



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Oral History Collection

**OH114: MINNESOTA'S GREAT GENERATION  
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**  
**Oral History Interviews**

**OVERVIEW OF THE RECORDS**

**Creator:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation Oral History Project.  
**Title:** Oral history interviews of the Minnesota's Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Richfield in the Postwar Era.  
**Dates:** 2007.  
**Quantity:** 47 sound cassettes; 24 transcripts in 24 folders  
**Location:** OH114.

**SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE RECORDS**

This collection chronicles the lives of men and women who lived in the suburb of Richfield, Minnesota, following World War II. The interviews primarily deal with city and community leaders including former mayors, members of the Rotary Club, members of the Chamber of Commerce, city managers, members of the Richfield League of Women Voters, members of the state House of Representatives, and local business owners. Some of the subjects discussed include demographic and cultural changes in Richfield; Richfield's stages of commercial, residential, and industrial expansion; the city water system; the impact of the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport; the public school system; tax increment projects; the idea of Richfield as a "bedroom community;" the sense of community; developing local parks and park spots; the postwar real estate market; impact of highway construction; lack of affordable housing; importance of religion; the New Ford Town housing project; and civic pride.

**INDEX TERMS**

*This collection is indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Minnesota Historical Society. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons or places should search the catalog using these headings.*

**Topics:**

Airports -- Minnesota -- Twin Cities Metropolitan Area -- Planning.  
Cities and towns -- Growth.  
City planning -- Minnesota -- Richfield.

Community development -- Minnesota -- Richfield.

Housing -- Minnesota -- Richfield.

Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

Municipal government -- Minnesota -- Richfield.

Parks -- Minnesota -- Richfield.

Rotary Club of Richfield (Minn.).

Suburbs -- Minnesota -- Richfield.

**Places:**

Richfield (Minn.) -- Biography.

Richfield (Minn.) -- Economic conditions.

Richfield (Minn.) -- History.

Richfield (Minn.) -- Social life and customs.

**Persons:**

Saylor, Thomas, interviewer.

Boeser, Shirley, interviewee.

Booen, Sherman, interviewee.

Bruins, Ralph, interviewee.

Burggraaff, Wayne, interviewee.

Burggraaff, Linda, interviewee.

Carr, Betty, interviewee.

Davis, Bill, interviewee.

Day, Emily, interviewee.

Elsen, Bob, interviewee.

Elsen, Donald, interviewee.

Elsen, Eugene, interviewee.

Franzmeier, Richard, interviewee.

Garcia, Edwina, interviewee.

Hamilton, John, interviewee.

Iverson, Marvin, interviewee.

Law, Loren, interviewee.

Lofstrom, Jeanette, interviewee.

Luettinger, Vernon L., interviewee.

Maxson, Marian, interviewee.

Molsather, Lawrence, interviewee.

Reiter, Mary, interviewee.

Scott, Wesley, interviewee.

Simon, Florence, interviewee.

Snyder, William, interviewee.

Ulrich, Gertrude, interviewee.

**Types of Documents:**

Interviews.

Oral histories.

## ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

### Preferred Citation:

*[Indicate the cited transcript and page or sound recording here].* Minnesota's Greatest Generation Oral History Project. Oral History Interviews of the Minnesota's Greatest Generation Oral History Project: Richfield in the Postwar Era. Minnesota Historical Society.

*See the Chicago Manual of Style for additional examples.*

### Accession Information:

Accession number(s): AV2008.27

### Processing Information:

Processed by: Oral History Office

Catalog ID No.: 6833517

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

*Note to Researchers: To request materials, please note the format (sound recording or transcript) and location shown below.*

