JUNIOR LEAGUE OF CEDAR RAPIDS
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with
Oliver Samuel Wilson

Conducted by Laura Derr
June 20, 1985
1921 Park Avenue SE, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Transcribed by Renae Blasdell

Oliver S. Wilson

Mr. Wilson was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, on August 27, 1887, to Samuel A. Wilson and Minerva Manning Wilson. As a child, he lived in Michigan and Wisconsin.

Mr. Wilson followed in his father's footsteps as a travelling salesman in the seed business. He came to Cedar Rapids in 1920 where he worked for the Hamilton Company for 34 years, all 34 on the road as a travelling salesman.

Mr. Wilson married and had one son.

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

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

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--Horses and First Automobiles
25 --Mud roads and the seedling mile
--Hunter Airport and the first planes
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27 --Streetcars
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--Carl Van Vechten (<u>The Tattooed Countess</u>)
35 --Marvin Cone
16 --Tex Perrim

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   --Local Brewing Companies
27 --Retail Businesses /Department Stores
   --Professions
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27 --Businesses that no longer exist (old groceries, drygoods, icehouses)
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LD: Mr. Wilson, would you give us your full name?

Wilson: Oliver Samuel Wilson.

LD: When were you born?

Wilson: I was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Pittsburgh, on August 27, 1887.

LD: So you are older than this century, you've been around longer than almost anybody we know? That would make you 97?

Wilson: 1887.

LD: You're almost 98!?

Wilson: Yes, I'll be 98 in August.

LD: What were your parent's names?

Wilson: Samuel Allen Wilson, and Manerva Manning. About a year after I was born, mother convinced my father, who was pull conductor on the Pennsylvania Railroad, that he spent too much time away from home. So he went to work for his uncle, Samuel Wilson, who was a seedsman in Mechanicsville, Pennsylvania. The company's name was Uncle Sam Wilson's Seed Company. On our way there, Mother and I stopped at my grandparents at Newportville, Pennsylvania. About three or four years later I was up there for a visit. They had

right near the kitchen door, the pump. There was a large horse trough there, a water horse trough. And grandmother kept telling me that I shouldn't play around it. The last time she told me she grabbed me up, carried me in the house, took a rope, and tied me to the dining room table leg!

LD: How old were you then?

Wilson: Oh, about three years old.

LD: When did you come to Cedar Rapids?

Wilson: About 1920.

LD: You were grown and married?

Wilson: Oh yes, I was married.

LD: What was your wife's name?

Wilson: Erma Gray Wilson, Erma Gray really.

LD: When were you married?

Wilson: Married in 1911.

LD: Did you have children when you moved to Cedar Rapids?

Wilson: My son was, I had one son. He lives now in Pep, New Mexico.

LD: Big place?

Wilson: He bought the whole place! It consists of his house, store, post office, and a couple warehouses. The population was two, and still is two.

LD: What is your son's name?

Wilson: Gregg.

LD: When was he born?

Wilson: Born 1912.

LD: So you had a wife and a child when you came to Cedar Rapids?

Wilson: Yes, when I went to Easter, Pennsylvania I had only one child.

LD: What has been your adult occupation over the years?

Wilson: For about 40 years, practically all traveling. A traveling salesman.

LD: When you were a child growing up in Pennsylvania, I presume, what did your father do during that time? Did he work for a seed company then?

Wilson: He was a seedsman. He worked for a seed company.

LD: He did not travel at all?

Wilson: No, he had charge of the garden seed department.

LD: In your household, how many children were there?

Wilson: I had a sister a year younger, and a brother four years younger, and one brother 19 years younger.

LD: When you were growing up, what were your favorite holidays?

Wilson: Oh, we really didn't have any. Of course Christmas was a good holiday, and the Fourth of July wasn't too bad.

LD: What did you do on the Fourth of July?

Wilson: Well, I remember one Fourth I was about 13 years old. My mother and father and my youngest sister--I had a young sister, too--had gone back east for a trip. We was living then in Bay City, Michigan. They left me and my brother who was four years younger, and my sister who was a year younger, to take care of the house. They laid in enough supplies so we had plenty of groceries. Unfortunately, when they were gone on the Fourth of July, I found an old pistol and got some blanks, and spent the morning shooting blanks, firecrackers, and finally I decided to do something else. So, I took a bar of laundry soap and went over and greased the streetcar tracks! And when the streetcar came along, it just slid. It had

no power over it. And when it hit the tri-track, he pretty near ran through the window! Another holiday ceremony was in Bay City. I had an uncle that was just a few years older than I was; he came to visit us. Fourth of July morning, I sneaked upstairs early with a dishpan and a pack of firecrackers. I lit it and put it underneath his bed. When I was visiting down at my grandparents', he was always playing jokes on me, so I got even with him!

LD: Did you get caught for that?

Wilson: Oh, my father, I caught some looks, but it didn't amount to much.

LD: Who was the disciplinarian in your family?

Wilson: They never were strict. I don't remember that I was ever punished by my father. I remember, though, he told me one time, he said, "Now if I catch you start smoking, I'm not going to do anything about it. But if you wait til you're 21, you'll know more about it." I never started smoking until after I was 21.

LD: So he gave you good advice?

Wilson: If he had told me that I shouldn't smoke, I probably would have right away. No, he never really told us what we shouldn't do so much. We never seemed to have much trouble.

LD: What was the role of children in your household? Did you have household jobs that you did?

Wilson: We didn't do much work in the house. Mother always took care of most everything. We never really had, that I can remember, a particular task we should do.

LD: So you had a lot of free time?

Wilson: Yes. Well, in those days, you didn't have much free time. When

school vacation came, there was no trouble to get jobs. No matter how young you were, you could get a job. I worked in the onion fields. There were a lot of onions grown around there--I was pulling weeds. And one summer I worked in a wood factory. There was 28 saw mills in Bay City at that time. I was making wood dowels that the butchers used. Then in 1902, I started working in a print shop learning the printing trade. It was a one man shop, and I was the man! And about two weeks after I was there I was doing all the work. All the typesetting and press work.

LD: You would have been about 14 years old then, right?

Wilson: Around about 14 years. It was 1902.

LD: So children worked pretty early in those days?

Wilson: They did in those days, they seemed to work much younger.

LD: What were your favorite toys?

