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NOTE: Accompanying sound cassette contains interview with Ben Tollefson.

SUMMARY: A history of the "Red Light District" in Minot, North Dakota, based on interviews with Ben Tollefson, Arlene Saugstad and Warren Hopmann.

SUBJECT: [Tollefson, Ben.](#) 1927---Interviews.

SUBJECT: [Saugstad, Arlene.--Interviews.](#)

SUBJECT: [Hopmann, Warren.--Interviews.](#)

SUBJECT: [Prostitution--North Dakota--Minot](#)--History.

SUBJECT: [Minot \(N.D.\)--History.](#)

SUBJECT: [Third Street \(Minot, N.D.\)](#)--History.

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This photo, courtesy of the city of Minot Assessor's Office, shows the glass porches where the girls would tap the glass with a coin to show their availability.¹

High Third Street

Christine Kuntz
March 15th, 2002
prepared for an Oral History Paper
History 104

¹ Lynn Severson, Plum Valley Women, (Published by the Minot Commission on the Status of Women, 1985) 125

Third Street Southwest in Minot for many decades was a “Red Light District“. “Red Light District” referring to a place where prostitution flourished. Along with the prostitution came gambling, illegal consumption and production of alcohol, and other after hour vices of the times. Minot’s Red Light District was well known throughout the country.² In 1961 the Minot Junior Chamber of Commerce took on a project to close Third Street SW. The timing was right. The make up of the Jaycee’s (Junior Chamber of Commerce) at the time included several promising young lawyers who knew how to access the public information and other young men who knew how to present it to the public. Third Street was closed in time, with the business being disseminated in a wider area, in and out of town. What this project really accomplish was extinguishing the notion that the community accepted this behavior and would let it flourish.

Third Street SW, from 1st Ave to Burdick Expressway today is nothing but parking lots. The small houses are all gone and the restaurants have vanished. When I worked for the city, 15 years ago there was still one small green square cubicle of a home, which sat upon a raised, from the

² Minot Junior Chamber of Commerce. Why Minot? (R-L-M Printing Company, approximately 1961) 19
Interview with Ben Tollefson, Minot, North Dakota, March 6th, 2002 2

street, foundation. I remember looking at it and wondering its history; it looked so out of place. Well, that history is larger than I could have imagined.



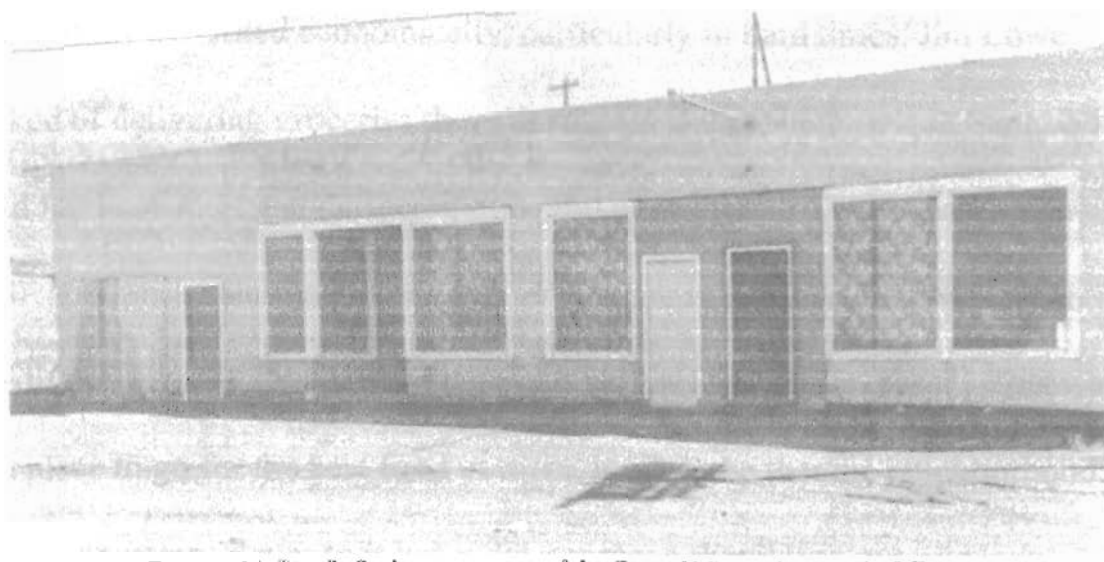
Colored prostitutes, in Kansas, in the early 1900's, photo courtesy of Anne Butler