### Sound recordings. 47 cassettes.

#### Location

OH114.1	Boeser, Shirley, April 29, 2007.
OH114.2	Booen, Sherman, February 24, 2007.
OH114.3	Bruins, Ralph, March 7, 2007.
OH114.4	Burggraaff, Wayne & Linda, April 28, 2007.
OH114.5	Carr, Betty, April 24, 2007.
OH114.6	Davis, Bill, July 18, 2007.
OH114.7	Day, Emily, February 26, 2007.
OH114.8	Elsen, Bob, February 27, 2007.
OH114.9	Elsen, Donald, March 22, 2007.
OH114.10	Elsen, Eugene, April 19, 2007.
OH114.11	Franzmeier, Richard, July 25, 2007.
OH114.12	Garcia, Edwina, April 20, 2007.
OH114.13	Hamilton, John, March 9, 2007.
OH114.14	Iverson, Marvin, April 19, 2007.
OH114.15	Law, Loren, October 18, 2007.
OH114.16	Lofstrom, Jeanette, April 26, 2007.

- OH114.17 Luettinger, Vernon L, February 26, 2007.
- OH114.18 Maxson, Marian, February 27, 2007.
- OH114.19 Molsather, Lawrence, May 3, 2007.
- OH114.20 Reiter, Mary, April 24, 2007.
- OH114.21 Scott, Wesley, May 3, 2007.
- OH114.22 Simon, Florence, July 31, 2007.
- OH114.23 Ulrich, Gertrude, July 17, 2007.
- OH114.24 Snyder, William, March 9, 2007.

**Transcripts. 24 folders.**

**Location**

OH114.1	Boeser, Shirley, April 29, 2007.
OH114.2	Booen, Sherman, February 24, 2007.
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OH114.20	Reiter, Mary, April 24, 2007.
OH114.21	Scott, Wesley, May 3, 2007.
OH114.22	Simon, Florence, July 31, 2007.
OH114.23	Ulrich, Gertrude, July 17, 2007.
OH114.24	Snyder, William, March 9, 2007.

OH114.1

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Shirley C. Boeser  
**DATE:** April 29, 2007  
**PLACE:** Richfield, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation Oral History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Shirley Boeser was born in Minneapolis and lived in Bloomington until her marriage. Her father owned and operated Scholz Mercantile and she worked in the store through college. Boeser has lived within a few blocks of her childhood home, both in Bloomington and Richfield, nearly her entire life and has been very involved with the local community, particularly Assumption Church and School.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The changing operation and inventory of Scholz Mercantile before, during, and after the war; rationing from a store-owner's perspective; personal and community impact of the I-494 construction and building condemnations; Boeser's experience of her brother's participation in the war; the role of Assumption Church in community and social life, especially preceding the war; private and public education; enrollment explosion at Assumption School during the 1950s and 1960s; impact of the GI Bill on the community; increase in suburban shopping options in the 1950s; church centennial and traditions; recent demographic and cultural changes in the area.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**           **User copy:**    1 60-minute cassette  
  **Original:**       1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**   57.5 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**     None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                 27 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**       AV 2008.27.1

OH114.2

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Sherman P. Booen  
**DATE:** February 24, 2007  
**PLACE:** Richfield, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Sherman Booen was born on a farm near Glenville, Minnesota. He was a civilian test pilot during World War II and moved to Richfield with his wife and daughter after the war. He then worked in radio and television, was in the Marine Corps during the Korean War, and published the *World of Aviation* and his magazine *The Minnesota Flyer* from his Richfield home.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Booen's reasons for choosing to live in Richfield; Richfield as a "bedroom community"; house construction and postwar prices; neighborhood changes since 1945; Richfield's stages of expansion; daily commute to Minneapolis; transition of shopping and entertainment from the city to the suburbs; impact of filling stations and road construction; installation of city water; shooting of Fred Babcock; 1951 tornado; civic pride; the relationship between Richfield and the airport; postwar demographics.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**           **User copy:**       1 60-minute cassette  
   **Original:**         1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**       55 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**       None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                   21 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**         AV 2008.27.2