Wilson: We never had very many toys. Of course, when I was around 10 or better, I got a Kodak, or a camera. There was a store, a hardware store there, that had a drawing for a camera. When I went down to the drawing, I didn't draw the camera, but they gave us a little box camera. It was about 6 inches long, two cardboard boxes. One fit inside the other. It had a piece of glass plate for a lense, and a piece of tin for the shutter. You took it in the darkroom and put a glass plate, in those days we used glass plates, not films. You put a glass plate in, about 2½ by 2½, and put the front part in there. That would lock it in. It would really take pictures.

LD: Well, you really would learn the process!

Wilson: It had just a little pinhole for a lense, for the lense opening. Then later I got a camera from Montgomery Ward. I started taking

pictures, oh I suppose it must have been around about 1903 or 1904.

LD: You took pictures all of your life?

Wilson: Practically all of my life. Up until about seven years ago.

LD: What else did you do for fun when you were growing up?

Wilson: Seemed to me we had the most fun going down to the river and running logs.

LD: Could you explain that?

Wilson: They would bring these rafts of logs down at the river. We'd go down and run them. It was a dangerous thing to do, but that's what we'd do.

LD: Jump from one log to the other?

Wilson: Yes, from one to the other.

LD: That was a natural kid thing to do?

Wilson: I went down to the river one time with a friend of mine, I don't remember who he was. I had a water spaniel at that time. We were walking down the bank there below the business section. The bank was about oh, ten feet above the river. Most of it had piles, do you know what a pile is? It's like a log that would die...to hold the bank there. There was a place where it was broken out. I'd throw sticks out and let the dog go out and get it and come back. By the water down by the bank was a board, and the dog would get on that and climb out. One time I went to tip the board so the dog couldn't come up. I went all in the river with my pole. It was about, oh I suppose, 23 feet deep, I don't know how deep it was. The kid that was with me, he ran home, never said a word. And I had to get out of there some how or other. I couldn't swim, but I dogfished and finally got out of there. When I got home, of

course mother was scared, but father said good thing he did because he got a bath!

LD: Where did you go to school, and when; how long did you go to school?

Wilson: I started school in Mechanicsville, Pennsylvania. It was a little country school house, and I was about six. There was about a dozen or so students there. The ages of them were from my age of six up to five times my age. Up to pretty near 30.

LD: All in one room?

Wilson: All in one room. I suppose you could call it a problem school because they never could keep a teacher a whole year. Some of the students was as old as the teacher! The first year I started school, must have been in January, we had a good snowfall. There were some hills just over the fence from the school yards, so they made a slide there. They got the teacher to slide down. He didn't know that they had planned it all. They had a lot of snowballs, and by the time he got down there he could hardly get off the sled. It was two or three days, and we had a new teacher. The new one was a lady. She roomed and boarded at our house. I liked her at first, but then I didn't because one night she told about how I had had a fight on the way to school!

LD: Did you go through high school?

Wilson: I went through one year of high school in Bay City, Michigan. And then we moved to Clinton, Wisconsin. That was a problem school, too. But I didn't know it. At Christmas time there was only three or four of us. That was all that was left in high school, the rest had all been expelled. So I quit school and went to work. To

help the family income. They didn't reject about it. In those days it didn't seem the fellows went to high school or to college so much.

LD: It wasn't an expected thing?

Wilson: One friend of mine went to the University of Wisconsin. That's the only one I ever knew that went to college.

LD: Was there an age that you had to attend school up to? Up to a certain time?

Wilson: Not in those days. There wasn't any age you had to go to.

LD: Any other comments about your growing-up years?

Wilson: Not very much, I suppose.

LD: Do you have any memories about what you did in the winter time?

Wilson: It was no colder than it is here. It was about the same there. We had more snow than they had here. In the Bay City we were close to the lakes. Every place I've lived in, practically, there was a river, or a lake, or an ocean. When I come to Cedar Rapids, I'd never lived in any one place much more than four years. Except the first place in Mechanicsville, I was there about eight years. I was nine years old.

LD: How did your family heat in the winter time?

Wilson: We had wood or coal stoves.

LD: Did you have electricity?

Wilson: We didn't have electricity in most of them. In early years I didn't know what electricity was.

LD: How did you light your house? What kind of lamps did you have?

Wilson: Oil lamps or acetylene lights, gas lights. They had gas lights sometimes, but I think probably when we went to Clinton, Wisconsin

was the first...no, they didn't have electricity there either. In fact I think Madison, Wisconsin was the only place they had electricity.

LD: Do you remember that as a really special thing?

Wilson: The changeover, no. Because we knew what electricity was at that time.

LD: Even though you didn't have it, you knew what it was?

Wilson: Yes, but we didn't have it.

LD: I'd like to move along on neighborhoods. What neighborhoods in Cedar Rapids did you live in?

Wilson: When we first came here we lived on the west side. Mostly along 2nd Avenue, and this side or the other side of the tracks. I was thinking the other day, the last 55 years I've lived in this section here, or within about six blocks of it.

LD: So you've lived real close to this neighborhood?

Wilson: I used to live around the corner at one time, for about five years. Then we went down to 15th and 3rd Avenue and was there about five years and came up here.

LD: Are there big differences between the west and the east side of town?

Wilson: There was where we lived, a big difference. The homes are not as big as they are over on this side. See, we were out there on about 10th Street and 2nd Avenue. If you know where the tracks are, we lived just beyond the tracks one time, and on this side of the tracks.

LD: Were there a lot of Czech people around you?

Wilson: There were a lot of those when we first came here.

LD: On the west side?

Wilson: Yes. A lot of them on the west side, southwest side.

LD: Do you have any memories, any stories about the Czech people that you have known?

Wilson: No.

LD: I wanted to ask you about renting. Where did you rent, what areas did you rent in?

Wilson: We rented on the west side. And also around the corner, we rented that house. I was on 1st Avenue, about 17th Street E. We rented it there, and rented a house on the west side on 2nd Avenue West beyond the tracks.

LD: This was in the 1920's?

Wilson: Yes, it was in the 20's and the 30's.

LD: What was a typical months rent?

Wilson: I think at the last, we paid about $50 a month. Because when I lived around the corner on 19th, I paid $15, Harry Hedges' old house, of Hedges Realty Company. He offered to sell me the house on one months rent for down payment.

LD: Did you take him up on it?

Wilson: No. Well, I'll tell you, there were three houses on two lots, there wasn't any lot to it. The houses were all right but there wasn't enough ground.

LD: So you generally rented a house, not an apartment?

