JUNIOR LEAGUE OF CEDAR RAPIDS
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Mrs. Ena Ford

Conducted by Anne Hampton-Larson
June 5, 1985
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Transcribed by Sue Daugherty

Mrs. Ena Ford was born June 17, 1907 in Delmar Junction, Iowa and moved to Cedar Rapids when she was eleven years old. She became a social welfare worker during the Depression.

Mrs. Ford enlightens us with information regarding the landscape of Cedar Rapids during the early decades of the twentieth century through her discriptions of the roads, homes, and building locations. We also learn something of the day's general lifestyle.

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?
--What are your parents' names?
--Where did you go to school?
--Are you married or single?
--Did you raise a family? How big?
15,23--What has been your occupation (career) during your adult years?

II. COMMUNITY TOPICS

A. Technology in the Community
1. Transportation
--Railway travel (Union Station, trips to Iowa City on Crandic)
7--Trolleys (the Interurban)
--Horses and First Automobiles
2,6--Mud roads and the seedling mile
--Hunter Airport and the first planes
--Cedar River (ferries, floods, dams)

2. Communications
--Newspapers
--Radios
--Advertising
--Telephones

B. People in the Community
1. Amusements/Recreation
--Motion Pictures
5--Cedar Rapids Parks
--Dances
--Carnival Week
--Chautauqua
24--Community Theater (Majestic Theatre)
--Little Gallery
--Symphony Orchestra
--Circus
22--Greene's Opera House
--Amusement Parks (Alamo)
--Camps
4--Community Centers (YWCA, YMCA)

2. Famous Characters
22-24--Cherry Sisters
--Grant Wood
--Carl Van Vechten (<u>The Tattooed Countess</u>)
--Marvin Cone

3. Lifestyle - 9.13,14, 16
   --Life before air conditioning
   --Winter Activities
   --Holidays (Memorial Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, Christmas)
   --Clothing
   --Toys
   --Saloons/Taverns
   --Farm Life
1,2,3,4,6,7,8--Homes

4. Family Life
   --Household Help
   --Women's Roles
   --Childrens' Activities/Behavior
   --Sunday activities (Church life, Sunday Blue Laws)

5. Ethnic/Minority Life
   --Immigrants (Czech, Greek, German, etc.)
   --Indians
   --Segregation of Blacks
   --Jobs Available

C. Organizations and Institutions in the Community

1. Education
   1-2,4-6--Cedar Rapids Schools (sports)
   5--Coe College
   --Mount Mercy College
   --Cornell College

2. Government- 14
   --City Services
   --Streets/Roads
   --Relationship with Marion (Courthouse Dispute)

3. Medical
   --Hospitals
   --Patient-Doctor Relationship
   --Broken Bones
   --Polio, TB, Debilitating Diseases
   --House Calls
   --Home Delivery of Babies

4. Business and Economy
   --Local Factories (Douglas Starch Works, Quaker Oats, etc.)
   --Local Brewing Companies
   --Retail Businesses /Department Stores
   --Professions
   --Banking and Finance
   --Restaurants (Greek Restaurants in 30's)
7,8-14,15,20--Businesses that no longer exist (old groceries, drygoods, icehouses)
   --Farmers Market
   --Mills on Cedar River
   --Buildings Erected
   --Manual Labor/Types of Jobs
   --Companies (Labor Unions, Strikes, Pay)

5. Attitudes/Values
   --Children/Discipline
   --Sex/Petting
   --Charity
   --Divorce
   --Work
   --Working women, Voting Rights for Women
   --Patriotism (World War I)

D. Historic Events in and Outside the Community
1. Catastrophic Events
   --Clifton Hotel Fire (1903)
   --Douglas Starch Works Explosion(1919)
   --Bank Closings (1933)
   --Lyman-Stark Building Collapse(1913)
21-22--Public Library Murder(1921)
18-20--Rutledge/Hatman murder case
2. National Historic Events
   --Womens' Suffrage
   --World War I
   --Roaring 20's
   --Prohibition
14,16--Great Depression

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AHL: Mrs. Ford, tell me where you were born and what year.

Ford: I was born at Delmar Junction, Iowa, June 17, 1907.

AHL: And Delmar is close to what town?

Ford: It is near Maquoketa.

AHL: How old were you when you moved to Cedar Rapids?

Ford: Eleven years old.

AHL: Where did you live?