This area of town was a bustling “integral part of Minot”³ since the early 1900’s⁴. Many blame the existence of it on the railroads. The railroads were a major employer in Minot. The all-male crews, which built the

³ Phone Interview with Arlene Saugstad, Burlington, North Dakota 3-19-2002

⁴ Gaylen Brown, Minot History through slides 1900-1920, (typed booklet at library), no date, pages 1-2

railroad, would not have objected to this trade nor would the men who continued to serve after the construction was complete. "After the turn of the century Minot was a combination of a rough western village and a fast growing trade center."⁵ This was a frontier town filled with farmers, ranchers, railroad, and traveling men some of whom made Minot a destination because of the availability of prostitutes.



Famous Pit Bar-B-Q photo courtesy of the City of Minot, Assessor's Office

This three or four block area had a large economic impact on Minot. In 1961 this industry, made up primarily of Afro-American women, was grossing approximately .25 million dollars per year⁶ not including the secondary businesses associated with it, motel rooms, meals, liquor, and

⁵ Lynn Severson, Plum Valley Women, (Published by the Minot Commission on the Status of Women, 1985) 49

⁶ Minot Junior Chamber of Commerce, Why Minot? (R-L-M Printing Company, approximately 1961) 23

other entertainment.

This was an area of strong in economic activity. It makes me wonder why the founding fathers let the enthusiastic young men of the Junior Chamber of Commerce tackle this project. Perhaps the location of the Jaycee's office, essentially in the neighborhood, was a contributing factor.

The comments through out these interviews showed that the whole community benefited economically, particularly in hard times. Jim Lowe⁷ talked of delivering groceries there during the depression. Arlene Saugstad said her husband, Stan delivered milk and eggs there from the farm⁸. The NSP appliance salesman liked them as customers because there was never a credit problem, just deliver the merchandise and get paid in cash⁹. This was the place to go for the best food in town, it might be that the neighborhood had an unsavory flavor to it but it did not mean that it was not regularly patronized.

⁷ Interview (past conversations) Jim Lowe, in Minot, North Dakota 1985

⁸ Phone Interview with Arlene Saugstad, Burlington, North Dakota 3-19-2002

⁹ Interview with Ben Tollefson, Minot, North Dakota, March 6th, 2002 3



Avalon photo courtesy of the City of Minot, Assessor's Office

This area of town had a rhythm life was different than that of the rest of town. This is where people went after the main street merchants closed. It was open 24 hours a day, but flourished in the night. The daytime was filled with sleepy days, laundry ladies, and shopping sprees. These folks had their community where they loved, lived and fought as any other segment of

society. The interview with Erma Simonson¹⁰ gives much insight into the daily tasks and the personalities of the people who lived there. I loved the tales of going shopping and walking by some of their customers with no recognition, the new underwear in all the fancy colors that when washed all turned to yellow, the help the prostitutes gave her walking her colicky baby at night was a heart warmer. They were regular folks who carried on life and did what they had to survive.

If we believe that only the travelers sustained this trade we would be lying to ourselves. As mentioned in all the interviews, the local businessman, professionals, and college professors were the regular customers, in addition to the rancher coming to town for the day, the railroad men on a layover or the classic traveling salesman. This part of town extruded a bit of romance and fun during some very austere times. Nicknames such as Little Chicago, High Third Street, and a characterization of it as a miniature Las Vegas¹¹ illustrate that it sustained fame as a place for entertainment.

Minot would not be the same place had this part of town never

¹⁰ Lynn Severson, Plum Valley Women, (Published by the Minot Commission on the Status of Women, 1985) 126-134

¹¹ Interview with Ben Tollefson, Minot, North Dakota, March 6th, 2002 8

existed. Though many of the players left town after the break-up, many stayed and contributed to the community. Ray DeBrill, Dee D. Govan, and Saul Davis are just a few I am familiar with. I hope someone will take the time to write **this segment of Minot's history**, as the original sin always fascinates **people**. This history is missing the links to organized crime that came in **during prohibition**; the truth about the tunnels below the area; the smuggling of alcohol from Canada into the now, I. Keating building; the links to the military base, both in getting it located here and retaining it; segregation and racial discrimination; and the political corruption. It is a story that some would **only** whisper about but a story that shaped Minot into what it is today.



