**New Deal Neighbors: Oral Histories of Greenhills, Ohio**

Interviewee: Stanley Wernz / Interviewer: Casey Huegel

Location: University of Cincinnati/ Date: February 21, 2018

Transcribed: March 6, 2018 / Last Edited: April 24, 2018

Huegel Okay, so Stan could you just state your name for the camera, please?

Wernz Sure, I’m Stan Wernz: W-E-R-N-Z.

CH: And what year were you born?

SW: I was born in 1935.

CH: And when did you and your family move to Greenhills?

SW: We didn't actually live in Greenhills, we lived south of the village in Springfield Township, however, the school district where I attended school was Liberty School District and it was dissolved when I completed my third-grade year and Greenhills absorbed that school district, and so since I didn't live in Greenhills, I'm honored that you would allow me to participate in this episode and I hope I give it justice.

CH: About how far from Greenhills was your community, Liberty?

SW: Where my home was about three miles, but it was all rural at that time, farmland, and I worked for farmers. My acquaintance with Greenhills as a little tyke was I would hear that fire horn--they didn't have a siren, they had like a foghorn--and you could hear it all the way out where I lived and it would be either one or two blasts and then it would be a series of up to five or six blasts, and I learned that it was a code. The one blast might--I'm not sure whether one was fire and two was medical or vice-a-versa--but they would blast that and then they would blast the series, and Greenhills was divided into letter blocks: A-B-C-D-E and F, and then later they added G, which was the Gambier Circle, but by the blast the volunteers knew who had to respond and where they had to go, but I would hear that foghorn all the way out where I lived. I lived between Winton and Daly on Compton in a home that my father built.

CH: Okay, so tell us a bit about your family.

SW: Well, there were five of us kids and mother and dad. My father was a mail carrier, he was the first mail carrier in Greenhills, he started when they opened the village and he continued to carry the mail up until 1952. In the days when he first started they carried two deliveries a day and so everybody got two mail deliveries, and of course during the war time people relied on radios in order to learn what was happening and when a radio would go bad my dad--although he only had an eighth-grade education--was mechanically and electronically inclined, and so he would pick up their radio after work and bring it home and sit in the basement and he would repair them. And often because you couldn't get parts, he would re-wire in order to use the existing parts that he had from one that couldn't be repaired, and it was quite an experience to watch him do that and it was a great service to the people because he would try to turn the repair job around in just a couple days so that they again had a radio to hear what was happening in the nation and the world.

CH: So did he know most of the Greenhills community members quite well then, being their mail carrier?

SW: Absolutely, and they were very great. There were people who were home during the day who would offer him a drink in the summertime or a hot drink in the winter when he came around. Very, very kind, it was a wonderful community, everybody cared for everybody else. If I got involved in some difficulty, often, my mother knew about it before I got home. There would be somebody who called and said, “you know, you need to talk to him about this.”

CH: Mhm. What about your mother and siblings? Tell us about them.

SW: My mother she had a high school diploma, and she did work also in the post office in Greenhills for a short while. Mrs. Lale was the postmistress and then and my mother became postmistress for a few years until we kids became such rascals that she decided she had to ride herd on us, but, and then I had two older sisters, a younger brother, and a younger sister, and my youngest sister she was born I believe in 1943.

CH: Okay. What would you and your siblings do for fun where you lived?

SW: Where we lived we would play in our yard, we had a half-acre of ground with our home, and so we played in the yard and all sorts of games, you’d play hide and seek, there were bushes, there were big fields around us, too, and when there was corn planted in the field, why, we’d often go out and play in the cornfield. We’d play hide and seek or you play kick the can, and then we were all given musical opportunities and I studied piano and then when I got into school I picked up trumpet and then baritone horn and then sousaphone. My brother played flute, my younger sister was a clarinetist, then we all participated in the high school band, which was--the music department and the athletic department seem to be the two hubs of the school--and it was fascinating the way they would make things work out for us to study and play and the bands went to contests as did the choruses and of course the athletics. We played, well, North College Hill and Mount Healthy and Finneytown--came into being later--Finneytown only had an elementary school at the time that I was in Greenhills, but then they added a high school and so just, just lots of fun, and I remember we had new band uniforms and it was marching season, so for a football game we went to Sharonville. Now our hats had white leather on top and do you know anything about Sharonville?