Wilson: We lived in one apartment, really.

LD: Did you ever have trouble with your landlords?

Wilson: I have to say I don't remember any time that I ever had any trouble with landlords. I always got along with all of them.

LD: Were there certain things that you were expected to do as a tenant in the house? Upkeep or anything of that sort?

Wilson: Not destroy it.

LD: Take care of it generally?

Wilson: When I lived around the corner, though, Harry Hedges owned the house there. I did do a lot of work on it which he appreciated very much. Like the porch needs painting, I did it. I put a new fence in there for him. Several things I did that way.

LD: Would they pay for the materials?

Wilson: Oh, yes. That was enough to pay for the materials, I didn't charge for the work of putting it in, though.

LD: When did you buy your first home?

Wilson: I bought this house in '42, 1942.

LD: Why did you decide to buy?

Wilson: Well I got kind of tired of renting, and I got a good deal on this house. The trouble was, the neighbors next door would chase out everybody that Harry Hedges rented to. He had an awful lot of trouble trying to keep them in here. In fact, it had been laying idle a year before I bought it. After I bought it they tried to chase me out, but it didn't work. They finally decided they would rather move than live along side of me.

LD: Did the people next door own their house?

Wilson: Yes, they owned the house.

LD: So they couldn't be evicted, obviously.

Wilson: No, they were a problem...what they wanted you to do and what you couldn't do.

LD: What sorts of things would they want you to do?

Wilson: See, I was on the road. One night my wife said it was raining and the phone rang. They said they had gone over there and put a rug on the porch steps because the rain made a noise on it and they didn't like the noise. They came to visit us shortly after we moved in, and the one thing they said they didn't like was to have any company after 10 o'clock at night. They could hear it from their bedroom and it annoyed them. And, oh, a lot of different things like that.

LD: Were they a young couple?

Wilson: No, they were older than I was.

LD: Very particular?

Wilson: I'll say!

LD: But you waited them out?

Wilson: I waited them out. The people that rented the house the last time, the last ones that rented it, used to have a driveway off the garage right past the door. They had a brother that lived down in Des Moines, he came and his wife was an invalid. She could hardly walk, they had a lot of trouble. So they drove up in the driveway so she could get out close to the steps. The next week the people next door put a post in there so nobody could do that. That was the kind of people they were. They were the only ones that you might say I had any trouble with at any time I've lived here.

LD: How did you handle the financing of this house in those days?

Wilson: Well, we paid by the month. Harry Hedges had some dealer that had a loan on the house, you might say a loan company; I paid there. They said they always hated to see me come in. Because

every time I came in I not only paid what I owed, but I would pay on the principle.

LD: To cut down on the interest?

Wilson: I paid it up in about four years time.

LD: What did you pay for this house?

Wilson: I paid the large sum of $5,000.

LD: In 1942?

Wilson: Yes, that was back in '42.

LD: What do you remember about city parks in those days? Were they the same as they are now?

Wilson: About all the same as they are now. Our favorite park, really, was Ellis Park. I suspect it was because of the river. My wife, of course, came from Minneapolis, Minnesota, a state that's got a lot of lakes. I'd always been around rivers and we like the water. We'd take our picnic dinner down there on Sunday noons. Occasionally we'd go out to Beaver but mostly down to Ellis Park.

LD: How would you get there? Did you have a car?

Wilson: Of course, I had a car when I came here. I came, you see, and I wasn't working for the company here. I was working for another company and I'd been driving cars for about five years.

LD: Why did you move to Cedar Rapids?

Wilson: Oh, we liked the city. See, I was working and had the whole state. I had good distributors in this part of the state, and we liked Cedar Rapids. That's why we came here.

LD: So it was a good location?

Wilson: Yes.

LD: What was this neighborhood like when you first moved in around

here? If we don't talk about your next-door neighbors! In general, was it built up?

Wilson: This neighborhood was about the same as it is right now. Most all of these houses were built about the time this house was built, or before. I don't think any of these houses were built since we lived here. They were all built before the '20's. This house was built in 1921, the same as the number here.

LD: How far out did the city extend; how far were the boundaries then?

Wilson: Close in. I'll tell you how close the boundaries were; we'd have hundreds of birds here in the summer time. Always had bird fountians and bird feeders. There were just hundreds of birds, and today you don't see a bird. See, we're so far in now that the country is a mile or two from us, or more. It's made an awful difference that way. In fact the local paper came out here one day, my wife told me, and took a picture of the birds. I had a fountain in the winter time with heated water for them. They came here and took a picture of a flock of birds around that fountain in the winter time. My wife made one mistake, though. She said one time a bird got froze in there and we had several complaints in the paper about us; cruelty to birds. The trouble was, the bird was diseased or crippled. It couldn't fly away. It didn't freeze in there, it died from other causes.

LD: What were the streets like when you came here in the '20's? Were they all paved?

Wilson: Most of it was paved. There were sections that didn't have paved streets. For instance, east of here, that section was a lot of unpaved streets there. It's paved now.

LD: Was it paved with brick?

Wilson: A lot of brick paving. This street here was brick, and then re-paved. In fact, if you go down here to about 16th or 17th it's brick paved. There's a lot of brick pavements around 16th and Park Avenue.

LD: Were the sidewalks all in?

Wilson: Yes, they were all in. A lot of them are getting out, though. I don't know of any place that didn't have sidewalks where they had paved streets.

LD: Do you remember new subdivisions or new areas where new houses were being built around here?

Wilson: There were houses being built all around Cedar Rapids at that time. You didn't have to go very far out to find new building, though. Take the section from 19th to Marion; the only houses you would find there was sort of settlement out there called Kenwood. But between here and Kenwood, and Kenwood to Marion was fields. We went to look at a house on B Avenue around about 22nd Street. When we drove up, my wife said, "I'm not going to live here." I said, "Why?" She said, "I'm not going to live out in the country." There wasn't anouther house on the block, and you could look from the front door of the house over to First Avenue and see the street-cars go by. You could look towards Kenwood and see all fields, you couldn't see any houses. The only thing you could see was Mount Mercy. There was no houses between here and Mount Mercy. That section there was all fields. You go out here, in fact my son camped with a friend of his, in a little woods right on First Avenue out round 24th Street one night. They pitched their tent there

and camped there in the woods.

LD: That would have been in the 1930's or the 1920's?

Wilson: Right about 1924.

