

could in the store, if it was packaged cookies or candy bars or whatever it was--and we'd run up. We'd just leave everything and go up to the tracks. Whoever was in the store, we'd go up. Of course they were all with their hands out, you know, wanting to grab.

LD: These were actually the men all going off to . . .

Gureno: Yes, and as long as it lasted, whatever we had we handed out to the men.

LD: That was a very different attitude than in later times. I'm sure your memories of Armistice Day are pretty strong. 1918 that would have been?

Gureno: 1918, yes.

LD: Do you remember what happened around you on that day?

Gureno: Yes. Of course there were extras out then.

LD: In the newspapers? So everybody knew this had happened?

Gureno: Yes.

LD: Did you keep the store open that day?

Gureno: Yes. You know there were some things that people had to have.

LD: That's true.

Gureno: But the downtown was just a riot! Now if my memory takes me back, this was one of the times they closed between Second and Third Street. And the people really had a ball.

LD: Literally danced in the streets?

Gureno: Yes, and the confetti flying. Everybody was so happy.

LD: The period that followed that was generally remembered as the years of prohibition in the twenties. Do you have specific memories about the effects of Prohibition on the community around you?

Were there taverns and things that closed that were there up to that point?

Gureno: Well, I don't think there were too many at that time. They sprang up later. But there were some on 14th Avenue SE that went through that period. They switched to near beer and your soft drink.

LD: Did you know people who actually boot-legged in order to make money during that time?

Gureno: You heard of them.

LD: I've heard a variety of stories about that time. (Laughter) What are your memories of the--and this is not perhaps a national event, but something that was really about that same time in 1919--the Douglas Starch Works explosion.

Gureno: Oh yes.

LD: That had a great effect on the community?

Gureno: Yes. In fact I remember it well. We were on the east side and the starch works was on the west side; the river was between us. It blew out our front windows in the store.

LD: It still blew out your front windows?

Gureno: Yes.

LD: Did it do a lot of damage to the store?

Gureno: Oh yes.

LD: You would have been 15 years old then? In 1919, right?

Gureno: 1919.

LD: Were you in the store when that happened?

Gureno: Yes.

LD: What did you do?

Gureno: I was just sort of dumbstruck, you didn't know what happened. You

know, until you heard just actually what the trouble was.

LD: Did you leave the store and try to go out and find what . . .

Gureno: Some of us did, yes.

LD: Did you have anyone that you knew that was affected by that, other than . . .

Gureno: Friends, yes.

LD: They actually lost family members?

Gureno: Lost the parent, the father, in the explosion.

LD: Did the Douglas Starch Works Company do anything for those families?

Gureno: They did some. I'm thinking of one particular family, but it would never recompense where you had a large family and that amount of money. It was just like a drop in the bucket.

LD: If you were left behind as a widow there wouldn't be any opportunities for women to work in those days.

Gureno: No. Especially if you had, you know, young children that were growing up. They had to be taken care of, too.

LD: That's something that we didn't talk about much in relation to the Depression years. How did the community deal with people in need during that time? Do you remember things that were done? It was certainly before the days of government welfare or any sorts of institutional funding.

Gureno: I think if it was really urgent, the Red Cross stepped in. But I think neighbors as a whole. If they knew one neighbor was hurting, they were going to help out.

LD: So there was just a general attitude of . . .

Gureno: Then.

LD: If there was a need?

Gureno: Yes.

LD: But we're not talking about just for the moment, then. That had to be a long term thing?

Gureno: Yes. In the course of years, things kept changing. Factories would come in and the homes were disposed of.

LD: That's right, you were losing a lot of residential area in that community.

Gureno: A lot.

LD: What are your memories of floods in Cedar Rapids?

Gureno: Oh my! I went through two of those.

LD: Do you remember what years of the ones that you remember? There was a very bad flood in 1929.

Gureno: See, 1929 yes. Our store and our home connected to the store. We were fortunate enough to get one of these motors that pump out the water, you know?

LD: You actually had water in your home then?

Gureno: Oh, the basements were filled. Now back of the store, in the back rooms we had about an inch of water come right up through the floor. We'd go next door, and we had about six steps and then it had a landing and then it had another six steps going downstairs. We opened up our kitchen door and there was the water right at the first step. All our canned goods--although we had the store we canned peaches and tomatoes and pears, you know, jam--all a total waste. And our furnaces in both places had to be . . .

LD: Had to be cleaned out and . . .