OH114.3

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Ralph Bruins  
**DATE:** March 7, 2007  
**PLACE:** Savage, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Ralph Bruins was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He served in the US Navy before being employed by the Bloomington Lake Bank and Summit National Bank in St. Paul. Bruins eventually transferred to the Summit Bank in Richfield. After working as president of the Buena Vista National Bank in Denver, Colorado, Bruins returned to the Richfield Summit Bank as president and moved to Richfield with his wife and children. He was very active in the local community, particularly in the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, and Optimist Club.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The transition to using computer systems in banks; use of tax increment financing to revive Richfield; attracting businesses to Richfield; history of houses built at the intended site of Augsburg College; postwar construction; suburban shopping options; Richfield public schools; relationship between the bank and community; demographic change; individuals who influenced the development of Richfield; relationship between the airport and community; highway construction; development and sale of Summit Bank; benefits of a close-knit community.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 60-minute cassette  
   **Original:**        1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      60 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**        None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      19 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**            AV 2008.27.3



OH114.4

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Linda C. Burggraaff and Wayne S. Burggraaff  
**DATE:** April 28, 2007  
**PLACE:** Bloomington, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Wayne Burggraaff was born in Morristown, New Jersey. After attending Lafayette College in Pennsylvania, he earned his Master's degree from the University of Pennsylvania, the Wharton School. He married Linda and became the assistant city manager of Des Moines, Iowa. Wayne later became the city manager of Richfield and he and Linda raised their family in Richfield and Bloomington.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Responsibilities of a city manager; comparison of Des Moines and Richfield; interview process with the Richfield city leaders; city services and municipal projects; installation of permanent roads; idea of Richfield as a "bedroom community"; city leadership; use of off sale liquor revenue for public projects; interaction between the school system and city manager; training of police and fire employees; idea of Richfield as independent from Minneapolis and other suburbs; Metropolitan Airports Commission; impact of highway projects; interaction with neighbors and sense of community; housing issues; Richfield League of Women Voters; suburban shopping options; tax increment projects; public and private schools; local Presbyterian church; structure of after-school activities; home financing; fiscal disparities legislation; labor relations.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**            **User copy:**     2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**       2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**     95 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**       None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      28 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 2008.27.4

OH114.5

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Betty J. Carr  
**DATE:** April 24, 2007  
**PLACE:** Edina, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Betty Carr was born in St. Paul, Minnesota. After graduating from Macalester College with a Chemistry degree, she did research on synthetic rubber for two years during the World War II. Carr married, started a family, and moved to Richfield. She was very active in the local community, particularly as an observer of the school board in the Richfield League of Women Voters, a member of the Charter Commission, and as a reporter for the Richfield News.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Synthetic rubber research during the war; women's roles in a wartime laboratory; prewar construction compared to postwar construction; postwar Richfield demographics; neighborhood community; expansion and history of the Richfield public school system; stability of neighborhoods; suburban shopping opportunities; socialization and entertainment; debate over constructing municipal sewer and water systems; transformation from a rural to urban community; city recreation projects; Charter Commission; city politics; recent demographic changes; 1951 tornado; impact of highway construction; adjustments to school district borders; impact of the airport on Richfield; quality of Richfield schools.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      80 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**        None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      30 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**            AV 2008.27.5

OH114.6

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Bill Davis  
**DATE:** July 18, 2007  
**PLACE:** Richfield, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Bill Davis was born in Graceville, Minnesota. He moved with his family to Richfield and lived there until attending college at the University of Minnesota. He returned to Richfield after playing semi-pro baseball for a number of years. Davis married, raised a family, and now works in the mortgage banking business.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Postwar home construction; sense of community in the neighborhoods; Richfield as a new community; local parks and park sports; expanding public schools; construction and development; sewer and water installation; influence of church on socialization; increasing organization of sports teams; development of identity in the Richfield schools; high school sports; community involvement in local sports; suburban shopping and entertainment options; state sports tournaments; community ceremony for sports teams; reasons for returning to Richfield; recent demographic changes and challenges in Richfield; impact of the local airport; trend of people returning to the city.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**           **User copy:**    2 60-minute cassettes  
  **Original:**       2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**    75 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**     None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                 27 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 2008.27.6