CH: Not really, no, tell me.

SW: They had a railroad yard, and the football field was adjacent to the railroad yard and you had all of those locomotives coming in and steam engines burning coal and our brand new hats, the top of the hats were all speckled with soot, and of course with a little bit of dampness in the fall, why that stained those brand new beautiful hats. Mr. Riley our band director had us turn in all of our uniforms and they were cleaned. [laughs] Those were some of the interesting things that happened for us along the way.

CH: You briefly mentioned your childhood home, could you maybe walk us through like we’re going in the front door and tell us a bit about it?

SW: If you went in the front door to the left was the living room and the living room was fourteen by twenty-six, it was huge, and of course we had a piano and a couple of sofas and occasional chairs and we had cabinetry that my father had built and that housed the high-fidelity equipment and he had a group of records and we got to listen to those recordings. At one end of the living room was the piano and in the winter time when Christmas was there, I had gotten a train for Christmas in 1939 and it was one of the old standard gauge trains, Lionel, and that was set up on the same end as the piano and on that right wall in the living room as you're facing the back of the house was a fireplace and the fireplace was used a lot, and we had two radiators, ours was a boiler, hot water heat, excellent heat, it kept the temperature pretty uniform. And then if you went when you enter there was also stairs that took you upstairs and then on the right was the dining room, if you went through the dining room to the back of the house there was a cupboard for foodstuffs, and for the work clothes and then there was a bathroom and to the left of that back hallway was the kitchen and it was an eat-in kitchen and we had a table there and all ate around the kitchen, and from the kitchen you would go downstairs to the basement, full basement under the whole house, and when you went upstairs on the right side was the bedroom for my sisters. Since there were three of them they got this big bedroom--first it was only my mother and dad--but when my third sister was born and she was out of her baby bed then they made that the bedroom for the girls, and if you went to the left down the hall in the back was a small bedroom for my brother and I and to the front was my parents’ bedroom, and in the center of that hallway out to the back was a bathtub and shower and we also had a commode and wash stand.

CH: Did you and your brother and sisters--did you do different activities as boys and girls or did you play together? How did that work?

SW: Well, we played together some, after I was about six I began working for farmers, and during the thrashing season, why, I would sack the wheat and then during baling season I would stick wires in the stationary baler and I got paid a quarter-cent a bale for that, and if you could do 400 bales in a day that was good. So if I got a dollar, why, I was really happy, but then I also cut grass for some people in Mount Healthy and I would walk up to Mount Healthy and mow their lawn with their mower and it was an old reel type that you had to push and so then and then when we were making hay while I worked on the farm and we used to have to use a pitchfork and put the hay up on wagons and there would be somebody on the wagon loading it so it would stay on the wagon when you went down the road with it and that was a trick in itself. Somebody that could do that and not have it one way or the other, you know, could have the sides straight, and then after you got a wagon loaded you, why, you used what they called a boom pole and it was usually made out of hickory and it would latch underneath the front stanchion of the wagon and then it would go across and come to the back and you would tie it down to hold the hay on the wagons. So now my brother he played more with his friends and Jim Senior was one of his friends and you may have heard somebody mention Audrey. Audrey Senior became Ray Young’s secretary when she graduated from school and so she was very astute, good grammar, good spelling, and I'm sure that's why he latched on to her. Then my older sisters they, well, we all had to work around the house. In the summertime there was a lot of time spent canning and it didn't matter whether it was green beans that were being harvested from the garden or whether you went off and bought a bushel of peaches or a bushel of apples. With the apples we made applesauce as well as canned the apples, and peaches you would boil them or scald them and then the skins would come off and you'd cut them in half or quarters and can those. Tomatoes, we canned tomatoes, we made tomato juice, we made ketchup, all of these were activities that everybody who was able-bodied got involved in doing. It was a family affair and tending the garden was a family affair as well.

CH: You mentioned playing, you know, playing in corn fields and playing in your yard and all that. Greenhills is known for its greenbelt, and some other areas in there like the community building and stuff. But were any of those places meaningful for you growing up, did you go there often?