Ford: At 1641 A Avenue NE.

AHL: Is the home still standing?

Ford: Yes, it is.

AHL: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Ford. I have one brother, Charles.

AHL: Where did you go to elementary school?

Ford: Polk School.

AHL: Do you have any teachers that you remember from Polk that stand in your mind?

Ford: Oh, yes, there are quite a number. Ruby Byers was the principal, there was a Mrs. Lola St. John, there was a Margery Walters, a Carolyn Pangborne, a Miss Wilson--I forget Miss Wilson's first name.

AHL: What time did school start?

Ford: Nine o'clock in the morning.

AHL: What time were you able to go home?

Ford: Four o'clock in the afternoon.

AHL: How about lunches? Did they provide lunches?

Ford: Fortunately I lived a few blocks from Polk and went home every noon for lunch. There was no hot lunch provided at that time.

AHL: How about Junior High? Where did you attend?

Ford: Junior highs were not built yet, so it was necessary to group the children from Kenwood, Johnson, Garfield, and Polk at Polk to take their ninth grade. The system was just starting of junior high but the buildings were not ready.

AHL; Tell me about senior high. Where did you attend?

Ford: I attended the old Washington high school at Greene Square.

AHL: How long did it take you to walk to school?

Ford: Probably about thirty to forty minutes.

AHL: Did you enjoy the walk?

Ford: I loved the walk.

AHL: Tell me about it.

Ford: There were so many wonderful homes on the route that I alternated between First Avenue, Second Avenue, and Third Avenue, just gazing at some of the old mansions and imagining what they were like inside. It was all residential all the way even down after you turned on Fifth Street. There were so many buildings that certainly hadn't been erected at that time.

AHL: Did they have sidewalks?

Ford: Oh, yes. Good sidewalks. Everybody walked. A car was a luxury. Not everybody had a car.

AHL: Did you walk alone, usually?

Ford: No. I usually had a girl who lived near Mt. Mercy who would come by and stop at my house and we'd walk together.

AHL: Tell me what the houses looked like. The colors and the structure.

Ford: Along First Avenue there were some wonderful big places. At 11th Street, on the south side, was the home of the Crawford family. There was a Dr. Jennings Crawford and a brother who was also a physician, and a Miss Louise Crawford, who was a music professor at Coe College. They had this brick house with a carriage house in the back. Very, very old. Then down at 10th Street was the most intriguing old place. It was red brick, several stories high, had a great big veranda that you walked up to with about eight or ten steps, I guess. This veranda, of course, wrapped around the house, more or less, on two sides. Then under the veranda there apparently had been a conservatory but that was going to pot by about this time and it wasn't very long until they razed that building. But from there on down in that 1000 block on the A Avenue side, there was a string of old mansions there. They sat up from the street because the contour of the land there goes up toward A Avenue, so these sat up from the street. Some had the curved glass windows up in the turrets. Some were frame. One was brick, I believe. Even below Eighth Street, there were a solid row of houses. In the 600 block . . .

AHL: This is all on A Avenue?

Ford: No, this is all on First Avenue.

AHL: Oh, I see.

Ford: Going down toward the YMCA. In the 600 block was the home of the

the Metcalf's. I believe this Conger Metcalf is known for his paintings and is quoted quite often in city news about his accomplishments. The Metcalfs were gifted musically, too, and sang quite often at the church and in high school assemblies and things like that. Even after you got down to the YMCA corner and turned toward the high school, there were frame houses sitting along Fifth Street.

AHL: Now with the houses that were wood, were they all white or did they have different color paints?

Ford: They seemed to have mostly white or brown.

AHL: And did they have shutters?

Ford: Sometimes.

AHL: Now tell me what you remember about Washington high school.

Ford: I was the most fortunate person to be at Washington high school at the very time that the championship teams were playing games--teams that have been remembered all these many years. The 1923 football team just missed by one leg being the national champions.

AHL: Can you remember some of the names of the people who played football then?

Ford: Oh, yes. Among the most famous of the athletes were Elmer Marek, who was a half back and Harold Merle, who later played at the University of Minnesota and then after that transferred to the United States Military Academy. Then there was Bab Kuehl, who was a runner, he was a hurtles champion and cross-country runner, he played end on the team. There was an attorney, Don Hines, who, at one time--I think before I arrived at Washington high school--played on the team, his brother Edward later was quarterback.