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Emily Day  
**DATE:** February 26, 2007  
**PLACE:** Richfield, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Emily Day was born in Chicago, Illinois. She lived in Ohio, where she graduated from Oberlin College and earned her Master's degree from Western Reserve University. She then moved to Minneapolis before moving to Richfield. Day still resides in Richfield and has raised a family, taught in the public schools, is a founding member of the Richfield League of Women Voters. She has also been on the Community Council and the Woodlake Nature Center Board.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Neighborhood development; prewar house construction compared to postwar construction; reasons for moving to Richfield; veterans moving to Richfield; increase in the number of children in the area; suburban shopping options; transportation issues; family outings; postwar homogenous population of Richfield; close-knit community; teacher education; working in the public schools; Richfield League of Women Voters; water and sewer installation; husband's work with the Youth Conservation Commission; hosting an African student; recently changing demographics, both ethnic and economic; sense of community when the Richfield High School basketball team went to the state semi-finals; impact of highway construction; optimism about Richfield's future; impact of the airport on Richfield; lack of affordable housing.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      70 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**        None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                    25 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 2008.27.7

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**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Bob Elsen  
**DATE:** February 27, 2007  
**PLACE:** Richfield, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Bob Elsen was born in Richfield, Minnesota. He attended local schools and the University of St. Thomas. Elsen and his wife raised a family and he owns and works at Elsen Auto Repair, a family business that has existed in Richfield since the 1890s.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Location, employment, and service changes of Elsen Auto Repair; history and description of the family business; neighborhood development from fields to houses to apartment buildings; postwar population of Richfield; recreational options for children; development of parks and ball fields; public and private school education; expansion of the local school system to accommodate increasing numbers of students; recreational and school sports; Scholz General Store and changes in suburban shopping; suburban entertainment and dining options; transition from regular to one-time customers at the auto repair shop and stable neighborhoods to frequent turnover; impact of highway construction on his business and the local community; impact of incoming businesses; recently changing demographics; impact of the local airport; convenience and safety of living in Richfield.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      1 60-minute cassette  
   **Original:**        1 60-minute cassette

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      55 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**        None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                    18 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 2008.27.8

OH114.9

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Donald Elsen  
**DATE:** March 22, 2007  
**PLACE:** Bloomington, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Donald Elsen was born in Richfield, Minnesota. He worked in the family business his grandfather started in the 1890s. He married, served in the Army in Korea, and raised a family. Elsen was very active in the local community, particularly through his work at Elsen Service Garage, later called Elsen Brothers, and in Assumption Church.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Postwar home construction and housing developments; transition away from farms and in-house shops; recreational sports; the impact of highway construction on the family business; car mechanics and blacksmithing; service station adaptations to changing demands from its customers; close interaction between the business and community; work ethic; increased complications of running a business; active role of Assumption Church in the social lives of parishioners; rapidly expanding schools; transition from the more rural-based Scholz Mercantile to suburban shopping options; memorial of police officer Fred Babcock; interaction with the Chamber of Commerce; reasons to live in Richfield; changing local demographics.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**           **User copy:**    2 60-minute cassettes  
  **Original:**     2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**    75 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**     None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                 26 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 2008.27.9

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Eugene Elsen  
**DATE:** April 19, 2007  
**PLACE:** Bloomington, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Eugene Elsen was born in Richfield, Minnesota. He attended Assumption School and graduated from De LaSalle High School in Minneapolis. Elsen married and raised his children in Richfield and Bloomington. He worked in financial planning before being employed by his family's business, Elsen Brothers.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Changes in the services Elsen Brothers provides, from services for farmers and pumping gas to auto work; neighborhood descriptions; postwar growth and development of Richfield; transportation options: walking, hitchhiking, and streetcars; recreational sports; his family's sale of property in Richfield; postwar commercial development; World War II air raids; 1950s housing shortage in Richfield; close-knit community and family; increase in shopping options; role of Assumption Church in social life; rapid expansion of Assumption School in the 1950s and 1960s and subsequent decline; demographic changes: increase in minorities, older population; employment options in Richfield; prominence of charge accounts in family business; 1951 tornado; impact of I-494 construction and the airport on business; police-community interaction.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      75 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**        None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      30 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 2008.27.10

