

Oral History of John McGuire

October 5, 1989

Thursday, October 5, 1989. I am Francis Durham, a member of the Northville Oral History Project. I am in the office of Mr. John McGuire. Mr. McGuire is the owner of the Guernsey Dairy, which is certainly a well known dairy in this area.

Q: Mr. McGuire, I notice that you were born in Howell, Michigan in 1908 and that you have lived here in Northville for fifty years. Where did you come from when you moved into the Northville area?

A: We were married in 1938. My wife was Elise Wacker. We started out in Detroit and we lived on Wildimere; then we moved from there to St. Clair Shores and lived there for a little while. Then we moved over into Roseville. Then I had a chance to work in the dairy in Northville.

Q: Do you remember approximately when that might have been?

A: That was May 5th, 1940 was the time that I came to Northville. I started working for John A. Applehoff and John Livingston. They were partners, and they had purchased the Red Rose Dairy from Mr. Anger, and they needed somebody to manage the dairy for them, and so they hired me, and that was the date that I started, May 5th, 1940. I ran it for Mr. Applehoff and Mr. Livingston for five years. In 1945 Fred Russell and myself purchased the dairy from Mr. Applehoff and Mr. Livingston. Fred and I operated as partners until 1952. In 1952 I bought Fred's interest. Since 1952, we've been operating as individuals. It's been my dairy since 1952.

Q: And several members of your family are also working for you and working with you?

A: Yes. We had fourteen children and each and every one of them spent their high school days working in the dairy. When they were going to school, they worked after school, weekends, and they worked all the way through high school. At first we had a popcorn machine and the popcorn machine used to sit outside in front of the old dairy on 125 S. Center Street, and they used to operate as an individual business until they could make a success of that, they were not allowed to come in to the dairy to go to work. So they had to take care of the money, keep the popcorn machine clean and they had to buy their bags and buy their oil, and they had to pay for all this and run it like a business before they could start working for me. So, every one of them passed through that stage. Of course, they wanted to get in and work in the dairy. They couldn't do it until they were successful in business for themselves. Each one of them went through the process.

Q: Let me back up just a minute because what I want to ask you is where you got your experience with a dairy. Now, you were born in Howell and then you eventually moved to Detroit, Detroit to Roseville, and eventually ended up out here, but somewhere prior to that you must have had some experience. We need to talk about that. How did you happen to know something about running a dairy?

A: Well, I graduated from high school in 1927. So then the rest of that year and through '28 I worked different places, getting a job here and there. And then along about 1929, I was going to go in partnership with my father. He had a farm in Fowlerville, south of Fowlerville, four miles west of Fowlerville. And I was going into business with him. Well, then in 1929 I think it was about November, the banks closed, and he had taken all of his money and put it in the banks to make the payment on the farm and pay the taxes. Well when the banks closed, he didn't have any left so he had to sell the cows, he sold the pigs and he sold the grain and the wheat. He had to raise the money again to pay the taxes. So he said to me, "You better go out and get a job we can't both make it here, and I will try to keep the farm. You go work somewhere else." So I went to the neighbors and the neighbors gave me a job for seventy-five cents a day and I cut wood from the crack of dawn as long as we could see at night. I cut for seventy-five cents a day. I saved some money, and I got enough that winter to pay my tuition at Michigan State College. So then I went up there and I went to Michigan State College, Agricultural College I should say and I studied dairy. So after I got through the dairy course, they gave me a place at Borden's. I went to work for the Borden Company in Detroit. That's what took me to Detroit. After that I went to McDonald's in Flint because they wanted me. And after I got a little experience, a few people found out I could do a few things so they hired me away from Borden's and took me to Flint. And then after I worked about three years in Flint, and then Harold Coon was the superintendent, and he came to Detroit and started his own business and he came to me and said I want you to go to Detroit with me. So he gave me more money than McDonald's did so I came to Detroit. That's where I met my wife and that was up to 1938 (3) we got married, and I went to Roseville. I left Slimmy Dairy and went out and worked in Roseville Dairy, lived in St. Clair Shores and then we finally moved over to Roseville, close to the Dairy, then all of a sudden there was a job that popped up in Northville, and those people wanted somebody with my experience so they hired me and that's what brought me to Northville.