LD: Could you tell us about any memories you have of radio and newspapers?

Wilson: When we first came here, we had some light housekeeping rooms on the 300 block of 3rd Avenue on the west side. The place is gone now on account of I380 going over there. Next door to us was a great big house and Mr. King lived there. We were told that the King family was well known in Cedar Rapids. Our son got quite well acquainted with them and he told how he used to work on the Burlington, Cedar Rapids, and Northern Railroad. It was taken over by the Rock Island. Just this side of the King residence was where Tex Perrim lived. Tex Perrim had a broadcasting station. He had like a repair shop in the front part of his house. Although I never saw any customers in there, he was always working on his broadcasting equipment; Changing it or adding to it. I never saw him broadcast anything, but he did broadcast some music. I used to be over there a lot of times on the weekends and when I was in town. One evening he called me up and wanted me to come over and hear some good broadcasting. So I said who is it. "I don't know," he said, "they haven't given their call letters yet." I went over and it was a good broadcast. I listened there, and finally they gave their call letters. Turned out to be Harry Parr's station, who also had a broadcasting station like Perrim did. I thought Tex was going to destroy the radio he had made. He had made a great big tube radio all laid out on the floor. That was

the only broadcasting that was done here in Cedar Rapids in the early 20's.

LD: Right out of his home?

Wilson: Yes. Tex Perrim station was KJAM which later became WMT. And then bought by the Waterloo Morning Tribune where they changed the letters to WMT, and then it was brought back here later. Harry had built a studio in the back yard, and a good radio tower. He would broadcast some music, either musicians or singing people that came into town. Also local groups.

LD: When did you get your first radio?

Wilson: One day Perrim went into Chicago on a trip and I had him buy me a radio. He brought me back a Westinghouse radio with three tubes. It was in two boxes, one tube in one box and two tubes in the other. It had a speaker hooked to it. I took the speaker and put it on the end of a graphaphone horn. Do you know what a graphaphone is?

LD: It's a big horn?

Wilson: I put it on the small end of that and you could hear it from across the room. Lots of times neighbors would come in to listen to the radio.

LD: What kinds of programs were there? What did you listen to?

Wilson: Well, we were getting our programs mostly from Chicago, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, eastern stations. There were very few radio stations at that time broadcasting, so there was no interference. In fact, I picked up one time, a European station. What we'd do, we'd take and string wire, like one place from the house to a tree, for an antenna. I'd always carry a radio on the road with me. Later I

had an Atwater Kent, after they got better radio. I had wire, and I'd take it and string it around my hotel room. From the dormer window to anything I could get, pictures or anything I could get to hang it on. I'd use that for an antenna, or if they had a good spring mattress underneath I'd hook it to the mattress. You could use a good metal mattress as an antenna. I always used earphones because in the hotel room, I didn't want to annoy anybody in the room next to me. I started carrying radios on the road, oh, I expect around about 1928 probably, 1930. In the early 30's I was always carrying radios.

LD: You would set it up in your hotel at night?

Wilson: Yes, I also fixed a radio in the car.

LD: How did you do that?

Wilson: I put it on some brackets in the car. And for an antenna I used a wire and run it down, and I had a board underneath the running board. Of course, they had running boards in cars in those days. I would wrap wire around and around the running board for an antenna.

LD: And you picked up stations?

Wilson: Oh yea, you could pick up stations. I always picked up Cedar Rapids as a rule at that time. That was because Cedar Rapids broadcasted more programs, of course in the 30's. Of course they say they broadcasted very early, but they didn't I can't believe they broadcasted earlier, because when I first knew him, he wasn't doing any broadcasting.

LD: Were there a lot of advertisements on the radio in those days?

Wilson: I don't remember any particular ads in the papers in those days atall. We took the Cedar Rapids paper, the Gazette. But my favorite paper

was the Chicago Tribune News.

LD: Did you take that?

Wilson: Yes, see that was the only thing that you could buy on the road. I was used to reading that.

LD: So that's what you read the most?

Wilson: Yes, I read that more than anything else.

LD: Was that your best news source in those days?

Wilson: Newspapers were, yes.

LD: Do you have memories of "extras" that came out?

Wilson: Not in those days. Of course, when I was younger I carried papers. We had extras then. I remember when McKinley was shot. I also sold the Saturday Evening Post when I was a youngster.

LD: You did lots of jobs, didn't you?

Wilson: In those days we sold it for a nickel.

LD: Did you have a special place that you sold from? A corner that you stood on?

Wilson: When I learned the printing trade there, I worked ten hour days, six day weeks, 50 cents a week.

LD: As a child?

Wilson: Well, I was a beginner.

LD: As an apprentice, you were about 14 years old.

Wilson: And I was doing all the work. At that time a beginner learning the printing trade had to work about two or three months without any pay.

LD: You just got the experience?

Wilson: For the experience. I got 50 cents for sweeping the hall at the top of the stairs and the stairs. But 50 cents in those days went a

longer way than it does today.

LD: Wasn't that dangerous for a young boy to be working with all that machinery?

Wilson: No. Plenty of boys worked in those days.

LD: Can you remember many accidents?

Wilson: No, we never had any accidents like that.

LD: Let's go on to the Riverside Park, because you had such good memories of what it used to be like.

Wilson: Before I started working out here, sometimes in the summer--early summer--we would give up our housekeeping rooms or where we were renting, and my wife would travel with me. My wife and boy sometimes. My boy spent most of his time in Minneapolis with his grandparents.

We carried a tent and all our clothing and groceries with us so we didn't have to eat at restaurants or stay at hotels. Of course, in those days there were no motels. Not even cabins, which came before hotels did. So plenty of people stayed in what was called a tourist park. Riverside Park had a tourist park. The park was about the same as it is today, the size, because it was shrouded all with homes. Of course, they had modern facilities in the park for us; showers and toilets. We had just as good facilities as the motels, you might say, as today.

LD: Did you have to pay? Did it cost you something to stay there?

Wilson: No, they didn't charge at that time.

LD: It was just a public tourist park?

Wilson: The public used to come down there on Sundays to see what we looked like and to talk to us. There was one man that used to come down

almost every Sunday, they said. I was told he was the president of People's Bank at the time. He was down one Sunday, it was a nice sunny day with no breeze or wind of any kind. In those days there was an old broadcast every few hours telling us what the weather was going to be. In the afternoon, I saw some breeze way up in the top of the trees. I figured we were going to get a windstorm out of it. I started driving my tent stakes down. Later on, the storm hit us. A lot of tents were down. One person was kind of embarrassed because she was taking a sponge bath and the tent went down; and to try to get dressed underneath a tent that's holding you to the ground is not very easy!