These teams achieved not only a lot of fame and fortune but they really were good, considering the conditions under which they had to work. At that time, there was no stadium, there were no dressing rooms, there was no practice field, and the team had to practice anywhere that they could. So the result was that in the afternoon about three o'clock the football boys went to their lockers, got out their pads and their helmets, they ran to Coe College, they dressed there--courtesy of Coe College--in the Coe facilities, they then ran to Daniels Park, then they scrimmaged. So you can imagine what a hardy bunch of boys these were. And it was said that, even after scrimmage, they would go home and some of them lived more or less in the vicinity of Third Avenue and Park Court--where there's a little park--and they'd play under the street lights then after they got home.

AHL: Tell me the different sports that they had in high school. They offered in high school.

Ford: Well, their famous coach, who later became a track coach at the military academy, was Leo Novak. He insisted in getting every boy to play something or other. So he had a huge squad that was running track, the basketball team of the previous year had been national champions, the football team was just legendary. Then there were a few individuals that played tennis or played golf. But mainly, it was the three sports: track, basketball or football.

AHL: And what other teams did Washington high school play?

Ford: They played out-of-state teams mainly. The 1923 team played Waite high school at Toledo, Ohio, and they played a team at Hershey, Pennsylvania. There was something about their being suspended or

disbarred from the Iowa State Athletic Association at that particular time, so they had to seek games pretty much where they could.

AHL: Can you remember Washington's school colors?

Ford: Yes, they were orange and black and the name of the team was the "Tigers". At one time, Shenandoah, Iowa, had a team that they felt was quite a great team and they thought that they certainly should meet Washington high school because they had a great quarterback by the name of Willis Glasgow. So Cedar Rapids met them over on the Roosevelt field, which was the Bunny Ball Park field, that was the only place that was available. Well, as it happened, the score became 115 for the Cedar Rapids Tigers and 0 for Shenandoah. By the end of the fourth quarter all the little pipsqueaks on the fourth team were in and doing the best they could. However, this Willis Glasgow was a good player and later on he was captain of the Iowa team and played against the great Bronco Nagursky, who was a legendary figure from Minnesota.

AHL: You mentioned First Avenue earlier. Tell me about First Avenue and what it was like in the twenties.

Ford: Where do you want me to start? What locality of First Avenue?

AHL: Whatever you'd like. You can first talk about how it was paved, whatever you'd like.

Ford: All three of the avenues--First, Second, and Third--were paved with brick at that time. To retrogress to the great houses. A house that I used to fancy was at Eleventh Street and Second Avenue and it was the Dr. Ristine house. it was made of large rocks--_____ _____, we called them--and out in front were some of the hugest seashells that you ever saw, they must have been five or six feet

in diameter. Those stood against the porch of the house. In that same block, from Tenth to Eleventh Street on Second Avenue, was the old Armstrong home, the family home. Across the street from what is now Allen's--one of Allen's--parking lots were great old brick houses with huge chimneys that went up into the sky. One became a kind of a religious retreat--not exactly a retreat, I guess it was the church and the rector's home combined. Beautiful big old places there.

AHL: How wide was First Avenue compared to how it is now?

Ford: It was quite a little bit narrower. It's been widened, I think, at least once.

AHL: Would you say it is twice as wide now?

Ford: No. No. It was rather wide because it had the streetcar track going down the center of the street, of course. Cedar Rapids was served so well by transportation then. The streetcars came and went every 15 minutes and you could reach almost every part of town on a streetcar.

AHL: So where would First Avenue start and end?

Ford: It ended out about where Armar--or the grocery store plaza is there, what's the name of it? Barlow's? First Avenue--of course, it was just country out that far--but I think probably by Brucemore . . . no, no, that's not right . . .Kenwood, over here, 32nd Street.

AHL: And then what was beyond 32nd Street to our downtown today? That just wasn't paved, it wasn't a road?

Ford: Yes, it was all paved out as far as Kenwood. But there were gaps along First Avenue where there weren't houses. A few, beyond 21st Street, let's say, beyond Brucemore. There were gaps along.

AHL: What were the gaps like, tell me about those.

Ford: Well, they were just places where no house had been built yet.

AHL: So then the road wasn't paved. Is that right, if there weren't houses, then there wasn't a street.

Ford: Oh, yes, there was a street. The street went--First Avenue went from downtown Cedar Rapids right to Marion.