Q: Was your experience primarily management type or you trained as kind of a manager?

A: Yes.

Q: But I'm assuming that you'd been through all aspects of the dairy business?

A: There was nothing I didn't go in the dairy.

Q: As a matter of fact why don't you related what you told me before we put the tape on about milking the cows in the morning, going to school, coming back and milking them in the late afternoon, tell us about that.

A: Well we'll have to back up a little. When I was going to school, I graduated from Howell High School, and my father had twenty-five cows. Our barn held twenty-five cows. And so I got up every morning and milked twenty-five cows. He helped me. We'd take care of twenty-five cows. Then I would drive twelve miles to school, twelve miles to Howell High School, and then when I'd come home at night and milk twelve cows again, and then I'd do my homework after that. So the homework was somewhat neglected at times.

Q: What time were you having to get up in the morning?

A: Oh, about five o'clock in the morning to get those cows milked and be dressed and ready to go to school by eight o'clock. Have your breakfast and be over in Howell which was twelve mile down a rough road.

Q: How did you get to school?

A: We drove, now a neighbor kid was doing the same thing. His name was Tommy Cain and Irene Cain. They were a brother and sister, and I had a sister her name was Sara May so the four of us rode in this car. And so the girls would get breakfast for us so that we could have breakfast as soon as we got in the house from doing the chores, and we'd swallow a quick breakfast and jump in the car. I think it took us about thirty minutes or so to get to Howell.

Q: The Cains had a farm also?

A: They had a farm also. He was used to doing the same thing. He was helping milk the cows and get to school. That's the way we got through high school.

Q: Okay, so like you say you've done just about everything there is.

A: I've done everything. And then when I moved into McDonald's Dairy, this Harold Koon that later hired me, he schooled me at McDonald's. I did everything in the dairy. I made powdered milk, I've run the condensing fans, I made butter, I run the mix gang for one summer for him, and I ran the milk department. I did everything in the dairy.

Q: Okay, but you never actually had a route of your own where you were delivering milk?

A: Not at that time. Later on I had five routes when I started with the Guernsey Farm Dairy with Applehoff and Livingston. I had five retail routes. And then I had two wholesale routes. We built that up back in the 50's. We were strong in the retail business. We had two routes in Farmington, one in Novi and one in Plymouth, and one in Northville, that's five routes.

Q: Okay, now I assume those were horse drawn?

A: No, they were a milk truck. When I was with Borden's back in the 30's Borden's had fifty horses at one time. They had fifty horses for their routes. The milk used to come into Borden's on a hard rubber-tired truck, and it was an old Mack truck and it would come in with chain drive wheels. There were chains on the back wheels of that truck. 60 years ago they were coming with hard tires on the truck.

Q: Now when you went to work here in Northville for the dairy was it called Guernsey Dairy at that time?

A: Prior to that, it was Red Rose Dairy, and they purchased the Red Rose Dairy from Mr. Anger. Frank Anger and he had a farm at Six Mile and Beck Road. That's where the House of Providence is right now. And then when they bought the dairy from Anger, they called it Guernsey Farm Dairy. Each of them were fellows from Detroit that were really well off in those days. They had a little money so they went out and bought farms. Mr. Applehoff was at Ten Mile and Napier Road. Mr. Livingston was down toward Saline. And they became kind of

Oral History of John McGuire

rivals. They wanted to see who could have the best cows. And so they would go off to Wisconsin most of the time, and they would buy good cows. And then they would bring them back here. Mr. Applehoff turned out to be the victor. He had thirty-five cans, ten gallon cans of 5-2 milk. That was in about 1945. And that was the biggest heard and the most milk, the most 5-2 milk of any farm in Michigan at that time.

Q: What do you mean by 5-2 milk?

A: That was a 5-2 butter fat. 5 and 2/10th percentage of butter fat. So it was good milk, from good cows and that's what we were using. In those days we tried to see how much cream we could get on the milk. The more the cream line, the better it was. People liked cream in those days. Today they don't like it.