SW: They weren't for me, but I know that they were maintained. Lucien Grace was one of the people who worked in maintenance for the village of Greenhills, and he ran the tractor and he had a tandem mower--they were the old reel type mowers--and my guess is there were probably ten or twelve mowers about three feet in width that he would pull behind that tractor, and he maintained those play areas, those green areas, and so he did the football fields and the play fields for the schools, well originally it was just one school and that was the community building, which is still standing today and it’s white and the years that I went there, why, if you looked to the south that was the elementary wing and the north and the one on the east was the high school, and it had a huge gymnasium, it was first class as far as we were concerned, and the gym had a stage on the one end, and the stage is where the plays took place, and so it was a multi-purpose facility and the pep band was on the stage when we were in basketball season and the football field was a little farther away from the school and it was over off of Farragut Road and right down at the end of Farragut Road where the apartments ended and you go down between the last set of apartments and down a ramp and you were at the football field. The band would form at the high school and walk over to the football field, well we marched over, had cadence with our drummers, and that was nice. Originally, I think that our band was about thirty-six marchers, a six by six, and then as we got more students and it grew a little bit and so we were marching I think a six by eight when I graduated.

CH: Okay, Besides your experience in music and marching band, tell us a bit about what school was like for you?

SW: Well, when I first went to Greenhills in fourth grade it was a self-contained classroom and we got to go out on the playground and play and they had rings that were fastened to a framework and you could swing on those rings. They were just close enough together that if you were good you could get going and swing over on one ring and reach over with your other hand and grab the other ring and then you’d come back and go and you could go across, those were lots of fun to play on. Of course, they had swings and they had slides and within our classrooms we did little plays, and I got to play the part of Scrooge when we did Dickens’ Christmas Carol [laughs], but the teachers were very active in keeping the children involved in multiple phases--weren’t many discipline problems--and you never wanted to get sent to the office, you would much rather take a scolding from the teacher. And so when I got to sixth grade the principal of the elementary was also my sixth grade teacher and that was Mr. Rickey and he was a real taskmaster and he was into history and I remember we had to learn the Gettysburg Address, and we all memorized that. Then in seventh grade they introduced us to instrumental music and that was where Mr. Riley came in and Mr. Riley became just a key name in Greenhills because he was the instrumental director, Ms. MacAfee was the vocal director and they were just great musicians and they taught us a tremendous amount of music. Mr. Riley’s bands went to contests and we were satisfied with nothing less than a one, and would go to state contests as well and at that time, I don't know if it's still that way, but you had a district contest and we were District 12 at that time and now that district is District 14, and if you got a one at district you can go to state and we would go to state and frequently the state contest would be held at Westerville at Ohio Wesleyan College, and those were good times, and the same was true for the chorus, and while the band had--we had a brass band that would play at Christmas time and do before the Christmas concert, a concert of Christmas carols, and the choir, and then we also had a pep band that would play for the basketball games. Then the choir was--we had an octet and a triple trio--the octet was all men and the triple trio was ladies and we would do some choreographed things, and that was before choreography was much of the scene in high school and later that changed and now I know the schools do much more with that. The one outstanding thing that I remember from my junior high years was we had a teacher and I’d been trying to recall her name and haven’t come up with it, but she had a speech choir and you were honored to be selected to participate in the speech choir, and we would do poems and other readings and had to do them and interpret them with our voices and that--that was something that served me in good stead later because when you're doing speeches and as I do presentations as Lincoln, it has told me to pay attention to diction, inflexion, and it just was a wonderful education.

CH: While you mentioned your Lincoln living history that you do, tell us a bit about that.

SW: Well, I got involved because I was a maverick of a teacher and a student identified when I grew a beard that I had always acted like Lincoln, and now I looked like him, and I went home and looked in the mirror and I thought yes, if I cut off the moustache and clean up the lower lip there is a similarity in appearance. And so I began doing some things, that year when we did a Pioneer Day on the football field, my chorus was the last thing of the day and I told the drama director, I said “stall while I go change clothes,” and we were in pioneer garb and I went and changed into a black suit, white shirt, black bow tie, and I had borrowed a top hat from the drama department, and I came out and I conducted the choir as Lincoln and the students went wild and that started it.

CH: So were you teaching at Greenhills then?