AHL: That's what I was wondering. So it didn't stop at Kenwood. What stopped at Kenwood, when we were talking earlier?

Ford: I don't know how to describe it. The activity, the density of the homes.

AHL: Oh, the homes, I see. I misunderstood, I though First Avenue went from Kenwood from Armar, but you were talking about just homes and past that.

Ford: Well, I do know that as you passed the cemetery down here, that--of course, there was no cemetery--there was a little pond out to the north side of First Avenue with a big rock in the center of it and sitting back near this pond was a big old red painted antique house in some woods or some trees. Later that was torn down and Mr. Linge created the cemetery.

AHL: Did they have any grocery stores in between all those places on First Avenue when you'd take the trolley car? Or was that mainly residential--First Avenue?

Ford: It was all residential from 16th Street.

AHL: Tell me about some of the grocery stores that existed during that time.

Ford: There were a number of small groceries and they were very interesting groceries. In the 1600 block of First Avenue, and I would know

that the best because our home was in that vicinity, there was one old grocery that was a few doors up from 15th Street called the Clark grocery and even by the standards of the day, it was an old-fashioned grocery. When you walked in it was deep and it was dark and it had the counters that had facings on them where little windows showed dried beans and crackers and flour and staples of macaroni, staples of that kind. But the thing that attracted me in the Clark grocery was that on top of the counters they had large tin trays--big, black baking trays--and they had the most marvelous cinnamon rolls on them. These cinnamon rolls were large and they were covered with boiled frosting which was especially delicious kind of frosting and the cost was 18 cents a dozen.

AHL: Oh, my word. Oh, they sound delicious.

Ford: I thought I would try some of those and they were large rolls, just immense rolls. So after trying an order or two, I would go back and it seemed to me that the rolls were getting larger all the time. They just seemed to be increasing in size until the clerk hardly knew how to separate the cinnamon rolls. (Laughter) So a little time passed and I went in one day. No cinnamon rolls. No trays on the counter. No loaves of bread. And I said to the clerk, "Why, don't you have any cinnamon rolls?" "Nope, no we don't." "Well," I said, "no bread?" "No." "Aren't you going to have any?" "No!" It seemed like the bakery had been in the basement. He kind of glanced in the direction of the basement and I did too. I said, "Well, why not? Why aren't you having them?" "Well," he said, "the baker lost his mind." I guess he got to making the rolls too big. But then, all over town, there were these marvelous, marvelous

bakeries. There was one at Seventh Street and Eleventh Avenue SE that baked the original Bohemian rye bread, the round loaf or the long loaf and it was filled with caraway seed and it was flavored with malt, 15 cents a loaf. They also had butterfly rolls and what we called roleckes, the horn-shaped rolls with the poppy seeds. Just delicious.

AHL: Would they slice the bread for you?

Ford: We didn't ask them to. There was no such thing as sliced bread.

AHL: How about the hours of the stores, was that pretty standard?

Ford: Yes, they didn't keep all hours. They opened about eight o'clock in the morning, I guess, and ran until about six or six-thirty at night and that was the day.

AHL: Would they deliver for you? Was there a delivery service available?

Ford: Quite a lot of them delivered. They had delivery boys that either drove a horse and wagon or something. Most of them did deliver. I think we were very lucky to have so many good stores around. The Shramek's Bakery where they had the wonderful rye bread was by no means the only one. They were scattered all over the city and later on, a few remained on First Avenue. The Holland Bakery--at Fifteenth and First, and the Naxera Bakery--near Park Court and First. But they were among the last of those bakeries.

AHL: Did each bakery store, did they specialize in a certain type of food, a certain type of baked goods?

Ford: Kolaches. You know and I know that kolaches are Cedar Rapids. And I'm not Czech, either. Then there were these wonderful fruit stores that the Italians had all around. They would come in and establish a little store with their living quarters in the back.

They'd polish the apples and have the big bananas and have peaches in season and carry a few other little items. There were the Gattos, and the Scolaros, and the Biondos, the Lazios. But among all of them, I think the one most memorable were the Catanzaros.

AHL: Where were they located?

Ford: The Catanzaros were in the 1500 block of First Avenue. They had quite a nice store there. Mrs. Rose Catanzaro was so typically Italian that she could have modeled on a tomato sauce jar or something like that. She had the gold earrings, the hair piled on top her head, the shawl over her shoulders.

AHL: How would you spell their last name?