Vendome Bar courtesy of the City of Minot, Assessors Office

Endo Motel

Point Motel
(314)

I. Keating
Building (Now)

1st Ave SW

Tessa Hunter

801

111 Francis Rhodes
113 Fred Jorgenson

Vendome Bar 104
Mirtle Handy 108

Oilmen's Cafe 110
Orville Burns 112

Oscar Halseth 116

115 Louise Beaver

Paul's Brake Service

2nd Ave SW

201 Rolla Registrar

211 Herbert Mills
215 Ernie Swenson

Erna Filipek 202
Clarence Amundson 204
Robert Stidham 206
Elmer Elvestad 208
Agnes Berg 210
Albert Lauff 214
Asplund Garage 218
Allen Registrar 220

222 Edward Wood
224 Hans Vanaen
226 Mirtle Young
228 Charlene Ackerman

Minot Chamber of Commerce

Addresses listed in
bookings in the book
"Why Minot"

Junior Chamber of
Commerce Office

City Minot Municipal Auditorium

NS St. SW 4th

Western Ave

227 Bertha Hoff

Charles Filipek

Margaret Simpson
Avalon

Della Marsh

SW St. 3rd

229 Thepket's Grocery

Sweetheart Bakery

Broadway (2nd St. Southwest)

3rd Ave SW

Parking Lot

313

Interstate Bus Garage 305
Vacant 306
Coffee Bar 308
Sauls 310
Bob-B-Q 312
Grace Kane 314
George McLean 316
The Grill 318
Ann & Sam Davis 320

305 F.D. Simpson
307 Third St. Grocery
309 Ray DeBrell
311 Dave D. Gowan
313 Gowan
317 Gowan

Boston Serial

Burdick Exp. (4th Ave SW)

Ben Tollefson Taped Interview

March 6th, 2002 in Minot, North Dakota

So Ben, can you tell me a little bit about your connection with the community? Did you grow up here?

My connection is that I grew up here. I was born here. June 14, 1927. Which is a long time ago.

The flapper era

74 years will be 75 year. I have been relatively active, even as a young man. That's how I got in to this thing (tapping the envelope containing Why Minot?). My connections with the community have been pretty solid, all the while. We were out of Minot for about a year. We lived in Crosby. I don't even count that because we have always been here. So I have a .. My activities include all the way from Jaycee's, to Kiwanis, to chamber of commerce, to political. Even I have been real active in our church. Which is St. Mark's Lutherans church. So if there was ever a native Minoter, I am one.

You have the label. Let's start talking about the demise of third street. You said that you were part of the Jaycee's when they took on this project. Why in the 60's did they decide to get rid of this area? Obviously their is a long history, it had been there a long time.

Well, I don't know when it all started, but I can guess. It probably started with the railroad. The Railroad was such an important part, we had a lot of employees. At one time there were over 600 rail employees., always a lot of traffic through here, passenger traffic and other. I think our proximity to Canada makes a difference.

They mentioned that in the booklet.

Of course the Jaycees, and they really used to be active, picked up on ... they used to pick up on... as a matter of fact at this time I was president of the Jaycee's ... they picked up on any project that might be good for the community or a training ground for younger people. To be a future civic leaders, or whatever it might be. And so this is a good one because, Joe Loader who would become Attorney General, was States Attorney. All these records were public records, so the availability of it was right there. Another attorney that was mention in here, was Herb Meschke, as a matter of fact he was chairman of this committee, he just retired from the States Supreme of North Dakota court, two years ago.

That's a good training record.

He was a big part of it. Many people thought it was a blot on the community. Not all people thought that way. but this Jaycee's eager young anxious to do something for the community. Thought this was a good project, and especially when you have the persons in the right positions to do that. So that is probably why.

In this booklet they were asking the prostitutes questions leading to the connection to more vice activities, was that a part of it? drug trafficking, drugs

You know drugs at that time, you didn't hear about them. I didn't hear about maraquana until 20 years ago,

I was thinking I went to college in the 60's and 70's the hippie era and I was wondering if they were worried of drugs coming in? but you don't think that was a problem. they mentioned a guy, what was his name, a Broxie Maiz? and his connection of bringing in drugs to the prostitutes.

Hmmm, I'm not familiar with that.

Obviously he was a bad influence. *Ben reads about it*

It is just a tone I picked up looking for why they chose to close it.

This reputation of Third Street was all over the countryside. I use to .. of course I worked for Northern States Power company for 34 years. Most guys, the visiting firemen from Minneapolis or where ever. The first thing they wanted to do was show me Third Street. This was, the reputation was like, I think I mentioned this fellow, Swede Olson, that had a shoe shine shop on 1st Street SW which would be now just north of the Bremmer or American Bank. Had you, talked to him at that time. He would always say you talk about economic development, you talk about third street. they bring more money and more people into Minot than any project to date.