SW: This was not at Greenhills, I was teaching at North College Hill, but that's what started my Lincoln presentations and it just grew from there. I would do presentations in our elementary school at North College Hill, but then when North College Hill began having Civil War reenactments, why, they asked me to be their resident Lincoln, and then when I retired I started doing more and more Lincoln presentations and I have done them for various schools, I've done one for the Greenhills Historical Society, and I get up to 150 presentations in a year, and I do them on all different topics, whatever the host or hostess requests, and some of the more popular ones are the early life of Lincoln, Lincoln the lawyer, and the faith of Lincoln has become popular recently. Then, of course, the Civil War, and I do one just on Lincoln and the Constitution and I use his speech from the lyceum from 1838 and so those are all fun times and I believe that Lincoln still speaks to us today and my effort is to keep the legacy of Lincoln alive. One of his particular positions that I espouse when I’m talking and I’ve done the Civil War is that: “It’s correct that we should honor those who’ve paid the ultimate sacrifice on the fields of battle in defense of our liberty and our independence. It’s correct that we erect bronze, marble, and granite monuments to them, but they live on in the more enduring monument that is found in the hearts and lives of each one of us who love liberty equally for ourselves and for all mankind [spoken as Lincoln].” That's the way I wrap that one up.

CH: Thank you. So jumping back to high school, so you lived outside of Greenhills in more of the country, so was your--did you feel your school experience was any different? Were there insiders and outsiders?

SW: Oh, no, and in fact, when I was put into the Greenhills Hall of Fame I commented I never felt like an outsider, I always felt like I was part of the group. We didn’t have cliques in the band and the chorus. We were all one and we delighted in success of one another, bullying I never knew when I was in Greenhills. I was born club-footed in both feet and early on in elementary school, why, they--I was quack, quack, quack because of the way I walked, my feet turned in, and I had it surgically corrected thanks to my parents and the Crippled Children's Fund. So the left foot was successful, the right foot wasn't, and then they did it a second time on the right foot and it was successful, the right foot wasn’t, they did it a second time on the right foot and it was successful and as a result I was able to go into the military and did an infantry basic. But at Greenhills they didn't allow that. I never was ridiculed because I couldn't walk as well--and the right foot wasn't corrected until I was in the summer between my eighth grade and ninth grade years. In gym, you dribbled a basketball in elementary school and I didn't dribble as fast as somebody else. When it came time to run baseball, I didn't run as fast as others, but that was all right. Now I don't remember anymore whether I was late in being selected for those teams, but when we played intramural sports, basketball, and I was on the basketball intramural team. I wanted to go out for football, but my father put his foot down and said no, we weren't going to undo what the surgeons had been able to correct. He was fearful that I would break something. But those were great opportunities and I was—I jumped ahead, I had made some notes and in the fifth grade I was on the safety patrol and we had a group of fellas that all were on the safety patrol and then in the spring of the year toward the end of school they took us out on a weekend camp out and there used to be just south of the village Science Hall Road and if you went back Science Hall Road, right on the Mill Creek, there was a scout cabin, and they got use of that scout cabin and we all went out and we spent two nights out there. It was, we were all there, you know, did fishing and played games and--

CH: Was the outdoors a big part of your growing up, doing recreation like that?

SW: Well, outdoor recreation, since I was working on the farm I had a lot of that, but in the village, in the woods all around the village were a wonderful resource when we would have to do some of our science projects because you had to go looking for trees and be able to identify them--you identified them with the bark as well as with the leaves, and you could have a leaf collection and it was quite expansive. And that came in handy when I went to college because in botany class identification was important.

CH: Where did you go for college?

SW: Well, I first went to Capital University and I dropped out. And, but, that's where I took the botany classes, and then later I went to--after military service and a stint working at P[roctor] and G[amble] in flavor development research--why I went back to Miami [University] and did an undergraduate in music and got a degree to teach music and then I came here to UC [University of Cincinnati] for my Master's Degree and I did post-graduate work here at UC.

CH: Growing up did you and your family come to the city much?