Ford: C-A-T-A-N-Z-A-R-O. There were three sons, she was, apparently, a widow. These three sons served the public and did other things. Tony, Marty, and Joe. Of the three, Tony became something of a Cedar Rapids household word because he was a little peculiar and he used to ride a bicycle all over Cedar Rapids gleaning up odd lots of goods. He'd buy up odd lots of paint or some stuff that a store had left over. Then he'd open little outlets in store buildings and sell out these things. I myself bought a dozen nice stem glasses for him at one time. And he was generous and kindly but there was a lot of talk about Tony and his tendencies. People would laugh say he made his money riding his bicycle. (Laughter)

AHL: Did you have a favorite grocery store?

Ford: Now?

AHL: Then. That you would look forward to going shopping at?

Ford: We shopped at a place called Eaton's Grocery. It was the second store above 15th Street on the south side of First Avenue. It was

a sort of family store. You could still charge and run a monthly bill there and we seemed to buy a good deal of goods there.

AHL: Was there a grocery store that the middle upper class tended to shop at?

Ford: Yes, there was one right down town behind what the Witwer Center is now. Let's see, what would be there now. . . there was a beauty parlor there at one time and there was the Western Union Telegraph office at one time. . .it was between Third and Fourth Streets on Second Avenue. It was called the F. W. DeMuer Company and I believe they specialized in fancy groceries. And handled chinaware as well.

AHL: Did most grocery stores handle chinaware?

Ford: I don't think so.

AHL: Just food in general.

Ford: I think so.

AHL: In the twenties, or the thirties, was it mainly specialty grocery stores? For instance, you mentioned the fruit store and then you mentioned the bakery store. Did you have to buy meat at a different place and fruit at a different place or was it all combined?

Ford: In general, you had to go to a meat market and there were meat markets. First Street was quite a busy, bustling street downtown of stores. It wasn't the hit-and-miss place it is now with the Post Office taking up the block--the old Post Office. It had drug stores and it had a bakery down there and it had a meat market--the Buehler Brothers Market--with several butchers hustling all the time. Of course, they hung the quarters of beef on hooks along the side and they had the sauerkraut barrel and they had the pickle barrel and they had the picked pig's feet in the showcase and the

butcher's block. They cut off what you wanted, it wasn't all packaged up at all.

AHL: How often would you go to the grocery store?

Ford: About every other day, I think.

AHL: Did you have refrigerators in your home at that time?

Ford: Ice refrigerators.

AHL: Did the meat stay? Was it preserved for a long time?

Ford: No. We didn't buy much meat at a time. You had to put a card in the window with either "50" at the top or "100" at the top or "150". So the iceman from Hubbard Ice Company coming along could see your card and know that you wanted ice that day. He'd get out and take his tongs and get a chunk and put it over his poor shoulder and hustle to your back door and hurry in and put it in your icebox.

AHL: Now the numbers, what did they signify?

Ford: How much you wanted that day.

AHL: Pounds?

Ford: Yes.

AHL: How long would 150 pounds of ice last?

Ford: Possibly four days. We usually got 50 because we had a small refrigerator and we'd have to get it about every third day.

AHL: How much would 50 pounds of ice cost?

Ford: I have no idea. Can't remember. [Outside comment: "Twenty-five cents"] Possibly. Twenty-five or thirty-five cents, I imagine.

AHL: Was he a privately employed person--the ice man--or did he work for a company?

Ford: He worked for the Hubbard Ice Company. [Outside comment: "There was a couple of them, there was another ice company, I don't quite

recall the name".] It might have been a rival company. It was great in those days to have people come to your home with things. There was the grocery delivery boy, there was the ice man, there were people making the rounds selling extracts and coffee and tea and little household gadgets and things of that sort. I even, during the Depression, had a fellow from Allen Motor Company come to the door and try to sell me a 1936 Oldsmobile and I'd only have to pay 24 dollars a month. The total cost was to be 625 dollars. And I said I couldn't afford it.

AHL: How would you get your money back then, was your father employed at the time?

Ford: Our father was going to start a teacher's policeman agency but somehow he didn't get it started and so he took work in factories for a while. Then he worked for the Illinois Central Railroad as a police detective. They called him a special agent, but his job was to check the cars and chase the bums off. And finally, when when the Depression got just too terribly bad, he was the only man employed in that position west of Chicago, I guess. Eventually they had to lay him off of that. So then he had learned painting as a boy and he contracted painting from that time on. After quite a while, he worked at the Armstrong Clothing Company then until he retired.