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Richard Franzmeier  
**DATE:** July 25, 2007  
**PLACE:** Richfield, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Richard Franzmeier was born in Neillsville, Wisconsin. He attended Luther College and Augsburg College. He eventually moved with his family to Richfield, where he became head bookkeeper at Richfield State Bank. He raised his children in Richfield and has been very active in the American Field Service Committee, City Hall Committee, Rotary Club, and Optimists Club.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Bank's emphasis on employee's living in the community they worked in; changes in the bank since 1959; description of postwar houses; close-knit neighborhoods; importance of community activities in daily life; the idea of Richfield as a small town in a city; resistance to commercial and municipal development; recent demographic changes and division of the local community; Heart of Richfield – attempts to construct a downtown; resentment over tax-increment financing; rapid postwar expansion of schools; local retail development; membership of the Rotary Club; details of building onto the bank and opposition to it; stability of Richfield neighborhoods and social ties; failure of the idea to merge Richfield and Bloomington; makeup of tax base; high quality of Richfield schools during 1960s and 1970s and subsequent decline; strong city leadership; changing political trends; drawbacks of the highways for Richfield; need for Richfield's future to be tied in with another city.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**           **User copy:**    2 60-minute cassettes  
  **Original:**       2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**    80 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**     None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                 32 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 2008.27.11



**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Edwina Garcia  
**DATE:** April 20, 2007  
**PLACE:** Richfield, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Edwina Garcia was born in Clovis, New Mexico. She moved with her family in the early 1970s to Bloomington, and later Richfield, Minnesota. Throughout her time in Richfield, Garcia has been very active in local politics and has served on the city council and in the state House of Representatives.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** The idea of Richfield as a small, safe town; description of Garcia's postwar-built house; personal experience of being a "novelty," a minority in a homogenous town; close-knit neighborhoods; suburban shopping and entertainment options; conflict between Garcia's politics and her Catholic church; advantages of being bilingual; gradual immersion in politics; conservative undercurrent in Richfield; increasing the tax base; political importance of knowing the community and its various perspectives on issues; challenges related to diversity which the school system and city now face; importance of writing letters in the local paper to campaigns; geographic divisions in the city; Richfield's changing relationship with the airport; reasons for running for political office; need for affordable housing; competitive attitudes between Richfield and its larger neighbors; disconnect between an increasingly diverse town and less diverse political representation and law enforcement agents.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      85 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**        None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      36 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 2008.27.12

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** John Hamilton  
**DATE:** March 9, 2007  
**PLACE:** Richfield, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** John Hamilton was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and graduated from Dickinson College. After working in sales, he was transferred by Timex Watches to Minneapolis as a district manager, at which time he and his family moved to Richfield. Hamilton has been involved in the Rotary and Optimist Clubs, worked on the school board, and served three terms as Richfield's mayor in the 1980s.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Hamilton's work in sales and supervision; convenience of living in Richfield; description of postwar houses and later renovations; addition of permanent streets and sidewalks; population increase and subsequent decrease, especially as it pertained to children and schools; friendly neighborhoods transitioning into more solitary ones; suburban shopping options; Southdale's minimal impact on small businesses; aging population; local campaign politics; quality of Richfield schools; suburban entertainment choices; development of parks; importance of Richfield Methodist Church in social life.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**            **User copy:**    2 60-minute cassettes  
  **Original:**     2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**    65 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**    None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                18 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 2008.27.13