LD: You also told me a story about a young couple that was traveling?

Wilson: Yes, that was during the depression. I was camped over at Marshalltown at that time . This young couple came in across the street from me. They started setting up, and I could see that he had a new tent, new cots, new chairs. He had a heck of a job trying to get the chairs opened up. He had more of a job trying to put the tent up. I went over and helped him. We had been cooking our supper, we had ham for supper that night.

After we got things fixed up for him, they wanted to know what we was eating. I said we were eating ham. Oh, he said, I wish I has some. So I brought some over; I was surprised he took it because he was a Jew!

They started to cook some corn and I went over to see what they were doing. I said where did you get that corn? He said, oh, over in the field along the road. It was field corn, it wasn't sweet corn at all. But that was during the time of the depression, too.

Thousands of people were going West to California. A lot of them would run out of gasoline, money; the towns would give them five gallons of gas to get them out of town, to get them out of there. Most of the tourist camp had plenty of them in there camping. But in those days, a lot of salesmen camped in tourist parks. Of course, like I say, we had no motels, or hotels, or anything else to stay at in those days.

LD: Were there some salesmen that you would meet again and again on your route? Did you make friends with other traveling salesmen that you would meet?

Wilson: No, just the dealers that would call, about the only people we would know in the towns you would go.

LD: So you didn't always see the same salesmen where you would go?

Wilson: Oh yes. I had regular routes, regular trips. Which lasted any where from, in those days, the mudroad days, one week to four weeks.

LD: Let's talk about being a traveling salesman, because that is an important part of your experiences. What company did you work for when you were traveling?

Wilson: Well, I worked for several companies before I started to work for the Hamilton Company here in Cedar Rapids. But they all sold products that were used on the farm.

LD: But it was the Hamilton Company, in Cedar Rapids?

Wilson: Before I worked for the Hamilton Company. Whatever I sold, it was something that was used on the farm. I would say that my trade, people that bought my products, were all farmers.

LD: You went out to individual farmers?

Wilson: No, I never called on individual farmers. Just on dealers. I established distributors, wholesale distributors; I would ship the stuff in there by carload and they'd reship it out on my orders.

LD: Was it generally grain that you sold, or seed, here in Cedar Rapids?

Wilson: Here in Cedar Rapids, it was a seed company. It was called, really, the Hamilton Seed and Coal Company. I sold seeds and also sold what was called Jobber's line of implements. The biggest thing in implements we sold was wagons. Most of it was small stuff that was used on the farm.

LD: What kind of car did you drive in those days?

Wilson: I drove a lot of different makes.

LD: How long did one of them last?

Wilson: I usually traded every year or two. I hardly ever used a car more than a year or two. I'd put on around about 50,000 miles a year, pretty near.

LD: Where would you go? What was your route?

Wilson: At one time I had better than three states; Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and eastern Montana. I traveled all of Wisconsin, all of Minnesota, all of Iowa, and northwestern Illinois.

LD: When you lived in Cedar Rapids, did you have that big of a route?

Wilson: My routes of the Hamilton Company, it was the southern part of the county across the state, from Council Bluffs to Fort Madison, and up the river to Dubuque. And I had northwestern Illinois, and southwestern Wisconsin.

LD: You didn't have to go west in Iowa, the eastern part of the state and farther?

Wilson: I worked up around the border. The first years I traveled, of

course, it was all dirt roads at that time, our trips would be anywhere from one to three weeks long.

LD: Depending on the weather?

Wilson: The weather had an effect on mud roads because you couldn't make a trip or couldn't get home. I went as far as Council Bluffs on one side and Fort Masison south, and Illinois went down as far as around Medota , Illinois. And Wisconsin, I just had about two or three counties in Wisconsin. But it was mud roads, you either had to take the train to get home or stay where you were!

LD: Did you ever get stuck to where you couldn't go anywhere?

Wilson: Thousands of times! (Laughter)

LD: Did you ever leave your car and go home by train?

Wilson: Oh yes, I'd leave the car sometimes, and sometimes you'd leave them and use the train for a while, or start out by train. But here in the state, though, I used mostly the car. Unless it was winter time and the snow was bad.

LD: Were there any places that you ate out, or did you always carry your food? Any restaurants that you ate at?

Wilson: I always ate at restaurants. See I wasn't using a tent at that time. When I traveled for the company, the only time I ever slept in the car was during the depression. One summer, all summer, I slept in the car at tourist parks.

LD: To save money?

Wilson: Yes. They put me on a commission basis and it was cheaper to do that than stay in hotel. Otherwise I stayed in hotels all the time.

LD: And when you were in a hotel, there were always restaurants, places to eat?

Wilson: I would eat at the hotel or some other restaurant in town.

LD: Let's talk about being a salesman during those depression years. You had told me some stories about what happened to you in those times.

Wilson: It wasn't so bad traveling, but our trouble one time was, mostly, we couldn't get the stuff. It was hard to get merchandise. But I don't remember laying off for any period of time during the depression when we couldn't get out on the road and sell something.

LD: You said you thought you were going to be fired once?

Wilson: Well, we didn't know if we were going to have a job from week to week. I came in one Friday night and my wife said the boss wants you to call him up. So I called him up, and he said come on over, we want to see you. I went over and there were two of them sitting there. They said you haven't had a vacation for quite a while have you? And I said no, I don't want one. Well you're going to get one! They said my face fell to the floor. I said what is that for? Well, we want you to take the train Sunday night and go down to St. Louis, then travel east and go over to Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky. They said you used to live back east, have a good time. I said, yes, but what do you want me to do? We got so many carloads of seed we want you to sell! So I made about a two week trip back east selling carloads of seed.

LD: Was that hard to do?

Wilson: Before they ever got that seed sold where I sold it, the market busted and prices went to the floor. And there were several companies that went broke and do not exist any more. Of course, today there are very few seed companies left. Today most of the seed is

sold by farmers, farm agencies or dealers. Almost all of the seed companies I used to work for are gone.

LD: What was it like to do that kind of traveling year after year? Was that a lonely life?