AHL: As a child, during the Depression, how would you try to get extra money?

Ford: I would babysit. It was the only money that I got and the rate was ten cents an hour. I'd walk for about a mile and a half out to the location, and babysit for five or six hours and go home with sixty

cents and walk the way home, too, to save the car fare.

AHL: Talking about grocery stores and the downtown area, thinking about the influential people during that time. Can you think of some names of people who were good community leaders?

Ford: The Armstrongs and the Smulekoffs have always been quite influential leaders. The Enzlers had a luggage store and they have always been active in downtown affairs. They still have a store to this day, as you know. Mr. Killian, I guess, was at least a participant. Then there were the Liebsohns, very nice people. Downtown, you know, was far more bustling and far more life. Liebsohn had a little department store on First Avenue where the Roosevelt Parkade is now.

AHL: How do you spell this last name?

Ford: Liebsohn? L-I-E-B-S-O-H-N. And then, the son had a furniture store here for quite a long time. Community leaders, well let's see, here. Sutherland Dows, I guess, and the same names that you hear a lot you know, nowadays, their forebears.

AHL: Tell me what it was like to work during the Depression as a social welfare worker. Where were you employed?

Ford: I was employed in the basement of the court house. I needed a job because I had been traveling on the road for Proctor and Gamble and that job had finished so I heard that if you went down to the court house and volunteered that they'd let you work and if they liked you they'd take you on as a worker. I knew nothing about social welfare. At that time, the basement of the court house had a large--what you might call--assembly room in the southwest corner and the director's office then in the exact corner and coming back

down the hall there were some ante rooms and cloak halls and adjacent workplaces that belonged to the social welfare department. At that time, it was under the jurisdiction of the state. I tried earlier today to think of the exact name of that commission, whether it was Iowa State Welfare Commission or what. But, be that as it may, the county itself--strictly the county--with their roll of poor who had been on the rolls before the Depression emergency arrived had their own office at the far end of the court house, that would be the east end of the court house. The basement open place was just milling with people, unwashed people, smelly people, because it was customary to use kerosene in their little apartments where they were holed up. Corn meal was cheap and pancakes were cheap and they'd been cooking those and there was the smell of kerosene on their clothing. They didn't have, I suppose, as good facilities as they should have had. So you were just struck by kind of a milling mob of unwashed humanity and they all wanted and needed something.

AHL: And then would go to your office for help?

Ford: They were at our office for help.

AHL: What kind of help would you give them?

Ford: Let me preface that by saying that I was sat down in this big room with a pile of case histories, which were some files fastened with staples, a yellow face sheet on the top.

AHL: Quite thick, were they?

Ford: Quite thick, some of them. It was customary to list the head of the family, the wife, the children and then you had all pertinent information on this face sheet about who the parents of the head

of the family were and the wife in the family. And the previous addresses where the people had lived so you had a little background on them before you started. You looked in the entries and you found that the head of the family was referred to as number one and the wife number two and the first child was number three and the next one was number four and the rest of the family went on down. Maybe grandma and grandpa were number twelve or thirteen. As you opened the case history and you read it it went something like, "Number one came in requesting rent and fuel. Number one has been working at the Acme Coal Company and he was laid off last Saturday. His usual wage was $16 per week. Family has enough groceries to last three days, but is hurting for fuel or whatever it was they asked for. Your duty was to go out to the home and see just what was going on out there, whether they had what they asked for or didn't have it or what their resources were and what could be done for them.

AHL: Do you remember anything unusual that happened as far as a court case when you worked for the court house?

Ford: I certainly do. I remember the Rutledge murder trial in the summer of 1949. The murder had taken place the first or second week of December in 1948. Dr. Rutledge was a pediatrician from St. Louis.

AHL: Would you spell his last name, please?