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Marvin Iverson  
**DATE:** April 19, 2007  
**PLACE:** Iverson home, Apple Valley, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Marvin Iverson was born in Minneapolis and graduated from Roosevelt High School. He served in the Navy and moved to Richfield where he and his wife raised their family. Iverson worked as a firefighter in Richfield for many years and was part of the New Ford Town interest group.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Fire department entrance exams; postwar housing development and the GI Bill; New Ford Town as a town within a town; close-knit community; inconvenience of shopping; public transportation; relationship of Richfield and Edina to Southdale; influential residents of Richfield; development of New Ford Town and later airport buy-out of the land; issues addressed by the New Ford Town interest group; New Ford Town's inferior treatment by the city; impact of personal political involvement; role of fire department in community involvement, fighting fires, building inspections, and rescue work; negative impact of highway construction on the fire department; construction of Mother's Lake; stories of colorful individuals, plane crashes, and fires in Richfield; local speakeasy; inter-city fire department agreements; local government leaders; changing demographics, especially diversity and an aging population.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      3 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**        3 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      100 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**        None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                    40 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 2008.27.14

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Loren Law  
**DATE:** October 18, 2007  
**PLACE:** Law home, Edina, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Loren Law was born in Bordulac, North Dakota. After completing his degree at Valley City State Teachers College, Law and his family moved to Richfield, Minnesota, where Northwest Airlines employed him. Law served in the Air Force and later served on the Richfield PTA, City Council, and as mayor.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Convenience of living in Richfield; Transition from a rural to suburban community after World War II; commercial development; Law's job training flight personnel for Northwest Airlines; reasons for moving away from and, later, back to Richfield; high quality of local schools; permanent streets, construction of a new library, parks, and other improvements made to Richfield; Law's terms on the City Council and as mayor; city-airport relations; close, friendly neighborhoods; importance of local churches in daily life; recent demographic changes; Law's participation on his condominium board; positive impact of highway construction on Richfield; importance of involving the community in local politics; positive opinion of the future of Richfield; experience as a consultant.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**           **User copy:**   2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**    2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**    105 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**     None

**TRANSCRIPT:**               31 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**       AV 2008.27.15

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Jeanette Lofstrom  
**DATE:** April 26, 2007  
**PLACE:** Richfield, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Jeanette Lofstrom was born in Minneapolis and grew up in Richfield, later returning with her own family. Her relatives have lived in the immediate area since the mid-1800s. As a child, she worked at her family's farm and vegetable stand and later in life was active with the League of Women Voters.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Growing up on a family farm; operating a Model A pickup; varieties of produce grown in Richfield; impact of the Great Depression and World War II on hiring day laborers; shopping at Scholz Mercantile; importance of Assumption Church in the largely Catholic community; Richfield Lutheran Church; two-room grade school; transportation options; buying items at the farmers market and selling them at the vegetable stand along with crops; labor-intensive process of growing flowers and other plants in a greenhouse; postwar growth and development of Richfield; highway construction forcing the move of childhood house; convenience of living in Richfield; children drawing neighbors together; personal experience of polio; entertainment options; suburban shopping opportunities; recent demographic changes and their impact on the community and schools; relationship between Richfield and the airport; Lofstrom family history.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      95 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**        None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                    33 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 2008.27.16

OH114.17

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Vernon L. Luettinger  
**DATE:** February 26, 2007  
**PLACE:** Richfield, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Vernon L. Luettinger was born in St. Charles, Minnesota. After high school, he joined the Navy and was a lieutenant commander when he retired from service. He moved with his family to Richfield, Minnesota, where he was very active in the local government. He served on the city council from 1963-1980, as a zoning hearing examiner, and with the Housing Redevelopment Authority.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Reasons for moving to Richfield; description of postwar housing and GI Bill; stability and friendliness of Richfield neighborhoods; suburban transportation, entertainment, dining, and shopping options; debate over the city water system; importance of Richfield being a community separate from surrounding cities; importance of local churches in daily life; positive and negative aspects of Crosstown and I-494 development; unpopularity of Sunday store closings; practical and aesthetic significance of storm sewers, permanent streets, and lighting; transition from village to Plan B government; increasing diversity of Richfield's population; rezoning and tax increment financing debates; community pride in high school athletic teams; town-airport relations; development and recognition of the Woodlake Nature Center.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      95 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**      None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      42 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 2008.27.17