Q: I remember the name Red Rose Dairy. Does that still exist?

A: No. When Mr. Applehoff and Mr. Livingston purchased the Red Rose Dairy that was the end of Red Rose. Mr. Anger was a printer in Detroit. He had a printing business. I don't know what kind of a thing it was, but he had periodicals that he would print. He was a printer and the dairy was a sideline for him.

Q: Kind of an investment?

A: An investment. People used to do that in those days.

Q: You purchased the Guernsey Dairy. You had a partner, eventually you bought him out and became the sole owner. What about competing dairies out here at the time? For example, didn't Twin Pines Dairy start out in this area somewhere?

A: Twin Pines started in the 30's sometime. I don't know exactly, but they had a dairy processing plant at Beck Road and Eight Mile Road. Where Zayti is right now. And their business was in Detroit. Everybody in the dairy business was in home delivery in those days. It seemed to be the way to go.

Q: Did they have their farm out here where they raised the cattle?

A: Actually, I think they did raise some cattle. That's where they started, but that soon faded away, and they bought milk from the Michigan Milk Producers Association which was strong in the area. Michigan Milk Producers is a co-op that markets milk for all farmers all through the state.

Q: So then while they were located here, their business actually was in Detroit. Where you were located out here, but your business was local.

A: Right. We were considered a small dairy. Five routes was a small dairy. I think Twin Pines was up to eight hundred routes at one time, at their top point. They covered the whole metropolitan Detroit area.

Q: Were there other local dairies out here while you were operating Guernsey?

Oral History of John McGuire

A: Don Miller was a distributor for Twin Pines in the Northville area. Now, he started out as a small individual dairy; then finally he sold his business out, sold his equipment and bought milk from Twin Pines and became a distributor for Twin Pines in the Northville area. Then Lloyd Morris was an individual processor, and he had his little equipment, and he was at about Grace and Center Streets is where his dairy was. He was a competitor. Then there was one on Six Mile and Newburgh that was Red Bell Dairy. And over in Plymouth we had several dairies over there. Cheslin Farms was at Six Mile and no, I think it was Five Mile and Napier.

Q: Okay so this was quite a dairy area.

A: Oh yes. Every little town would have several dairies in those days. There were six hundred dairies in 1951 in Michigan.

Q: Do you have any idea how many dairies there are now?

A: Nineteen dairies left in Michigan out of six hundred.

Q: That's quite a change.

A: Yes, quite a change.

Q: Now is your business still primarily local or have you expanded. We're going to talk a little later on about how you happen to get into the ice cream business and eventually in the restaurant business.

A: We serve probably about a thirty mile radius. We go to Ann Arbor, and we go down around the airport, and then we go as far over as Lake St. Clair, then we go north to about Rochester, and we go up as far as Grand Blanc. We have a little business up around Grand Blanc. We have a little business up around Grand Blanc. And then around South Lyons and Howell. We have six routes over the area. Each driver has two routes. So they cover quite a bit of area.

Q: So it's certainly not strictly a local business any longer?

A: No. We serve more than three hundred accounts.

Q: Well as long as I've already led into it, you started off saying your initial store was over on Main Street.

A: Yes. 125 S. Center Street. We had a little store that was about ten feet wide and probably twenty feet long.

Q: And what products did you have there?

A: We used to dip ice cream and make malted milks. And in those days the races were held in Northville in the daytime in what is now Northville Downs. And the people in those days would park up town; there was no parking at the race track. So they parked up around town, and then they would walk down past our place and go to the races in the afternoon. We used to sell a

Oral History of John McGuire

big malted milk that I think was fifteen cents. And we would sell as many as four hundred malted milks a day in that little place. We would have to have five spindles going all the time as fast as we could put them on and take them off.

Q: How early in your career when you bought this dairy did you get into the ice cream business?