Ford: R-U-T-L-E-D-G-E. I walked up to the sheriff's office one day on business and I noticed there was activity up there and someone then remarked that a man had been murdered in the Roosevelt Hotel the previous night. The murdered man's name was Hatman He was a

representative of the Emerson Radio Company and he had come to Cedar Rapids on business with Collins Radio. He was in the habit of making certain business visits up here in that capacity. It developed that Rutledge had stalked Hatman and had knifed him in a room at the Roosevelt Hotel. The background was that Rutledge's wife Sidney--who was a tall, willowy woman--was supposed to have had an affair with Hatman on a moonlight ride that the Emerson Radio people had had on the Mississippi River. Rutledge had apparently come to Cedar Rapids one previous time to try to locate Hatman here and it developed that his purpose was to try to blackmail Hatman and get money from him--which does seem odd in retrospect, considering that Rutledge had a position as a doctor although he was only an intern, I believe. The way that Rutledge was traced, he'd had some trouble with his car, and he'd gone to a motor company here in Cedar Rapids to have repairs made but he didn't have enough money and had to ask for credit. After this affair was publicized, a clerk at the auto company recalled that this man who had charged auto repairs at the auto company had said he was from St. Louis. So putting two and two together, the county attorney and and the local law enforcement people traced down Dr. Rutledge and made a trip down to St. Louis to apprehend him. When he knew he was going to be taken in by law authorities, he attempted to commit suicide by drinking alkenite. However, he was revived and brought back to the county jail. He was a quite an attraction over at the county jail because he was a handsome man, tall and well-built, good features. Crowds would gather out in the back park of the court house--there was a park there at that time, with trees,

a sort of circle, with grass--quite a number of spectators would gather there to see the sheriffs bring him back and forth. Finally the day of the trial arrived and it was a blistering hot day. But the big attraction that day was the wife, Sidney, who arrived at the west entrance of the court house basement and came down the steps into the basement looking as if she was going to attend a country picnic. It was a little risque then to wear barefoot sandals and she was wearing a white, filmy dress of some sort and these barefoot sandals. It would seem to the mere spectator that she was enjoying the whole proceeding.

END OF SIDE ONE

AHL:

Ford: I did. I also sneaked up and heard some of the testimony when Rutledge was on the stand and, I believe, when she was on the stand. One pathetic note was the elderly Mr. and Mrs. Hatman sitting down at the coffee bar during the breaks.

AHL: The parents of the . . .

Ford: The parents of the murdered man.

Rutledge was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment and was taken down to Fort Madison. But a bond company set up bond for him after he'd played the saxaphone in the prison band down there, I guess, for a while. (Laughter) But when he was out on bail, I believe his people lived in Texas, he spent his time down with his people in Texas and when his appeal was denied and he was going to be remanded back to the penitentiary, he attached a hose to his automobile and killed himself with carbon monoxide. First telling

his wife, that seemed to have caused so much stress for him, that he believed she should change her name and try to melt into the background.

AHL: Do you know if they had children?

Ford: No, they had no children.

AHL: Can you think of any other cases? You mentioned a defrauding case earlier.

Ford: Sometime in the twenties, there was a cigar store on Second Avenue and Third Street about, I think, across from the Merchants Bank. And I believe it was called the Niagara Cigar Store, though I wouldn't be positive about that. It was operated by some people named Hawkins. Elmer Hawkins was the name, I believe, of the proprietor. Word got around that if you invested money with Hawkins, that you could triple your money. The deal was, that somehow he could buy seconds of cigars and wholesale those out some way. So quite a number of people invested money with this man and by-and-by, it appeared that all he was doing was paying high interest out of what the people had paid in. It was just a sort of kiting deal where you got the money in at high interest and out of the capital that you had taken in, you paid these people the interest and then you kept the rest. (Laughter) So they finally sent him to Anamosa. I'm surprised that this isn't recalled. It's never been brought up in the paper or reviewed and it was quite a scandalous affair at the time.

AHL: Do you remember the library murder?

Ford: Oh, yes, I do.

AHL: Can you tell me about that?

Ford: There was a man who lived on the southeast side, down Seventh Street someplace, who was reputed to be an eccentric genius with electricity. They said that he had his house wired up in various ways and was wary of burglars and all those things. So one day this man was going to get on a street car somewhere near the old John Huss Presbyterian church. Some boys that were playing ball knocked his hat off and this seemed to infuriate the man so he pulled a revolver out of his pocket and got on the streetcar and threatened the motorman. The children were wise enough to go and call the police so when the street car arrived at Third Avenue and Third Street, up by the Guaranty Bank, the man alighted from the street car and a couple of policemen tried to take him in custody. Instead of his being taken in custody, he broke away and, I'm not sure he fired at that moment--I think he did--he ran to the alley between the Guaranty Bank block and what's now Witwer Senior Citizen Center. He ran up that alley, he ran in the back door of the Third Avenue Virginia Cafe at the tracks, came out the front, and ran up to the library. He entered the library, ran across the vesibule and the reading area and went to the stairs and started up the stairs. The policeman behind him again was going to charge him and he turned around and killed one policeman, wounded another. And for years and years, the blood of that man was on the marble there on those steps until they--only quite recently here--scoured that off. They did manage to overpower him when his pistol fired empty.