They mentioned in there that they figured the girls were bringing in a .25 million a year. And then when you think of the rest of it, spending a night, going out to dinner, it had to be a lot of dollars.

.25 of a million dollars in those days was a lot of money.

Well, even now, a .25 million dollars/ year. you wouldn't run a business out of town.

Absolutely, not.

But if like you said the community felt it was a blight

Some did, and of course it had existed so long, some felt it was really bad news. And really morally it is bad news. If you look at the economics of it, which many people did, they thought it would be alright to let it exist. If it is confined. What happen here ,with project , all it did was break it up. Many of us in some places they talk about the Flame. It moved south of town, it was absolutely wide open. I was out there myself, not as a customer. They didn't know why , and they had good food, if you wanted a drink you could have a drink after hours if you looked right. They were very popular. What it did was, to disperse it. Originally, Third Street was from 1st Ave, I. Keating's now, up to Burdick which was 4th Ave. then. and on up that street. They even picture it, there is one which they missed which would have been west ,of Keatings, it was a popular spot because it sat on a promitary ,a point on the hill. I don't know what else went on. Right directly south of there was the Vendome Motel and bar. That was a two story building, is that down now? Minot electric bought it a t one time, but it might be out of there, now. Then across the street into the next block is a grocery store called Tuepker's T_U_E_P_K_E_R, the reason I know that so well is when I sold cookie's and crackers which I did at one time, I called on them. And I was always told that many of these places where connected by tunnels. I didn't ever see that but across the street was the Avolon, Parrot Inn was on 4th Ave. best chicken in town, and it you went in there at 1:00 in the morning the place was packed. Then we had these other guys like Saul Davis and, mostly colored guys running it.

When you read the interviews with the prostitutes, they say there are 20 colored girls working, but there are a lot of white girls but they hadn't been caught.

That is probably true.

I'm trying to think of some of those others Dee D. Govan, short slightly built black man, Saul Davis was a former baseball player

I knew Saul, I never knew his connection to this but when I worked for the park he would always park his car at the pool, and I talked to him lots about his years in the colored league.

Yes, he was a great guy. Matter of fact, latter on he worked for the Green thumb.

He was active in that latter, but he was real active here. Saul, I am trying to think of some of the others Dee D. some of my friends are listening in.

I noticed that the book lists mostly the girls, and not the public. What was the fear of publishing this book?

I don't think people were afraid of it, it became very popular, the book did. Oh course , you know how it works. If you bring things out into the light, people either get nervous or nosey. one of the two.

It really, this project brought a national recognition to the Minot Jaycee's . We, our chapter, won a national award for this project. What happened latter, I think it was latter, the city put in street lights. I mean like about two or three a block, big fluorescent things, the theory being if you light up things people will kind of duck the light.

Who knows what all brought about the demise of Third Street. I think this book helped certainly law enforcement, they talk about law enforcement, and of course some of that was bought off.

They mentioned that , said they were only running one shift.

But the lights. At that time they started to move out of town, there was the Springcroft, the Flame, the Chicken Ranch, all out of the city limits. You didn't take prostitution away you just spread it around. Their maybe prostitution right here in Minot today.

When I worked at the park the boys knew where to go. It moved around , but they could find it.

Sure, that's right. The word gets out.

The Avalon, the Coffee Bar,

They imply a lot of business men were effected by this. Did they own the property? or were they just customers?

I don't know who owned all the land. I suspect some business man owned a lot of it and leased it out. A friend of mine who sold appliances for a living. In fact, I went up there with him a couple of times. His name was Bobby Ellison. Everybody knew Bobby Ellison he said some of his best customers were up on Third Street. They bought appliances and it wasn't a credit problem, just cash money. And we went into the Parrot Inn one morning about 1 am , I was a young man and could stand those hours. But I remember, this waitress came up to him and said "Bobby, a colored lady, what can we do for you to night Bobby?

Ben was backing out of there

If you could look into the ownership of some of that property, I bet some businessmen own a lot of it. Minot was a different community back then.

Like I say I think the railroads, had a lot of effect on the development of third street, probably even way back when they were building the railroads through here.

It was mostly a male community.

Why sure at that time, and it gets started and the word gets out. Word of mouth is the best advertisement. And it just keeps growing. I say , I bet if you look around town, my not around town like that any more, but I bet there is prostitution yet.

I think that is part of every culture, it is just how well it is hidden, and how well it is enforced.