Wilson: No, I never was lonely traveling. Of course most salesmen would collect in the lobby and talk in the evenings. But I always had my radio with me, and I used to like to do pencil drawing. I'd draw quite a bit, do quite a bit of drawing. One time, I picked an outfit that carried in a suitcase where I could take pictures and develop them in my hotel room at night. I always had something to do. I like to read, so I would do a lot of reading.

LD: So you entertained yourself?

Wilson: Yes.

LD: Let's talk about downtown Cedar Rapids.

Wilson: Of course, downtown Cedar Rapids had changed a lot from what it used to be.

LD: What businesses do you remember?

Wilson: The only thing I remember here is Dennickey's and the Boston Store. It was next door to Killian's.

LD: What did they sell?

Wilson: They were sort of like Killian's was.

LD: Did the streetcars run downtown?

Wilson: Yes, we had streetcars at that time. The only time I was ever on a streetcar was the time I made the trip back east. My wife took me down and I was going to get on the sleeper sitting there that would be picked up during the night. When I went to look for my ticket, I didn't have it. I had left it at home. So I checked on the

streetcar, they ran all night then, came out and got my ticket and went back downtown. That's the only time I was ever on a streetcar here.

LD: You made your train?

Wilson: The streetcar ran on Grande Avenue just a block away from me. The train didn't come in to pretty near midnight. See, I went down there early in the evening, at bedtime you might say.

LD: Did you go downtown for entertainment a lot?

Wilson: We would go to the movies occasionally. They used to have vaudeville at the Iowa Theatre. And we would attend movies, but not too much.

LD: What were the streets like in the winter?

Wilson: Sometimes good, sometimes bad.

LD: Was there good maintainence on the streets?

Wilson: The city had a snow plow, but they didn't have any in the country. There was no county or state snowplows, but the city did have some. They would keep the streets pretty clean. Although, they used to push the snow up to the sidewalk. You would have a mountain of snow and if you got into it, you were stuck!

One January they had a snowstorm, and it got pretty deep; around about a foot deep. The street commissioner figured he would let the sun thaw it rather than plow it. But the weather changed, we had some cold, wet snowstorms and it froze in the cold weather. It wore ruts down throught the snow. All the streets had ruts on them, and that's what we drove in. On 1st Avenue they had a rut going out west and one going east. We drove in there until they melted in the spring of the year. After it was all gone you could still see where the ruts were on the pavement until they repaved

the street.

LD: What was parking like downtown? Could you park anywhere in those days?

Wilson: We didn't have, of course, parkades in those days. I don't think there was any parking lot, we parked on the streets. But I went down one evening, my wife and the boy, and we all went shopping and I came back first. I was parked on First Avenue on about Third Street, where the Five Seasons is. When I came back, Gregg was in the car. He said, "Dad, you got a ticket." I said, "What for? What are they doing, advertising something?" "No", he said, "It's a police ticket". I looked and it was a parking ticket. It said I should come down the next morning to court. I went down there and the Judge looked at the ticket, it said parking too close to the fire hydrant. In those days it didn't have any marks on the curb or the sidewalk to show where you shouldn't park. You almost had to carry a tape measure with you. He turned the ticket over and started reading something on the back. I hadn't noticed the back of the ticket. He said, "How big of a car have you got?" I said, "A Ford". "Boy", he said, "it must be a wide Ford. You were too close to the fire hydrant and too close to the Grande Hotel entrance. And they were about 40 feet apart. Case dismissed!" That was the only time I was in traffic court.

LD: So it was kind of arbitrary how they made those decisions?

Wilson: No, there was no marks on the pavement in those days at all. You just had to guess where you could or couldn't park. Of course, cars were fewer, and you didn't have too much trouble finding a parking space in those days.

LD: I'd like to ask you about national events? What do you remember about World War I?

Wilson: I was in Minneapolis living then, and I just hired out to a grain commission house. My number had been one of the early ones called. I was called up for examination. I was upstairs in a fire house. When they looked at my feet, they said 100 percent on the feet. I had fallen arches. They looked at my eyes, and I wore glasses. They said 100 percent on eyesight. They held a watch up to my right ear, and I'm deaf in that ear; never had any hearing in that ear since I was four or five years old. 100 Percent on hearing. I said, "Heck, you're going to have me down to Camp Dodge before I know it." He said, "No, you're exempt." I said, "Why?" He said, "You're married and got one boy, and we're not taking any men who are married and got children out of that ward because we got too many enlistments."

I traveled all during the war. Out in the Dakata's many a town I'd run through there'd be buildings with yellow paint splashed on them, because they were German extract.

LD: And there was hostility?

Wilson: A lot of buildings would be painted yellow. My wife knitted sweaters during the war so I knitted sweaters, and I knitted quite a few of them. I still got the one I knited for myself!

LD: So patriotism was pretty strong? And feelings ran against people who were German? You weren't in Cedar Rapids then, so you wouldn't remember that in Cedar Rapids.

Wilson: No, I was traveling, then to the Dakota's, Minnesota, where my territory was at that time. Quite a bit of my territory in South

Dakota was Germans. They were really Russians, was what they were. But there were Germans that had gone to Russia at one time, and then came to the United States.

LD: What do you remember about Armistice Day?

Wilson: I was in Fargo, North Dakota, that night. When I got up in the morning, the clerk said, "What do you think about the noise last night?" I said, "What noise?" He said, "Armistice night." He said, "They were out here with fire trucks and everything, didn't you hear it?" I said, "I never heard a sound, I was laying on my good ear!" The next morning I finally got a train out of there. Every town I went into they started blowing the whistle. About a mile or two out of a town, the engineer would hold the whistle cord down until he got into the station. Of course, all the people would flock down to the station. In those days that's about the only way they could find out what anything was doing, getting the news over the telegraph wires.

LD: So you took the news with you?

Wilson: Well, everybody on the train did, yes. There wasn't much business done that day, though.

LD: What about the years that we call prohibition yesrs?

Wilson: The only thing about prohibition I remember is, I was driving in Tri-state, South Dakota, at the time. When they put in prohibition, I went down and filled my car up with all the whiskey I could get into it; which I carried out of the Dakotas. I didn't drink it myself, but there was an old elevator manager--I was working at the time for a grain commissioner--that never turned me down when I offered him a drink!

LD: So that kind of helped your sales, then?