AHL: Did they have gun laws then? Did you have to own a permit in order to own a gun?

Ford: I don't think so. [Outside comment: "It was much looser than they are now".]

I believe that he fired at and struck a man right down there on Third Street. I thought he did. Before he took off running up the alley and through the cafe, and on up to the library and through the library to those back steps. And he certainly killed one and wounded one at the library. Oh, he was a mad genius.

AHL: Was he ever apprehended?

Ford: Oh, yes, he was sent up for life to Anamosa. His name was Broekschmidt. B-R-O-E-K-S-C-H-M-I-D-T, I believe.

AHL: How old was he?

Ford: Probably a middle aged man of, like 40, or something like that.

AHL: You mentioned, earlier when we spoke, the Cherry sisters. What do remember about the Cherry sisters?

Ford: My mother used to talk about the Cherry sisters. You see, Greene's Opera House was the big gathering place at that time.

AHL: And where was that located?

Ford: It was across from the side door of the Roosevelt Hotel. Or right behind where the Brenton Bank is now. And it was considered one of the finest opera halls around anyplace. There were famous people who performed at Greene's Opera House. Then, after Greene's Opera House closed--and it was about the year before I graduated from high school--the Majestic Theatre was the big place. These Cherry sisters were farm girls from outside Marion and they had an idea they could act and they were just ridiculous. So ridiculous that people just roared with laughter. They managed to get to Broadway through some manager and did earn some pretty good money

there. Which, I understood, was later just kind of dissipated and wiled away, that they didn't profit very much by it. But they showed at the Majestic once, I think, that I got to see them. Then interestingly enough, when I was a welfare worker, I went up on the hill of A Avenue above the Quaker Oats, which was covered with old rooming houses and old dwellings there. A lady was keeping some patients in a small nursing home and one of the Cherry sisters was a patient there and was my client. She was just a hazy, sort of old lady, who just sort of looked at me, didn't apparently apprehend quite what was going on. She was medium-tall, thin old lady with a papery pale face and pale blue eyes. Gentle and just not knowing too much. But the lady who was keeping her said to me, "How would you like to have a stage costume of Miss Cherry's?" and I said, "Why, I'd be delighted." So she went and got a couple of old dresses that were very obviously home-made and had been wadded up were of cheap and sleazy material with some dime store buckles sewed on the front. Just most amateurish. I kept those for quite a long time until I had no more space in my old house and had to dispense with the costumes.

AHL: What were their names?

Ford: Eddie and Effie and . . . I know Eddie and Effie . . . Effie, I think, was the one that I called on. There were three of them. I don't recall what the third one's name was.

AHL: What did they look like?

Ford: They looked like farm girls.

AHL: Were they tall? Short? Dark-hair? Light hair?

Ford: The one that I called on seemed to be quite willowy and medium-tall

and she had dark hair that hadn't grayed very much. But my mother saw them perform at street carnivals and things and she said that they would kind of dance up and down and they'd sing, "Ta-Ra-Ra-Boom-De-Ay". That was a piece of the times, you know.

AHL: So people around here didn't find them very professional.

Ford: No, they pitied them and they laughed at them and all of that, you know.

The Majestic Theatre--if that wasn't quite a place--I'd go there from college and you could see a vaudeville show for five acts and then you could see a double movie. For about 25 - 35 cents.

AHL: Where was the Majestic?

Ford: It was just off A Avenue on Third Street. It was up from where you turn the corner at the Seasons and go toward the viaduct. I think that there is a professional office building there--called Professional Park, or something of that kind now. But this was a nice theatre and Lawrence Welk used to come there--I used to think, "Oh, he'll never amount to anything". (Laughter) Because I didn't think his music was all that good, you know. (Laughter)

AHL: Well, I want to thank you so much for this interview. It's just been a real pleasure.

This is with Mrs. Ena Ford. Interviewed by Anne Hampton-Larson on June 5, 1985.

END OF TAPE