Right

Did they notice an economic change when they ran them out, or did it just disperse them?

As far as I know it just moved them around., I don't know but maybe someone with the Chamber of commerce could have said **we had less traffic** or what ever. I have never heard, you **checked** the newspaper?

I couldn't find anything really. No editorials, but since it is not indexed I could have missed something.

You know, I suppose Minot, **if you** look at it from the standpoint of the Chamber of Commerce, they didn't **necessary** think that this **Third Street** was a good thing. It **was certainly a blot on their** reputation. A lot of the church people were really upset.

Did they preach about it, or talk about it all.

As far as I know they just over looked it. I suppose some of the churches , The Baptist if anybody . The Baptist churches were popular in Minot and well attended. If anybody would probably been **speaking up** against it it would have been the Baptists. But I don't remember that. I'm a Missouri Synod Lutheran about as conservative as you can get and I don't remember anyone saying anything against it. But it was an interesting project for the Jaycee's which gave them a reputation, but it also opened the eyes of the people. That it existed whether you liked it or not. I kind of brought things to the light. I can remember this name Della Marsh for example, real well.

When I went through it I didn't think they put anybody's name in it. but at that time they didn't ticket the johns it was the prostitutes and the **gamblers** that they wrote up. If you read it are mostly the prostitutes and the madams.

Well, you see if you look at the law. Hear if you Victory Johnson not Johnson but Victor Lington. I **knew** him real well in fact he caused me to get into politics. **the only thing** they could get him on was **illegal** consumption of alcohol, after twelve o'clock. So they probably raided the Parrot Inn **and** he got caught with a cocktail in his hand and that is about **all** they could **charge** him with. Now, what if **he** have been picked up for prostitution, well he wouldn't have been, he would have been a customer and I don't know if that's illegal.

I think it is. Back in here they talked **about** it Assignment, yes, that would be fitting. But then **like** you said it was just the girls, like this Della Marsh.

Were girls part of **the community** ?

As far as I can remember **they were fairly isolated**, you know at that time people were **more** sensitive to the black and white. I **think you can look at the blacks and they stayed by themselves**, oh you would see them downtown and such. **But Today it would be different**, you know what I'm saying, **the integration thing** would be a big factor. You got to realize too, and I would bet, a lot of the law enforcement guys were paid off too. Law enforcement was paid off.

As a matter of fact this guy at Tuepkers grocery would tell me, "Hey we are having a raid tonight **behave** yourself. " Now , how did he know that. Well you know, you get the **right information** and you pay a little bit and you can be forewarned and forewarned is forearmed. And don't think that didn't happen but I think that caused this part of town to be in place a long time. If you think about it they didn't have the law enforcement , not like today ,it sounded **like** they had one shift mainly

you know

they directed a little traffic

I think these people. At that time one of the most popular hotels in downtown Minot was the Leland Parker Hotel and before this burned down was the Waverly Hotel, all those bellhops they were probably the best promoters of Third Street, these guys, if you wanted something they got it for you. With a pay off I'm sure.

Uh-huh

So all of these guys had a kind of a network. I'm talking from my head but you know how these things work. Yes," tonight there's going to be a raid, so be good". And there was no electronics at that time, except possibly the telephone.

They probably didn't use that because it was a party line.

That's right it was a party line.

They also talked about you know, who was it Governor Guy?

It's right in the back there.

The Police Chief, and the States Attorney,

Yes and the mayor, Harrison

Harrington

Yes, Harrington

Bifocals really aren't ... Here it is, here's Governor Guy

Now lets take Harry... think about his connections, he was a business man, he had Harrington Brother Stock Yards big ... They'd get a lot of these cattlemen they came in they bought cattle, they sold cattle, whatever, they stayed overnight in Minot. You know your not going to disrupt these guys too much. Now I'm not saying that he couldn't do anything. He maybe just overlooked some of the pressures, which could have been placed on them

This Swede, Olson if he was alive he would be just a reservoir of information on this place, he used to say that the red light district extended east to 1st Ave, where he was, that would be north of the Bremmer building the Bremmer Bank their used to be two story buildings their were a couple of them, and the girls would be up on the balcony, now that is what he said. I don't know.

