. My sister and I lived together until she passed away. I have a sister in Jacksonville and one in Tamarack, Florida. She lived in Miami for about forty-nine years and recently moved to Tamarack close to her son. There are three of us living.

You were talking about the Matheson Center. Isn't there a creek down there by the Center?

J: I don't know.

M: There used to be a creek there, and the library used to be just on the other side of the Matheson Center -- a little, small library. Of course, it's gone and that's where the public library was. I don't know if the new library covers that ground or not.

J: The new library is right next to the Matheson Center.

M: Well, it must cover that ground, but I don't know just where it was.

J: Thank you for your time in doing this interview.

M: I hope it helps.