A: I was soon after we purchased the dairy. We got a little forty quart Emery-Thompson freezer, and we started making ice cream in the forty quart freezer. We'd make forty quarts at a time, and it would take about ten or fifteen minutes to make it then we'd draw it off and put it in cartons. I think we had one child at the time, so we'd take him down and put him in a little jumper and hang that on the compressor, and the compressor would vibrate a little bit so it would bounce and pretty soon the kid would fall asleep and my wife would help me put up the ice cream. Pints were the only way we sold it at the time.

Q: Was this hand packed?

A: It was free packed, it was kind of soft and we had a little system to get it into the pints. Now it's mostly half gallons.

Q: Now we're sitting here in your office in your present location. Is all of your milk and ice cream processed right here, or do you have another facility also?

A: All of our products are processed here. We buy our milk from an independent co-op in Grand Rapids. And the milk is picked up around Owasso and then it comes down. They bring us in a load of milk and fill our tank, and we buy our heavy cream from Michigan Milk Producers Association which is in Holden, Michigan. So they bring us down a load of milk and put it in our tank, and then we put the two products together. We use the heavy cream to increase the butterfat in the milk, and we pat out a twelve percent butter fat ice cream mix. We make our own mix out of the milk and cream. We buy sugar from Dot, which is another family outfit. They are down in Indiana. They have, I think, ten children. And they're all in the distribution business.

Q: They are a family business?

A: Family business. They cover pretty much of the Eastern part of the United States now. They distribute sugar and all kinds of products that go into ice cream, and they come through with a big truck and drop off what we need and move on to somebody else. It's a fantastic business. They are fine people. They serve us well.

Q: One of the ice creams that has become renowned is your butter pecan. Would you say that butter pecan is probably the most popular ice cream that you make?

A: Yes. I would say the butter pecan became the most popular ice cream we produce, and we give a lot of credit to People magazine which wrote us up on it. They gave us a nice story on it. They tested the ice cream. They picked up samples from all the dairies in Michigan, and they judged us to be the best in Michigan. So then, they called us and told us we had won Michigan. Now if you'd like to go to New York and be in the national, you send a sample of your ice cream

Oral History of John McGuire

to New York. So, the next day I put a sample of ice cream in the overnight express, and it was in New York the next morning. They called back and said, "Yeah, you've won fourth place in the United States". And so, I said what happened to first place. And they said, "You better be happy you even got mentioned." So they wrote a nice story about it, and the butter pecan took off the next day. We had four girls taking orders in our offices and four girls answered the phone continuously. We couldn't even get our own orders through the phones because people couldn't get to us because the phones were all tied up. That happened for about three days. And after that it kind of died down. We had calls from all over this United States wanted to know how they could get a hold of this butter pecan.

Q: Well, I'm sure people drive here from long distances.

A: They do. We have people come from long distances. We have people that used to come into our lobby, and they would pack ice cream and send it to their friends in California. Over in the State of Washington we had some over there. We had them all over the east coast. They would send a package of ice cream. We wouldn't do anything with it. We said hey, we got the ice cream if you want it. So they would come and bring their dry ice and pack the ice cream and send it out. It did make a big difference.

Q: So originally when you bought the dairy you had this little outlet where you sold ice cream and you made malted milks. Then you also had delivery routes where you were delivering well I presume all of the products, did you have butter?

A: We used to try to carry a full line of dairy products.

Q: Would that include eggs?

A: We would carry eggs, right. We still carry a full line of dairy products. We have just about every container there is going. We can meet anybody in the business.

Q: Now eventually you went into the restaurant business. And there's an interesting story there. Why don't you tell us about that.

A: Well in the 50's the dairy industry was updated. Everything became Grade A. And so we had a little antique dairy in town. It was kind of antiquated and kind of small so I came to 21300 Novi Road and purchased four acres of ground and decided to build a new dairy so we would be updated. So we would be modern. So we would be Grade A. So we went through and built the dairy, it took more than a year, and we opened it in February of 1966, and at that time there was no food in the north end of Northville. No place you could get a sandwich or get anything to eat. So the people that I knew in Northville said if you move out there, that will be the end. You'll starve to death out there. You're moving way out of town. You can't make it. But as people came out this way a little bit, they wanted someplace to eat. So they kept asking for it, and we had the little store so we put in coffee and then we put in sandwiches.