SW: Not much, we went to Coney Island, we got to go up on the Island Queen. We came to the zoo, we might come to the zoo every other year and spend a day there, but most of our activities were through our church, local, which is another fascinating thing for Greenhills. There were two churches: Our Lady of the Rosary and then the Community Church, and the Community Church was a Protestant church and it's now the Presbyterian Church, but they would have baccalaureate and we’d alternate one year the baccalaureate service would be in the Roman Catholic Church, the next time it would be in the Community. The Community Church originally used the gymnasium of the school for their worship services. I don't recall if Our Lady of the Rosary used the school as well prior to the time that they built their church, but if my recollection is correct it was Father Kunz that was the pastor, the father at the Our Lady of the Rosary, and I don’t remember who the minister was for the Presbyterian Church.

CH: What church did your family go to?

SW: Now we went to a Lutheran Church in Mount Healthy, and so I wasn’t a part of that scene.

CH: Did your friends growing up attend different churches?

SW: For the most part those friends in school attended at one of the churches in Greenhills. For those who were part of the group that came from Liberty School and went to Greenhills’ School then when they dissolved the Liberty District they went to different churches, and some went to Baptist churches and Methodist churches and some of them came and were in the Lutheran Church, and, but that was never a bone of contention for us.

CH: What were your--your family, do you remember were they politically involved in town at all with local politics?

SW: Didn’t get involved in politics, politics was a dirty word in our home. My father felt that politicians just did everything to get elected and didn't follow through and they didn't always represent what was in the common good and so there were--Washington was esteemed, George Washington, and Abraham Lincoln was esteemed--beyond that you didn’t have father talking much politics around home. [laughs] And as the mail carrier in Greenhills he stayed out of the politics. In fact, when we were in band and they were having a talent show like and it was called the “Nacilbuper.” It was a long time before I recognized “Nacilbuper” was Republican spelled backwards. So it was really the Republican Club that was putting it on, but the Democrats and the Republicans each had their own club in Greenhills, but I didn’t remember politics being contentious. I remember there was a fellow by the name of [Geason?] who was mayor and I guess he was mayor for several years because I remember that, but--just it was sort of interesting because the police would man the light at Winton and Farragut, which was also Winton and Cromwell, and when the kids were walking to and from school, why, the police were there directing traffic and making sure we got across safely. Well, there was one thing, lest I forget it again, there was a very interesting paved path and it went from Farragut all the way over to Andover and Winton. We went right between the apartment houses and Our Lady of the Rosary Church and would walk that path and that was a shortcut to get over there and because I was from out of town when we had any sort of an evening activity that I had to be there, my friends and I would walk through the woods on that path and then we would hitchhike from the corner of Andover and Winton and there was like a park bench there that we would sit on and hitchhike until we got a ride. But that was one of the nice amenities that the village had, and of course the kids walked that coming to school because we only had the one school originally. After a few years they build the Damon Road School which is now the Alzheimer's Center in Greenhills, but that was a big change. Then as the number of students continued to grow they put a building outside of the high school and it was made of metal and it was in what was like a courtyard and there were two classrooms that were in that building and so we sometimes had to leave the main building to go over into those. And the cafeteria was right in the main building and that was a wonderful experience, too. We had cooks and they were good, and you know, a lot of times you hear kids complaining about the meals, well I never had reason to complain. One of the favorite things that I liked was the Johnny Marzetti, and the Johnny Marzetti was a conglomeration that had peas and carrots and vegetables and macaroni and hamburger in it and that was just a nice dish.

CH: Okay, so that was a hit?

SW: That was a hit for me. I don’t know if it was a hit for everybody. [laughs]

CH: Do you recall how World War II impacted your life and your family’s lives?

SW: Yes, well, I had two uncles who served. The school pulled together, we had savings bonds that we would get and I don't remember any more if they were sold through the school or if we were doing that separately, but that's been a few years, but, milkweed pods, I remember collecting those and I think Mr. Salisbury was our principal at that time and we’d put them in bags and we'd go out and we’d hang them on the fence that they put up just across the street from the front of the school and that--and then of course patriotism was a great thing--there was no disrespect of the flag or the national anthem and we also would have Memorial Day activities and the band participated in those and it was an honor to be able to march in that activity. They established this memorial on the commons right across from the school in that E block and it was great to participate in that. I remember Taps being played and one of the instrumentalists, one of the trumpeters, would be on the field with the band and then they had a second one up in the music room in the front of the community building, and he would play the response muted--that's about all I remember about it, other than when you would learn men had died--still very touching, I'm sorry. [emotional]

CH: No, just giving you one second here, thank you for sharing. Moving forward a little bit, do you remember the Cold War impacting life in Greenhills at all?