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Marian Maxson  
**DATE:** February 27, 2007  
**PLACE:** Richfield, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Marian Maxson was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She and her husband later built a home in Richfield, where they raised their family. Maxson was very active in the local United Methodist Church and Girl Scouts. She currently is a charter member of the Richfield Historical Society, and has previous experience working in the Richfield Bank.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Prewar construction; transition of Richfield from rural to suburban; importance of the Richfield United Methodist Church in daily life; transportation and shopping during WWII, close-knit, stable neighborhoods; growing and processing some of the family's food; rapid increase in house construction following the war; importance of children in creating neighborhood friendships; suburban shopping and entertainment options; significance of local parks; recent age and racial demographic changes; high quality of Richfield's public schools; convenient location of Richfield; community work environment; development of the Richfield Bus Company; low occurrence of crime; impact of the city water system and highway construction; personal impact of the 1951 tornado on Maxson's house and her husband's job; community pride in school sports teams; Richfield's July 4<sup>th</sup> parade; proactive political policy; importance of the Richfield Historical Society; positive impact of the airport; the idea of Richfield as a small town.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**                 **User copy:**     2 60-minute cassettes  
  **Original:**       2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**        80 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**         None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                       38 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**            AV 2008.27.18

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Lawrence Molsather  
**DATE:** May 3, 2007  
**PLACE:** Orono, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Larry Molsather, the son of Norwegian immigrants, was born in Richfield, Minnesota, where he was president of the first class to go through the Richfield High School. He moved away from Richfield after college, but later returned to live in one of his childhood homes.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Convenience and affordability of living in Richfield; postwar growth of the city; description of Richfield houses; move from wells to a municipal water system; Richfield's experience of World War II including rationing, air raid wardens, blackouts, and an increase in the employment of women; close-knit neighborhoods and increasing numbers of children in the postwar period; expansion of the schools; increasing suburban shopping options; safety of the community; organization of sports teams for the large numbers of children; developing school traditions; endurance of friendships from Richfield High School; personal experience of balancing Norwegian language and traditions with American ones; jobs available to young people in Richfield in the 1950s; participation in University of Minnesota athletics; reasons for returning to Richfield; aging and stability of the neighborhoods; negative impacts of highway construction and the airport; recent increases in crime in Richfield.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      90 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**        None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                    29 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 2008.27.19



OH114.20

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Mary Reiter  
**DATE:** April 24, 2007  
**PLACE:** Reiter home, Richfield, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Mary Reiter was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She attended Holy Angels High School in Richfield. In 1939, she moved to Richfield. She raised her family in Richfield and was active in the PTA, Democratic Party, and the Civil Service Commission. She married and her husband became the deputy registrar of motor vehicle licenses and ran Reiter Tax Service.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Richfield as a rural farm community and its suburban transition; descriptions of pre and postwar houses; buying houses with sweat equity and FHA loans; the local impact of the Works Progress Administration and other New Deal programs; transportation options; close-knit neighborhoods comprised of young families; installation of city utilities; impact of World War II on suburban life; increasing shopping options and convenience; postwar construction of housing developments; rapid school expansion; her husband's job as deputy registrar and changes in the organization of public services with the transition of Richfield from a village to a city; memories of the 1951 tornado and the shooting of Officer Babcock; postwar functions of the DFL in Richfield; contrast of urban delivery services with more rural waste services; tasks of the Civil Service Commission; benefits of the Richfield park system.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**      **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
   **Original:**            2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      85 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**      None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                      47 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 2008.27.20

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Wesley Scott  
**DATE:** May 3, 2007  
**PLACE:** Richfield, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Wesley Scott was born in Minneapolis and has lived in Richfield his entire life. He graduated from Washburn High School, attended the college of St. Thomas before joining the Army, and later graduated from the University of Minnesota. He married and raised a family in Richfield and was active in coaching youth athletics and in the PTA.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Descriptions of Richfield's development from rural to suburban; housing costs; early transportation options; expansion and quality of Richfield schools; impact of World War II blackouts and rationing on Richfield; Scott's father's move from Canada to the United States to join the Army during World War I; suburban shopping and delivery options; stable and close-knit neighborhoods; Richfield entertainment options: movie theaters, American Legion dances, sports, parks; the idea of Richfield as a small town; convenience of Richfield; Scott's experiences coaching youth hockey; reduction in the size of Richfield over the years; the sense of competition between East and West Richfield.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**           **User copy:**    2 60-minute cassettes  
  **Original:**       2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**       None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                   30 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 2008.27.21

