

The Grumpy Watchman, Eating Marshmallow Cream, Model-T on Maple, and Town Movies

SM: I just know I loved growing up here in Vienna. I loved my childhood here. In the summer evenings, or late spring evenings, we'd play kick-the-can and Red Light and Mother-May-I. A whole gang of us, we'd get out in the yard.

AS: Could you play it in the street?

SM: No, we did it in the yard. We had a brick sidewalk on our side of the street—from Center Street up to Lawyers. And it was like this. (moves hands up and down) The bricks were all up and down. You couldn't roller-skate. You couldn't do anything. We used to go down—they had a nice sidewalk by Savia's. We'd roller-skate there. The bank, Vienna Trust, was at the corner where POSH is now. They had a watchman. He'd come out waving a gun. 'You kids get away from here!' I don't think it had any bullets in it, but we'd scatter. Ten minutes later, we'd be back. (laughs)

AS: What was in the Freeman Store?

SM: That was where the Freemans lived. Their grandchildren used to come. Peggy and Marian. They had this latticed basement.

AS: Was it under the extension in the back?

SM: Yeah. They had jars of marsh-mellow cream. Peggy or her sister would go get it and everybody would eat out of that jar of marsh-mellow.

AS: Were they sort of your age?

SM: Both of them were older than I was. Peggy was my sister's age.

(continued) There was this old lady who had this, I don't know, a Model-T Ford or something. She would drive that thing. She used red crepe paper to make her cheeks red. They used that for red—for rouge. She would make herself all up and ride down the street in that thing. I'm telling you, that was a sight to see.

(continued) We used to have movies in the old Town Hall when I was a kid. We thought that was great. They were awful.

AS: Was that for pay? Did somebody do that for money?

SM: I can't remember whether we paid. I think that was done by the Town. I'm not sure. They were terrible but we thought they were wonderful. The sound was terrible. It was something new. We'd never seen a movie before. We enjoyed it.

AS: That was as a kid when you went to that?

SM: Yeah, very young. Six, seven, eight years old, something like that.

VH: Were they silent films?

SM: Some of them were, with subtitles or whatever you call them. But there were some that were, if I remember correctly, that were sound. It's been so long. I haven't thought about that for years.