SW: No, the Cold War came more after I graduated. I graduated in 1953 and so the Cold War was after that, but I do remember when MacArthur wanted to go ahead and bomb in Korea and Truman fired him. I remember being in world history class and Mrs. Lowe was the teacher and she told us that we needed to remember this moment. She didn't say Truman was wrong and MacArthur was right, but she did say that this will have an impact on the world for years to come, and she was right because Korea ended up divided. It was I think a fear of the Chinese that kept Truman from going ahead and letting MacArthur hit those supply lines and as a result we see what's happening today. And that was another part about the education--education was truly education and you were--they attempted to get you to think to go beyond and today the politicians pass a law and they come back and when something's wrong with it or it doesn't go right, well, that's just one of those unintended consequences. And we were taught you had to think about the what-ifs. If you do this than what if this and this and this, and does it in fact result in something that you don't want and those unintended consequences need to be addressed before you pass the law. Mr. Fowler taught us American history, American government in our late years in school and he was also the one who kept trying to tell us you can't just go off and do those things that you feel are going to be to your benefit, what about the other people?

CH: Do you think that any of that spirit in Greenhills schools has anything to do with the initial, you know, community focused design of Greenhills itself?

SW: Oh, I have no doubt because the people who were selected to come and live, there they had to have a certain income brackets, they couldn't be affluent, they all had jobs, they all had a work ethic, and that work ethic was instilled into us as kids. If you wanted something, well, you had to work for it. When I wanted to join the octet and I'm trying out for it--you had to try out and be selected--and octet had a special uniform and when I came home and told my mother that I had been selected, that I made it, and she said, “and who is going to pay for your uniform? You have to think about that." Well, I had to work that out and so part of the jobs that I took--I worked for a monument company for a while--and working for the farmers and I put away those pennies, walked the gutters alongside the road picking up pop bottles and milk bottles, things that people discarded, and I'd stash them and then I take a wagon every now and again when I had enough and load them in a wagon and take them over and cash them in. So I always felt that we were poor, and when I grew older, I learned how rich we were because we had to work for those things. Everything wasn't just handed to us, and that was the work ethic inside Greenhills. That community pulled together when there was a common goal, something that they needed, when it was time to get additional instruments for the band, the community provided them. Education was a very, very, important component of that community.

CH: Could you tell at all at school if there were, you know, rich kids and poor kids or anything like that? Was there any noticeable class differences?

SW: There were some noticeable differences with the very poor and they generally were not living in the city itself, but they were in the surrounding community. Greenhills, you had the city or at that time it was a village because it hadn't reached the 5,000, and that was the A through F block and then they added G. But around that village there were a lot of farms that were from the government and under government control, and farmers were farming them, and some of those farmers were poor and you might notice that the clothing that they wore, more of it had been mended as opposed to being new, but I never recall anybody making fun. After the war was over my parents picked up a lot of shirts at army surplus and so I was wearing army surplus shirts to school and occasionally a comment would be made about, “when you going to go and get in the army for real?” or something like that [laughs], but it was--I always felt it was in fun, it was in jest, I never felt humiliated by that.

CH: Okay. Was it harder living and working on farms from, I guess, did you ever feel that any—that there were any differences--despite if you got along--between you and your peers who might have had a more comfortable life in town or anything?

SW: Oh, no. Fred Holscher was one of my close friends and he lived in town. He was in my same class and he lived in town. He would go to Wapakoneta and work on a family farm a lot, too, and so we often shared what our farm experiences had been. And Harold Johnstone, the Johnstones was a large family and he had an apprenticeship license in pharmacy and he worked for Mr.--oh, now what is his name, the pharmacist? The pharmacy was right there in the village square and that was another interesting thing about those businesses, but and so he worked in the pharmacy and really the pharmacist sort of tutored him and Harold went on to become an outstanding gynecologist. He became a doctor and, but, that tutoring had a good stead for him as he went on to further studies. The IGA, well, I don't know if it was IGA at the time, it was called The Co-op, the grocery store was a co-op and you kept your receipts and based on the amount of profit that the co-op made, why, you could cash in your receipts and so a percentage of that profit came back to you for having shopped there, and so then there was a food locker and where you could buy meat by the quarter if you wanted. It was a tight-knit-- it was almost like an extended family in that community.