Q: You had a store here?

A: We started almost two years after we had started the dairy. Then we put in some booths. Then we put in a counter. Then finally it grew to the point where we didn't have room to serve

Oral History of John McGuire

the people anymore because there was nobody else serving. So then finally the stores opened up across the street and there were restaurants that came up all around us, and then we had outgrown our capacity so we decided we'd build a restaurant. So we now have a hundred seat restaurant. And that is pretty small now. On Friday night till Sunday night, there's usually a line up to get into the place.

Q: I've been here and stood in the line so I know. Are you considering expanding?

A: Nobody wants to carry the ball. Maybe we will. Some people say that we're big enough. But I feel that we should be about fifty more seats, and maybe we will do that someday. That kind of brings us up to date.

Q: Because you have fourteen children, and you've already mentioned that each one of these children was expected to become kind of an independent business man or businesswoman, they had this little popcorn stand in town and once they proved themselves that they could operate that and were responsible for every aspect of it ordering and accounting and the finance and everything then they came to work in the dairy. How many of your family, that would be both your children and their spouses and maybe even some of their children, are currently involved in this dairy operation?

A: Well, I sold the business to five of my sons. As time went on as each one would get married, I had offered every member of the family an opportunity to become part of the Guernsey Farm Dairy. Well, all but five chose to go another route. They went to school some of them. Tom went into the ministry, he was a Maryknoll priest, he went off to Maryknoll, New York and he studied in Maryknoll and he went to Bingham, Massachusetts and he studied up there, and he became a Maryknoll priest, and they gave him work in the states for a few years and then he went to Hong Kong. And he was a priest there for nine years. Then the church started changing a little bit, the priests started getting married, and he was one of the ones that got married. So then he came back here to the states, and we gave him a job right away. And he thought well maybe this is for me. But he worked for us for about two years, and he couldn't hack it, he was trained to do other things so he got into campus ministries, and he went to Lansing and he was the campus minister for the college in Lansing. And then he had a job offer in Detroit last year, and he moved to Detroit to U of D College (University of Detroit) and that's where he is now. Then last year he was elected campus minister for the United States. So he is over the United States too. Did you want to go into all of this?

Q: We don't need to talk about them individually, maybe just the ones that are directly involved in the dairy. Now, for example, I met your daughter-in-law when we went out to get some beverages. So she is working as what, a waitress?

A: Well yeah, she's helping out. I'm sorry you'll have to cut this out then because we can't mention one if we don't mention the others. I've always been kind of careful on that.

Q: Okay, why don't we do this than. At one time or other, is it fair to say that every one of your children was directly involved in the operation of this dairy?

A: I know that everyone of them has been through the dairy. They've spent their time here, especially when they went to school. And some after school, after they got through with school. I think there are still three of the girls that are still here and they are still keeping the books. But they're not involved in the dairy, but they are working for the brothers.

Q: And five your sons you say you sold the business to them. So in effect they run the business and you're kind of like the chairman of the board?

A: Yes, I'm still the president.

Q: President and chief executive officer. And some of your grandchildren, are they involved?

A: Yes, there are a few grandchildren. I would say maybe five or six. They're kind of in and out when they aren't in school.

Q: And then some of your sons' wives or your daughters' husbands have been involved?

A: I think there are three daughter-on-laws that are working in the office too. So one of them takes care of the accounts payable, and one accounts receivable, and one does the payroll.

Q: This is really a beautiful example of a family business.

A: Well thank you and I believe we are really happy with it, and they have a nice business and it's going very successful. They're not setting the world afire, but we do make a living. They're all buying their houses, and they've all got families. My wife and I are happy and we have a good life.

Q: I think one of the best things, that me as a consumer living in the Northville area, is the quality.

A: We stress quality from the beginning. We try to make the best of everything that we can make. In the restaurant we buy only the best stuff. We pay top dollar for it. We get the best that we can find in every line. We work on that all the time.

Q: Well, I'd kind of like to divert off into some other areas.