Wilson: But it didn't bother me any because I wasn't interested in liquor. In fact, at the grain convention we had in Minneapolis one time, I stood at the West Hotel bar from about 8:00 in the morning until noon and after, 1:00 to 6:00 buying drink after drink. The bartender either served me water, ginger ale, or something like that. He'd say,"Wilson, you've had too much to drink." So he gave me a whiskey glass of water and charged me whiskey price for it!

LD: But you were able to walk out of there?

Wilson: I walked out of there all right.

LD: Do you think people drank more during prohibition years?

Wilson: I don't know, I don't think so. I think that today they're drinking more than they did then. Of course, here's one thing you've got to keep in consideration; in those days there was fewer people. When I came to Cedar Rapids, there was about 30,000. Today over 100,000 mark. And you get 30,000 people there is going to be more people drinking because there were less people, it was more noticable.

LD: What do you remember about the bank holiday in 1933?

Wilson: I was banking at the time at Merchant's National Bank. The Hamilton Seed Company, before I really worked for them, was owned by Hamilton that was the head of the bank. He died the day after I hired out. For about a week, I didn't know whether I had a job or not. And finally, Clings, who were running the company, made the deal to buy the company. The Hamilton family was going to break it up and get rid of it the best way they could.

At the time of the bank holiday, it was on a Monday, I had cashed my traveling check so I had plenty of money. I went over to the

office to see what they were going to do about it. The first thing they wanted to know was how much money I had. I told them what I had done; well, we want it, we haven't got any money in the cash drawer! So I had to give them most of my money.

When we traveled, of course, during the bank holiday, nobody could give us a check because there wasn't any money against checks. Up to the time of the bank holiday, the company only sold for cash. We didn't sell for credit in those days. So when they had the bank holiday they had to sell for credit.

LD: Because they couldn't get cash?

Wilson: Yes. The dealers would give us checks which we would hold hoping that it would be cashable at some time, which they were. I don't think any of them in my territory, when the banks started opening up, was closed. Some closed later, though.

LD: So you banked at Merchant's personally?

Wilson: Yes, I banked at Merchant's.

LD: You didn't loose any money, then?

Wilson: No, no big banks failed in Cedar Rapids.

LD: Did you have any friends that were badly hurt by the closings?

Wilson: Not here, no. I can't recall of any banks that failed here in Cedar Rapids, they all opened up. Most of the banks opened up, very few of them were closed after the holiday was up.

LD: You mentioned that you gave up staying in a hotel during that time because you were on commission? Up until that time you were paid a salary?

Wilson: After that time, of course, they went back on the salary again.

LD: But you never lost your job?

Wilson: No. I was with the Hamilton Company 34 years.

LD: What other effects did that period have on your family? Were there things that you had to stop doing?

Wilson: It didn't bother us too much. I'd been through several of those, I'd been through a depression before. I never felt any effects from the Depression at all.

LD: Do you remember how charity worked in this community at that time? How did the community help people in need during that period?

Wilson: I don't remember that there was much distress among the people in town that they had to do anything for. Everybody, as I recall, seemed to be able to get along all right. But they had to cut down on a lot of things.

LD: Were there particularly bad winters or summers during those years that you remember?

Wilson: Our winters were about the same as they are now. The trouble is today, you know, people think that winters are so severe. But you got heated cars, your homes are better heated, and everything like that. Your dressed better than they did, probably, in the early days. You think things are much worse now than they were. I don't think our winters were any worse, we had just as bad winters then as we have now. We had good winters, we had bad winters. I've seem some real cold winters, and I've seen some mild winters.

LD: I meant to ask you if you remember floods in the river during that time?

Wilson: Our floods here in Cedar Rapids, was caused by the water coming up from the sewers from the river. It wasn't the river going over the banks, it was coming up on the west side of the river, not on the

east side, on the west side of the river. It came up through the sewers. They would take a sand bag around the sewers to keep the water from overflowing onto the street. But it would overflow onto the street. In fact, when we lived there on Third Avenue, we had one of those floods. I never saw much of them because I would be out on the road, out in my territory.

But my wife, in one of those floods, was up in the doctor's office over a drug store on 3rd Avenue and 1st Street W. The doctor looked out the window and said, say, get out of here! He was quite a character. Later he was a farmer in the painting of the farm couple that Marvin Cone painted. He was my dentist. She went home, was able to get home, the water then was up to the steps of the building below her.

She worked quite a bit at that time inspecting homes where they were helping out to refurnish them.

LD: So she worked for the city?

Wilson: For a charitable orgainzation. It was all on the west side of the river.

LD: Do you remember what orgainzation? Was it a church, or a religious orgainzation that she worked for?

Wilson: I don't remember just who it was. Whether it was Red Cross or who it was. I don't remember what organization she was working for at that time.

LD: How about church? Did you belong to a chuch over the years?

Wilson: Well, when I was a youngster I joined a church. I didn't have any say about it; I was told to join. During my teenage years I pumped the organ in a church where my mother, who was an

organist in Wisconsin. And when I gave that job up, I went and sang in the choir twice. The first time they heard that I couldn't carry a tune in a basket! So, back to the church I went; I became an usher. I had to walk up and down the aisles and see who gave, and how much they gave.

And when we came to Cedar Rapids, we attended the Congregational Church which is down on the southeast corner of 2nd Avenue and 5th Street E. The only thing I remember about that church was they had a kitchen and a dining room down in the basement. Also some great big cat size rats! (Laughter)

LD: Rats?

Wilson: Yes. They later built a church out here on Washington and 17th. We attended there for quite a few years. My wife was a member there and my son was a member there.

My religion was a Quaker religion. All the Wilson's ahead of me have been Quakers. I attended quite a few Quaker meetings. The first one, I remember, my father took me with him one Sunday when he drove down to visit his mother that lived about 25 miles south of where we lived, there in Casswell, Pennsylvania.

We came to a little Quaker meeting house in the village. The people were just going in, so we drove around to the back where he put his horse; hitched to underneath a long horse shed that they had there with a lot of other horses.

When we went in the men sat on one side and the women sat on the other side of the curch. And the seats were like a bench. They had a board that was just high enough to be comfortable for your shoulder. Well I was only about five years old, only part of

my head hit the board. And there was no spoken word during the service atal, during the meeting. My head kept quarter-inching down till all of a sudden I flew backwards into the man's lap in back of me!

Another time when I was down visiting my Grandmother, I was down at the surry waiting for them to come down from the house to get in the surry. When she came up to me she looked at me and said, Oliver, you better go back and take off that tie. I had a great white and red necktie on and I would look very noticeable in a meeting house where everybody was dressed in either black or gray. The Quakers wore no colors.