Grueno: Replaced.

LD: So it had quite an effect on you?

Gureno: Oh yes. And we were going around in boats.

LD: How long did it take for the water to recede?

Gureno: Several days. And then even after the river started going down it took a long time to clear your basement out. It all had to be disinfected and that all took time.

LD: Did you have memories of any city administrative help? Did anybody come to help you out of that situation? Was the fire department around during that time, or did everybody just kind of take care of themselves?

Gureno: You had all you could do to take care of your home.

LD: So you really were left to clean up the mess all by yourself.

Gureno: Oh, yes, we did it.

LD: I guess that was the beginning of some operations on the river to make it more livable for the people.

Gureno: Yes. That's why I often wondered when they selected the spot for the new library.

LD: If it was a good idea or not?

Gureno: Yes, very much so. Because Smulekoff's had plenty of water in their basement. They had to take all the furniture in the basement up. And I thought, now what if they put that beautiful library there.

LD: That would be scary. Surely they thought about it. There hasn't been a flood for many years.

Gureno: Not in--I think in the 1930's. But it couldn't help but go through my mind, those thoughts.

LD: Were there a lot of differences in the way that you were raising your children when they were growing up and the way that your

mom and dad raised you?

Gureno: Well, we had good backgrounds, I think, for both. But I think our parents, maybe, were a little stricter.

LD: I know you said you consciously made sure your children had time to play as well as to work.

Gureno: Yes.

LD: That was important. Did you find that they had more of--I don't know what the right term is--did they get out of that neighborhood more as young people growing up in Cedar Rapids than you did? Did they range out more over the community?

Gureno: Oh yes.

LD: Did they pretty much stay in that same little area that you did when you were growing up?

Gureno: No, they branched out. They made friends. We always had a household.

LD: Always had a lot of kids?

Gureno: Always, Gus and I figured if they have a crowd here--and you know they'd put on those records and they'd go on and on and on. We said, well we know what they're doing and who they're with.

LD: That's right.

Gureno: And we always provided them with refreshments. We had a good time right along with them. But I'll never forget it as long as I live--when Gus died, those youngsters were all to the funeral.

LD: They came back because you had obviously been very close to them . . .

Gureno: You don't forget those things.

LD: What--and I've kind of come to the point here where I've covered all the questions that I wanted to ask you--but what do you think

has been the biggest change? You have a very special vantage point because you were in the same place for so many years of your life; as a child, then as an adult raising your own children. What was the biggest change in the neighborhood or perhaps even in the whole community that you have seen from the time that you were a child?

Gureno: Well, it was years ago, a home community. And then gradually it became commercial; one, then two, then three. And before you know it it was practically all commercial.

LD: You saw that whole . . .

Gureno: Creeping up.

LD: That residential home environment . . .

Gureno: Disappearing.

LD: That has to be a hard thing. You probably look at a building and know that there used to be home there?

Gureno: That's right. I can visualize--sometimes I'll sit here in the evening and I'll think back and remember different things. I guess we do that as we get older, you know, reminisce of the past.

LD: We have more things to remember, actually.

Gureno: There were a lot of them, there were good memories.

LD: Have you kept touch with a lot of those people?

Gureno: Most of them are gone now, you know the old timers.

LD: Are your children still in Cedar Rapids?

Gureno: No.

LD: They've gone all over?

Gureno: Mary Jo is in Solon; Judy is in Palatine, Illinois; and Augie is in Peoria.

LD: You pretty much are holding the fort here, then?

Gureno: Yes, but I wouldn't want it--I told them, I said now--especially Augie, he was pretty close and he kind of hated to leave Cedar Rapids. And I said, "Augie, you've got your wife and a family that come first now." I said, "If you have a chance for advancement you take it!" They are very close to me, though, very close. I couldn't ask for a better family, all three.

LD: Are there things that we have not touched on that you had specific memories of that you wanted to share with us? Anything that I've missed that you can think of?

Gureno: Well, I have told you about all, I think, that I remember. I suppose there will be things popping in.

LD: I'm sure that we'll both think of things.

Gureno: That will pop into my head. But I've tried to jot down different things that I . . .

LD: I think we touched on most of those things. Mrs. Gureno, I thank you for the time that you have given us. It was really--you have the most particular and special memories and I'm very grateful that you were able to participate.

Gureno: Well, I'm glad if I was able to help you out.

LD: You sure were. Thank you very much.