A: I'd like to take a little break.

Q: Okay, we've been talking a little bit while the recorder was off, and there are some interesting things that I still want to talk to Mr. McGuire about. One of the things is the fact that he's lived in the same house here in Northville for forty-seven years. And that's the house at 240 Orchard Drive. Now you moved here as a newly married man, or you were married at the time you moved here?

A: Well, we were married before we moved to St. Clair Shores. Then we lived out there I guess about three years I think. Then we got the job in Northville, so naturally we wanted to live in Northville. When we first came, we were unable to get a place in Northville because there

was not a house in Northville for rent. Anyhow, they said you won't be here long enough to rent a house. I remember one lady said that. She said nobody has existed down in that dairy yet, and I wouldn't rent a house to you because you won't be here that long. So anyhow we decided we were going to stick it through and we finally found a house on Farmington Road where we rented a little house. So we had to live there I think two years. And then finally we heard of a house in Northville that was for sale, and so I immediately ran over and bought that house right away. I bought that little house for \$5,000. I paid fifty dollars a month in payments. Then we started out with five rooms and a nice little house, so then as the kids kept coming along, we just kept expanding the house. We built on we made a little addition and finally as we had that filled up we made another one. I think we expanded it four times.

Q: When you first moved here did you have children then?

A: We had one child, I would say two.

Q: So when you moved to the house on 240 Orchard you had a couple of children already?

A: Two.

Q: It was a five room house which was okay then.

A: It was okay the, but we had to expand later on. Actually, there was never fourteen home at one time. They might have been home for holidays and things like that, but for the most part they were away to school somewhere when the young ones were born. So, I believe the young ones hardly know the older ones.

Q: Were they fairly close in age?

A: They were pretty close but over fourteen years and being away to school, you're not really close to them.

Q: Did you have kind of a dormitory style setting, one for the girls and one for the boys?

A: At one time we did. The one addition put on, we added one big room. So then we used to put the boys out there, and they had bunk beds, I think we maybe had three bunk beds all in one room. Then after that why then you become running into a problem with bathrooms. We finally had to build another bathroom. So we built a bathroom.

Q: I forgot to ask you, do you have more boys or girls?

A: There's seven boys and seven girls.

Q: Seven and seven, okay. Girls like to spend time in the bathroom.

A: And the boys didn't like that in the morning. So we had to get another bathroom. We added the other bathroom. And then finally we got the third bathroom.

Q: Right now you've got more space.

Oral History of John McGuire

A: Right now we've got more space than we need to. We're the other way now.

Q: But you have no intention of moving?

A: No. We just talked about that the other day. We don't need this space anymore, but when they come home we've got the place for them. We have finished our garage over; it's a two car garage. When they do come home we just leave the cars out, and we use the garage, and we can eat in the garage, and it is close to the kitchen. We set up 5 tables so we can all eat in the garage.

Q: Boy, I bet the holidays are a very busy time with everybody around.

A: They all try to get home, but now there are two of them in Arizona, and they have a hard time getting home from Arizona.

Q: How many of them have stayed in the Northville area?

A: There are two in Arizona, one in Detroit, one in Rockville Maryland, and one in Florida, the rest of them are pretty local.

Q: Well that's good, you've got a lot of your family still around. Now you are a member of the Our Lady of Victory parish? Tell me what Our Lady of Victory was like when you first moved out here.

A: When we first came there were forty-six families in Our Lady of Victory. At that time it didn't take long to learn forty-six people. You knew everybody in just a little while. Then it grew to about a hundred and twenty-five. It seemed to grow pretty fast. And you knew everybody with one hundred and twenty five. And then I would, I don't know what year, maybe along about 1950 I'd say things started to change and then the people moved into the area and, then it grew so fast and pretty soon you didn't know anybody. Then they finally took five hundred families away, and they moved them over to Holy Family. Then we kind of dropped back again to only twelve hundred, then it grew back, and now it's over seventeen hundred families again.

Q: Well now the building when there were forty-three families what kind of building was it.