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Florence Simon  
**DATE:** July 31, 2007  
**PLACE:** Richfield, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Florence Simon was born and grew up in Plainview, Minnesota. She attended Winona Teachers' College and graduated with a teaching license and specialties in mathematics and physical education. In the early 1950s, Simon and her family moved to Richfield. Simon was employed as a teacher and later as the principal of Assumption Catholic School.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Reasons for moving to Richfield; homogeneity of close-knit, stable neighborhoods; importance of children in creating a community within the neighborhood; civic issues: city water, community center, the city pool, Woodlake Nature Center, impact of the highways and airport, taxes; development of suburban shopping; Simon's progression from homemaker to teacher to principal; rapid expansion of the schools in the 1950s and 1960s and the subsequent decline; the need to merge the three Catholic schools in Richfield; increasing diversity of Richfield; quality of Richfield's political representation; the idea of Richfield as a small town beside a big city; sense of civic pride and independence; optimism for Richfield's future.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**            **User copy:**      2 60-minute cassettes  
  **Original:**        2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**      85 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**       None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                    37 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**          AV 2008.27.22

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** Gertrude Ulrich  
**DATE:** July 17, 2007  
**PLACE:** Ulrich home, Richfield, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** Gertrude Ulrich was born in Heron Lake, Minnesota. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics from the University of Minnesota and taught in Minneapolis city schools. After her marriage, Ulrich and her husband moved to Richfield, where they raised their family while he operated a dental practice. Ulrich was also involved in many local committees.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Ulrich's experiences living in rural, urban, and suburban Minnesota; reasons for moving to Richfield and experience of moving into an established neighborhood; neighborhood socializing; importance of the churches in social activities and the structuring of neighborhoods; local shopping and dining options; small-town familiarity of Richfield; community homogeneity in terms of race, class, age, and service careers; importance of Richfield High School and athletics in creating a sense of identity for Richfield; quality of local schools and government; Ulrich's participation on the Minnesota Cable Communications Board and Richfield chapters of the League of Women Voters, Planning Commission, Human Rights Commission, and City Council; issues debated in local government and the impact of partisan politics on local issues; increasing diversity of Richfield; significance of geographical boundaries in developing a unique identity for Richfield.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**           **User copy:**    2 60-minute cassettes  
  **Original:**     2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**    105 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**     None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                43 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**        AV 2008.27.24

OH114.24

**MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**

**NAME:** William Snyder  
**DATE:** March 9, 2007  
**PLACE:** Richfield, MN  
**INTERVIEWER:** Thomas Saylor

**PROJECT SERIES:** Minnesota's Greatest Generation History Project  
Richfield in the Postwar Era

**BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:** William Snyder was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He grew up in Van Wert, Ohio and participated in World War II and as a reserve in the Korean War. After his service he married, raised a family, and moved to Richfield, Minnesota. Snyder served as president of the Richfield Historical Society, on the Chamber of Commerce, and as a member of the Optimists and Visions organizations.

**SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:** Moving to Richfield; a description of his first house; the sense of a neighborhood community; the diversity of Richfield; shopping locally and commercial centers; the entertainment and restaurant scene; involvement with the Optimists, Chamber of Commerce, and Visions; working for Central Mutual; the development of Richfield; working with the Traffic Commission; Richfield water quality; the advantages of living in Richfield; the current state of Richfield.

**COMMENTS ON INTERVIEW:**

**SOUND RECORDINGS:**           **User copy:**       2 60-minute cassettes  
  **Original:**         2 60-minute cassettes

**LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:**       81 minutes

**RESTRICTIONS ON USE:**       None

**TRANSCRIPT:**                   53 pages

**ACCESSION NUMBER:**         AV 2008.27.23