Gureno: You're certainly welcome.

(END OF TAPE)

INTERVIEW TOPICS
CEDAR RAPIDS: THE EARLY DECADES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

I. PERSONAL LEAD-IN QUESTIONS

- 1--When were you born? Where?
- 1--How long have you lived in Cedar Rapids?
- 1--What are your parents' names?
- 2--Where did you go to school?
- 2--Are you married or single?
- 39,47-48--Did you raise a family? How big?
- 3--What has been your occupation (career) during your adult years?

II. COMMUNITY TOPICS

A. Technology in the Community

1. Transportation

- 5,40--Railway travel (Union Station, trips to Iowa City on Crandic)
 - Trolleys (the Interurban)
 - Horses and First Automobiles
 - Mud roads and the seedling mile
 - Hunter Airport and the first planes
- 44--Cedar River (ferries, floods, dams)

2. Communications

- 36--Newspapers
 - Radios
 - Advertising
 - Telephones

B. People in the Community

1. Amusements/Recreation

- 8,20--Motion Pictures
 - Cedar Rapids Parks
 - Dances
 - Carnival Week
 - Chautauqua
- 20--Community Theater
 - Little Gallery
 - Symphony Orchestra
 - Circus
 - Greene's Opera House
 - Amusement Parks (Alamo)
 - Camps
 - Community Centers (YWCA, YMCA)

2. Famous Characters

- 6--Cherry Sisters
 - Grant Wood
 - Carl Van Vechten (The Tattooed Countess)
 - Marvin Cone

- 3. Lifestyle
 - Life before air conditioning
 - Winter Activities
 - Holidays (Memorial Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, Christmas)
 - Clothing
 - Toys
 - 13 --Saloons/Taverns
 - Farm Life
- 4. Family Life
 - Household Help
 - 43 --Women's Roles
 - 17-18,46 --Childrens' Activities/Behavior
 - 24-26 --Sunday activities (Church life, Sunday Blue Laws) Religious prejudice
- 5. Ethnic/Minority Life
 - 7,8,15 --Immigrants (Czech, Greek, German, etc.)
 - Indians
 - Segregation of Blacks
 - Jobs Available
 - 10 --Greek Settlement by River
- C. Organizations and Institutions in the Community
 - 1. Education
 - 2,23 --Cedar Rapids Schools, Parochial
 - Coe College
 - Mount Mercy College
 - Cornell College
 - 2. Government
 - 45 --City Services
 - Streets/Roads
 - Relationship with Marion (Courthouse Dispute)
 - 45 --New City Library (1980's)
 - 3. Medical
 - 21,22 --Hospitals
 - Patient-Doctor Relationship
 - Broken Bones
 - Polio, TB, Debilitating Diseases
 - House Calls
 - Home Delivery of Babies
 - 4. Charity
 - 32,37 --Junior League
 - 43 --Red Cross

4. Business and Economy
 - 6,29--Local Factories (Douglas Starch Works, Quaker Oats, etc.) Wilson's strike (1930's) Cherry Burell (6)
 - 12--Local Brewing Companies--Tehel Beverage Co.--Pepsi Cola
 - 45--Retail Businesses /Department Stores--Smulekoff's
 - Professions
 - 27-28--Banking and Finance--Depression
 - Restaurants (Greek Restaurants in 30's)
 - 3,5,8,9,12,13--Businesses that no longer exist (old groceries, drygoods, icehouses)
 - Farmers Market
 - Mills on Cedar River
 - Buildings Erected
 - Manual Labor/Types of Jobs
 - 29--Companies (Labor Unions, Strikes, Pay)
 - 13-15--Morticians/Funerals Hubbard Ice--16
5. Attitudes/Values
 - Children/Discipline
 - Sex/Petting
 - Charity
 - Divorce
 - 23--Work
 - Working women, Voting Rights for Women
 - 40--Patriotism (World War I)

D. Historic Events in and Outside the Community

1. Catastrophic Events
 - Clifton Hotel Fire (1903)
 - 42--Douglas Starch Works Explosion(1919)
 - Bank Closings (1933)
 - Lyman-Stark Building Collapse(1913)
 - Public Library Murder(1921)
 - 44--1929 flood Serial robberies and murder--30-32
2. National Historic Events
 - Womens' Suffrage
 - 40--World War I
 - Roaring 20's
 - 42--Prohibition
 - 27-28--Great Depression
 - 41--Armistice Day