LD: Why did you like the Quaker religion so much?

Wilson: Oh, a lot of their beliefs, I think, more than anything else.

LD: They were very peace loving?

Wilson: Yes, they were very much so. Of course, my Grandmother always read out of the Bible every morning at breakfast time.

LD: That was part of your family life, that you did that?

Wilson: I went back to that house in the 1950's. The house was just about the same as it was. The only thing that changed was the kitchen had been burnt, they had to rebuild the kitchen. When my Grandparents lived there, up over the kitchen was a room. One day my Grandmother took me up into the back bedroom and opened the closet door. She said, do you see that door there? And I couldn't see any door. And she showed it to me, it was a secret door that led out over the kitchen. The days when the slaves were running to the north, that used to be on the underground railroad. The slaves used to keep that room there.

LD: Was that room still there when you went back?

Wilson: I didn't go upstairs. When I stopped, the house is on the Sandy Creek, the farm is. My wife and I drove down there, and I told my wife, there's the house on the road. So I turned around and came back and parked. She wouldn't go in with me! I started to go in there and there were some youngsters out playing about where the old horse trough used to be. And I told them I used to visit there at one time around about back in the 90's. I was wondering if I could get in to see the house. So one of the youngsters went in and a young lady came to the front door. (It was a brick house) I told her and she said, "Sure, you can come in here." I went in there, and the house was the same. In the front entrance part there was a great big hallway that had a curvey stairway that went up to the upstairs room. In the living room she had some rugs on the floor, but you could see the boards. The boards were worn so much that you could see ridges in them, where the softer wood had worn out them.

She said she had just come home from the hospital, she was laying on a cot there. She wanted to know if I would like to see the downstairs of the house, and I said I would. She wanted to know if the kitchen was the same as it used to be. Well, it was the same size and everything, the only thing was the old kitchen had wooden beams across the ceiling where they used to hang their dried corn and dried vegetables. Grandma had a great big long kitchen table where they ate, with a bench along one side and chairs on the other. Of course the barns were all gone. It had been built up along that section of the country; Newport had been built up.

But the house was still there. I was told the house was written up, it was supposed to be an historical house.

LD: Any other memories that you would like to share with us about those times when you were growing up or here in Cedar Rapids?

Wilson: Say, listen. (He goes across the room to get something.) It would take too long. There's 500 pages of it!

LD: You've written a book?!

Wilson: Yes. (Laughter)

LD: Is this just a journal or memoirs?

Wilson: Memoirs.

LD: When did you start writing this?

Wilson: Oh, about 15 years ago. But here's the funny part about it, or it's just funny because I expect this of everybody my age; I know more about what happened in the first 40 years than I do in the last 50. That only goes up to about 40 years. It's all things that happened that most of them never got in the newspapers.

LD: What are you going to do with that book?

Wilson: Give it to my great grandchildren.

LD: Maybe you should think about making a copy of it for the library, too. That would be great!

Wilson: No. There's nothing that would refer, it's all before I got to Cedar Rapids.

LD: How many pages do you have did you say?

Wilson: Over 500. In the front there, it's all the family Wilson's. See, the first family of Wilson's that I have any record of were born around about 1710.

LD: Here in the United States?

Wilson: Yes. They came over with William Penn.

LD: That's where your Quaker background was?

Wilson: The first one I have record of in my mother's family was in 1606. The funny part of it is, my father died when he was in his 60's. His father died when he was 44. My father was only four years old when his father died. So I thought most of the Wilson's died early. So I didn't think I would ever last over 60 years! Then I got a hold of this and I found the first family had 13 children. And all of those children were born in the early 1700's; up to about 1740's. And they all lived to be about 70 or 80 years old. I thought, heck, if they can live that long I can live to 100!

LD: You had to go back further to find those people, right? So you must have done a lot of research in your family?

Wilson: I didn't do it, I had an aunt that did that. Whether she had before that time, the 1700's, I don't know. I always understood she only gave him what might refer to my father, more to my father.

LD: Do you have any other memories of Cedar Rapids that you would like to share with us today?

Wilson: Well I know Cedar Rapids has grown.

LD: What do you think is the big difference now? Is it just the size?

Wilson: When I came here, up to 19th and 1st Avenue it was all timber up to the east. I was told one time, they used to hold the circus up there. You take on 1st Avenue as you go down to 19th, there was a few houses but there was an awful lot of open spaces there. On Sunday we used to take and drive out here in the Bever Park section and pick violets where there wasn't a house to be seen.

LD: It was very woody?

Wilson: Today the houses run out there a mile or two beyond that. The trouble today is, I stopped driving about 10 years ago. The only time I ever see any of Cedar Rapids, I have to be with some friends that are going somewhere. So I get in a lot of sections today that I don't know where I'm at. I'm lost a lot. In fact the first time I came in on 380 I didn't know where I was! I had been down to the Amana's for dinner with some friends, and they took me over to see what 380 looked like. We came over by the Airport Road over to 380 and came into town that way. When we hit it to come in, I couldn't figure out where we went. The funny part, one day, of course the streetcars were a block and a half from the house either way; one day I went downtown and I got on the wrong streetcar. I thought I was getting on 1st Avenue and I got on the Kirkwood streetcar. I knew it as soon as I got on a couple of blocks, and it was too far to walk back. So I decided to see where it went to. I was lost all the way out there and back, I didn't know where I was at.

LD: Was it a streetcar or a bus?

Wilson: Bus, yes. Another time I used the Beaver Avenue going down because they run more frequently, about 20 minutes, and the Grand Avenue only runs about an hour and 10 minutes. So one day coming back instead of getting off up at 4th and 19th on the Beaver Avenue line, I decided to ride around and come back down to Bever Avenue and 19th. And all the way around there I was lost. I don't know how the bus driver knew where he was going.

LD: It has changed a great deal.

Wilson: The trouble is as you get older, I think as the city changes you

don't notice it so much. Especially the people that drive all the time, they probably don't know how the city grows. It seems to me every time I go on 1st Avenue there's something new on it.

LD: I thank you for the time that you have given us.

Wilson: You're not going to keep that recording, are you?

LD: You bet I am. I'm going to keep it and I'm going to make a copy of it for you, and transcribe a copy for the library.

Wilson: Oh my gosh! (Laughter)

LD: Thank you very much, Mr. Wilson.