A: It was a nice little old building. That was the enjoyable time of it. It was a little old wood building, and it seemed like it just fit the people.

Q: Well if you were a part of that forty-three family parish, and the parish started growing then I'm sure you were also involved in raising money for additions in the growth of the parish?

A: Oh yeah, there was always some fund-raising to be done. So the people had to do it, and the old timers were elected to do that part of it. I tried to get money to build a new building.

Q: And I don't know exactly right now where the parish is. Is it a pretty comprehensive parish? Do you have a parish hall and sanctuary?

A: Yes. It's big now, and the hall actually is in the basement. They have a nice big hall and a big church, holds about 800.

Q: And you were very much involved in the growth of that parish?

A: I was until the last one I think was in 1959 they built a new church; then in probably '87 it had to be brought up to date. So they tore the inside of the church all apart and brought it up to date. But I didn't have much to do with that. I thought well, I built it once. I didn't get involved too much with that.

Q: Well now also having fourteen children you mentioned to me that there were nine different schools involved at one time or another. And of course when you've got young children you want to be involved in the activities of the school, and both you and your wife were involved in the PTA and other parent groups.

A: There was a time when we had them in nine schools. We were pretty much occupied all the time. They just kept us going. There wasn't too much time to get involved with public affairs.

Q: We just turned the tape over and you were telling me about your involvement with the schools.

A: A lot of time my wife would go to one PTA meeting and I'd go to another. And to keep up with nine schools we were pretty busy. We had them in kindergarten and then we had them in grade school some of them were in high school and some in college, and they were all going at the same time. So we supported nine schools at one time. So it went through pretty fast. It was only a few years, and it was over with. It don't take long. They grow up pretty fast. Well that's one thing we should stress on younger people. It looks a long time off when they start to school but it's such a short time. You can't be far away from them at any one time. You've got to be really close to them as time goes on. It goes pretty rapidly.

Q: Okay. Now you are active or a member in other organizations I see by your biographical statement. You're a member of the K of C (Knights of Columbus). Are you still active in K of C?

A: Not too much. I'm kind of an old timer there too. I kind of wore that out I guess. Let the young take over. Most of the old guys have died off. They're not around anymore. There's a few, and I enjoy them. But the new fellows they're different, so I'm not too active in that.

Q: How about the Knight of Equity?

A: That was great when I was young we had a lot of fun in that organization. That was back in Detroit. That was a fun organization.

Q: I'm not familiar with Knights of Equity. Is that something like K of C?

A: Kind of like it but it's an Irish organization. The thing that I was in for was the parties, we had a good time.

Oral History of John McGuire

Q: Now you also were involved in the Society of St. Vincent DePaul which is a charitable organization.

A: I was involved in that over many years when I was in Northville and we did a lot of work. You would think there would be nobody in Northville that had needs, but we used to find a lot of people that were suffering and needed support and needed many things. Then that was the purpose of St. Vincent DePaul was to help people in need. So I did that for many years.

Q: Are they still out here?

A: I don't think they are anymore, not that I know of. It went for many years, and it was a good organization. But I kind of wore that out too.

Q: Well, you've done your time so to speak.

A: Maybe I haven't, maybe I just think I have.

Q: Well, here you are still the president and chief executive officer of the dairy.

A: Well, this is my home, and I like it here and I have a place to go every day. Not that I did very much, but it's kind of home.

Q: Keeps you out of mischief and off the streets.

A: That's about what I can say for it.

Q: I didn't ask you is your wife still alive?

A: My wife is still alive. I'll tell you what her big thing is now. Maybe we'll call her a babysitter. Every once in a while not regularly and she won't take them if she has something else to do they come along and drop off two or three kids at our house and they go shopping or somewhere and she watches the kids and she enjoys it. She's in good health. You can't hardly get her out of the house. She'd rather stay in her own little domicile.

Q: Well, it certainly has been a pleasure meeting you.

A: It's been a pleasure meeting you and I've enjoyed talking to you. Hope you can edit the mistakes out.

Q: Oh, yes, we're going to have this tape reproduced and bring it back for you to listen to. And thank you very much.