I was surprised to when I think of a brothel, you know several girls, but they seemed to imply in here that it was a house with one or two girls at most. So it changed my opinion of what I thought of as a

Well, you see if you read this closely, this DeBrill, Ray DeBrill and Saul Davis, and some of those people they were charged with White Slavery, here and so they were bringing as a matter of fact I think in the latter stages, they were bringing, they brought some of those girls by air. North Central Airlines was in here, sent from Minneapolis, so forth and so on. Even some of those allegations got them in trouble I don't know what kind of category that was

It's here cause Ray asked me what it was ... know there is a definition, It's the first one knowingly transports interstate

Right, I know Minneapolis, Winnipeg, that's the way I remember that.

and especially when they were bring them on the airlines, and I think some of them did. And they got caught a couple of times. Debrill or Saul Davis one of them got picked up for that now you are talking about a federal offense .

It must have, even though it may have dispersed it, it must have lowered the incidence of prostitution because it's not something that you even see now. I've been here some 20 years and... Like I said I know the guys know where to go but it's not a big community.

You see, this is such a concentration, I think a number of ...number 1 concentration and number 2 I think is the reputation, who knows, say 50 maybe even 100 years, 50 years at least, it kind of developed. Commerce, it became, so the concentration of it caused more attention on it, which caused more attention by the law enforcement, then of course your going to get kind of a favor, and so forth and so on.

If I went to a hotel today, I would bet I could get, as matter of fact it has happened to me in Minneapolis, the bellhop said " if you lonesome tonight, call me, let me know. Now this is the way it works today, you didn't You know go up to a Vendo Motel or an Avalon café, or a.. and make the arrangements there, the arrangements come to you. I think the way of doing business is entirely different and that in turn also lessens the odds, well the notoriety of it, or people don't pick up on it as quickly as..

Well it's harder to trace.

Well sure, how are you going to do that? And like I say these Bellhops, I'm sure they get a kickback, you know... They know how to pick people, they are very selective. They know whom to ask.

They know who to ask and who not to ask.

Yeah, this guy looks like a prospect, you see. So then that's what happened. Over the years, lot of people, knew the popularity of it, it was known as a place to have fun and drinks, eats and do what ever you wanted to do when everything else was closed. So I think the method of doing business, it's not going away, it's just different it's a different process. That's my opinion, I'm not being an expert.

No, but you were there and that's the neat part. Like, well I told you when I worked at Lowe's with Jim Lowe, Phil's Dad Jim's parents owned a grocery store, and he delivered groceries during the 20's and he said that's when everybody was broke, then he would go down there and everybody would give him candy. His whole feeling of that area was real positive it was a good time in his life. They had money, and they spent it.

They had money when nobody else had anything. And if you got into trouble they could help you out, I think that's where some of this flourished. Probably, a good time out was not a real expensive deal. Then you had these travelers coming through, especially the railroad. If you came to Minot you didn't come in in the morning and fly out in the afternoon. You came in a probably stayed least overnight and maybe even more. So even, ...Hey even the business people came in to town, say the visiting fireman, they would say hey show me a good time tonight. A lot of people would ask you about it.

That area seems to be completely raised.

Yah,

Did it just diminish over time?

You know way back, that I Keating building. That was Through Motors (Stearn's Motors) There are rooms in that building that still are probably not known. It was really, kind of a den of eniquity. That's another part of this story the bootlegging days.

I was wondering if that started all this?

Well, you know with the proximity to Canada, getting booze into North Dakota was relatively simple. Well, they did. That was maybe the beginnings, that together with the railroad. But this Keating's building.

I have noticed that when you go into it, there's this little room and that little room, and for a huge building... it **seems really compartmentalized**. I never consider it as being part of the bootlegging industry.

Some of these parameter rooms still have stills in them. That building was concrete. There were chambers through out that building. Bootlegging was big in Minot, a lot of money was made. In fact, today there are sons and daughters of bootleggers.

I was, my Dad was a bootlegger in Iowa,

Was he?

Yeah, it was small scale since we didn't have the Canadian connection.

The Probst's, Tom Prost (Probst Law Firm), his Dad went by two names, Brown. That's kind of an old name, Joe Brown, but his real name was Joe Probst. It ended up Dakota Beverage and that's where the boys came in. They ran Dakota Beverage after Joe died. He made a lot of money, a lot of money. There were others, too that, Transportation, third street, all allowed it to be there and to grow. This exposed, a lot of people don't want to see their name in a book.

Not in that book!

It was very popular.

I bet everybody had to have a copy of it.

I think the Minot Daily has a one of these.

I think I'm going to go down and see if I can find the secret file

Sure, they

I was surprised I figured their would be stuff in the paper, but then thinking of the times, they may not have wanted it.

I once accused the Minot Daily, especially today, of being in business to write about who ever buys the most advertising.