CH: Did you keep any keepsakes over the years from your time and Greenhills?

SW: I had kept a sweater along with my band letter on it, and then I did have--and I had lent it to my brother and I’ll have to get it back, he’s in Oregon--but there was a book, you likely have seen it, it had dated pictures in it from when they were building Greenhills and it has a picture of my dad in there as the first mail carrier, but, so yeah, those were the things. But more than that I have the memories of the many of the different songs that we played. Dr. Riley, he became a doctor after we all graduated, well, not all of us, after I graduated he got his doctorate and he went on and became a graduate school dean at the college conservatory here, but he, in the one fall came out and gave us all a book for our part and it was all the Philip Sousa marches and so one football season that was all we played was John Philip Sousa marches when we went on the field. That was wonderful. Then there was a concert number, it was called [monevene?] and I'll never forget when we were playing that Dr. Riley said, “now here calls for an organ, however, we don't have an organ, so make your sound as if it's the fullness of an organ.” So we all began thinking and imitating and we just had--I can tell you how great the musical experiences were. After I graduated and then I went to--in the Army, my musical experience served me in great stead--and I worked in the chaplain’s division. I was able to direct choirs and I played organ for them, the organ a result of my piano keyboard experience. I had enough knowledge from my musical experiences in high school that I was very successful with the Army and it was that same knowledge that took me--after I got out of the Army and I was working at P & G, my wife and I started a choir school out in Brown County, and we were having so much fun that I told her one day on the way home from the choir school I want to quit P & G, go back to school and get a degree and teach music and that's what I did. When I started at Miami University in the music department, I was able to examine out of courses because of my musical background from Greenhills.

CH: Okay. Are there things you miss about being in Greenhills?

SW: I found that Greenhills was more inclusive than many of the communities today--I don't find other communities banding together like they did in Greenhills, and so yes, I think that we'd all be better off if we saw the similarities that we have and accentuated those rather than the differences. The one thing that Greenhills had that disturbed me was the prejudice. When I went--as a fourth grader one of my classmates from south of the village was a Black child, and the first summer after we had been in fourth grade together he and I decided we wanted to go to the swimming pool, and everything was fine. My parents said I could go and his mother said he could go and we had the money and we got to the swimming pool, they sold me my ticket, and I went in and I stopped to wait for him and they would not sell him a ticket. I didn't have the gumption to say “well, then I can't go either.” And that bothers me to this day, I didn't stand up for that kid, and he was my friend. We played together regularly. He lived on Winton Road and he would come over. We’d play in the fields and whatnot.

CH: Do you recall his name?

SW: Melvin Jones.

CH: Were there any African Americans in school with you at Greenhills?

SW: Just Melvin and his sister. Melvin’s sister was in an older class.

CH: Okay. Did they have any trouble at school that you recall?

SW: Well, not that I recall, and it was only the first year that we went to Greenhills was in the fourth grade and then for fifth grade they took the whole district and they sent it to North College Hill and then the sixth grade they had settled how it was going to be divided and after the district was divided the part of the district where Melvin lived went to Finneytown and the part--Compton Road was the dividing line--and he lived south of Compton and all of Compton Road on the part going toward Mount Healthy went to Greenhills, and so--

CH: Well, I think I've hit on most of my questions here is there anything that you wanted to talk about that I missed?

SW: I covered the Science Hall Road, the blacktop, and I mentioned Lucien Grace the maintenance guy, I guess the only other thing that I would say is all the police seem to be our friends-- there wasn't this antagonism about the police and if the police corrected you, you shut up and you took it. They probably were right, [laughs] you know? We weren't always being backed up by our parents to the point that we took offense at anyone in a position of authority. If you got reprimanded you could expect to be reprimanded again when you got home if they found out about it, and our teachers were esteemed and they did a fantastic job and that was the thing that I took most from Greenhills was my education.

CH: Okay. Great, well thanks so much for being here.

SW: You’re welcome, and I'm sorry I didn't do that in a chronological order through all of your notes, but you can edit it.

CH: You did a great job, thank you.

SW: You are welcome.