That's true.

You bet, if you buy a lot of advertising they will treat you right in the editorial page., but in those days it may not have been that much different. You know, you aren't going to write against some business people if they are going to lose whole bunch of business. It would be biting off your hand.

No, you can't afford to

You know as right as it may have been... some of those editorials and I don't remember them at all. Kind of glossed the whole thing over. It is an interesting part of Minot, though. This book not that that did it all, but in combination with the lighting of Third Street, the increased law enforcement, which suppose ably went along with the project.

You talk about recommendations, those were all recommendations.

Right

I haven't been able to find articles to support that. That's what I'm doing now, trying to find articles about the community action that was taken.

One issue that we haven't talked about of course is gambling. Gambling was available up there too. It was like a mini, **mini Las Vegas**. Let's face it you could do just about what ever you wanted to do. **Your** from out of town and you wanted to have fun you went to Tuepker's. That's what you did.

And if you were from in town? They seem like plenty were from in town.

That's right.

When you read this, you realize that... that's why they get closed down. Many times it's not the prostitution but the vice that goes with it. Was there much organized crime that went with it?

Far as I know that wasn't a factor. But you know usually some type of crime follows this type of lifestyle. I don't know... other than alcohol .. I don't know if there was some hard cocaine, maybe that was available to. If you talked to Saul Davis or DeBrille maybe they could get it for you.

Ray DeBrille

Ray DeBrille

Saul ran the Barb-B-Q?

Saul ran another one to. The nicest place as far as looking nice and so forth, was the Parrot Inn. The Parrot Inn was right on the corner wherewell it would have been kitty corner form the Flower box, right on the That corner there . It was a nice building and good food,

Most of these establishments were colored, but it was mixed it wasn't segregated like in the South?

Most of these people we are talking about in this book were colored. Now there might have been some white. Now it seems to me that Tuepker's might have been a white, or maybe he was mulatto. But it didn't amount to a row of beans. I think what happened down there kind of revolved around Tuepker's Grocery, he always knew what was going on.

He was the alarm man?

Or maybe more, who knows but they

How do you spell that ? I've never seen it before.

I tell you I can recall it so well. It wasn't a big grocery store. Probably only 25' wide and not even that. You went up about three concrete steps to get into that door and he had 3 or four cans of grocery's on one side. He bought some cookies and crackers from me once and awhile, but that didn't amount to much.

You don't think he ws making a living on the groceries?

No, I don't think so, but he always said." I know the operation." I was told by him or otherwise about how they were all connected underground.

That's the grocery store that's where Harvey enterprises used to be.

No, it would have been about a block south of Keatings

Oh, ok

Keating, then right on the corner was the Vendome Hotel, then west of Keatings was The Point, a very popular bar, then about a 1/2 block south of there was Tuepker's east side of the street right across from it was the Avalon. Maybe there is nothing there now.

Empty block now, just a lot of parking.

You see then there the Sweetheart bakery's garage.

I remember a little mint green house, just a shambles. It was something I always wondered about. It was still here while I was here.

It probably had a connection. I think that that was with main places. Butler's Inn is something that stick's in my mind. Was that something.

go throught the names in the books

The Grille, I think Tuepker's was right near the Grille, what's that address.

315 3rd Street Sw

The Flame that's the one that went out of town.

Radio City addition

yeah

And the Springcroft that was out of town?

Yeah that was over in , you know where that was oh if you go down valley street to...

The Red dog?

No not that far. It was in a kind of a couleethere is that deep draw next to the road that goes up the hill

turn over the tape

Here is the springcroft

It is kind of a fancy looking place

I don't recall ever being in there

The famous Pit Barbaque., that is down on 4th Ave quite a ways.

That is different from Saul's.

There's another place down there, latter on, a house of prostitution, there is a bar down there and a small motel 4 maybe 6 units just south of there.. I think it is still there. I'm suspicious if that isn't one.

When I first came to town there was Sunday closing. They said if you went to the backdoor of the Red Dog Saloon on Sunday they would get you whatever you wanted. That's what they told me.

I think that there are a lot of places, yet, that you can get what ever you want,

You know, we have vice today.

It is interesting that both of these guys who both played such a major role on the this committee Herb Meschke, he just retired from the supreme court. he lives in Minot, east of Minot right now he is very crippled up. Very sharp attorney. Joe Loader lives in Tucson, in fact we were talking about him this morning. He was a very curious guy. Always wanting to know more about something. If fact, that is probably, his very curiosity is what instigated the publication of the pamphlet. It became a good Jaycee's project. Do good for the community and make the Jaycee's look like a bunch of heroes.

And you were President..... And that is what draw communities together.

The Jaycee's were so active at that time. You don't even here of them today. At that time they were kind of a training grounds for people to become community leaders. They used to be strictly men. Now there are a lot of women in it. In fact that got a lot of attention a few years ago, when they were forced them to admit women. Which is fine.

They had a strong Jayceetes program.

Yeah, but the Jaycee's did a lot of community projects. Not even half of them were moneymakers so I don't know how we kept our head above water, financially But it was a lot of fun. If you look around town you can see a lot them, most of the active Jaycees, became active in the community,

I think it give you connection, it is easy to stay inactive if you isolate yourself., but when your walking down the street and somebody say's hey we need you to work on this project.

Conversation went away from third street.

Arlene Saugstad a telephone interview 3-19-02

(C) Arlene do you have any insight on 3rd street SW?

(A) You mean the infamous 3rd street? The Red light district?

(C) Yes

(A) Yes. While I was dating Stan (Saugstad) we ate there. It was the best food and open 24-hour a day.

(C) Do you know the name of the establishment you eat at?

(A) I don't know if it had a name, it was Dee Dee Goldwin's (Govan's). He just died recently. He was an interesting character.

(A) Stan would have been a great one to talk to as he delivered eggs and milk every day to that area. He knew the kitchens of those establishments well.

(C) I know when I first came here I would work with Jim Lowe and his parents ran a grocery store in that area and as a kid he delivered groceries there. It always seemed a happy time when he talked about it. They had fun and always had treats for him during the hard times.

(A) Yes, the Paul Kempers, the Samuelson's the people who go back a long time in this city would know more about the working so 3rd street as it was "Well an Integral Part of Minot". It was never a threat or a hazard just kind of "unsavory" something you would whisper about, but yes it was an integral part of Minot like Eastwood Park was a part and main street was a part. You might be marked if you were seen there but it was well known that many of our illustrious businessmen were seen there with regularity.

(C) Are there any other places I might find more out about 3rd street?

(A) In the "Plum Valley Women" book I helped coordinate their is an excellent article with a prostitute who worked in the 3rd street area. In the old days you could have gone to the paper office but it is now harder to find anything from the paper.

(C) I know the paper used to have a file but it is missing and as the paper is not indexed it is hard to identify anything.

(A) I know but the Ward County Independent is the Gordon B. Olson library I edited it for 8 years, it goes way back and it is indexed. Another person you might want to contact and I know he would be flattered if you asked is Chris Mostad he is 93 and lives in the Clarence Parker Hotel. He was a bachelor for years until some widow caught him but she is long gone. He would know a lot of tales to tell.

Discussion then went to other subjects that we hold in common.

Interview with a Warren Hopmann,

City of Minot Inspector, 3-25-2002

Warren do you know any history of the last standing house on third street?

That was Erma Simonson's house. After the baby was born she moved to the Virginia apartments.

Did you ever eat on third street?

Yes the Grill. If mom was out of town Dad always took us there and we had hamburgers and he had the special coffee(they served illegal alcohol in coffee cups).

Did you ever eat at Dee D Govans's?

Yes, he had the best chili.

Did the tunnels that everyone talks about exist?

They existed, but not as people talk about them. They were NSP heating tunnels and some that were used for delivery from the days when all deliveries were through the basement.

Erma Simonson's brothers were Howard's. You know the attorney Judith Howard? Two of the boys were killed in world war 11. One was a pilot and the B-52 trainer at the base is named in honor of him. Irma divorced her husband and built a small house up near the cemetery behind her brothers.

I cut some Dutch Elm Trees down there.

You know you should talk to Al Hockspuring. He owned AJH Motors on Burdick. He lived right behind it on 3rd street and knew the area well. Another person to talk to is Jerry Filler, the fireman.

I know him well he helped me with specifications for the boom truck.

He lived up there and his dad was a cab driver. He would be full of stories and he loves to talk. Also, Dean Caldwell, he has been collecting Minot history for decades. Being in the real estate businesses he knew a lot of people and had time to talk.

My Uncle lived up there kind of behind the Salvation Army and then a little to the East. There were a lot of steps to get in the front door. It was on top of the hill. He was a policeman and had 5 boys. They were my double cousins. He was my dad's brother and she was my mother's sister. They divorced and she moved the boys to Washington. His picture is on the wall in the police station.

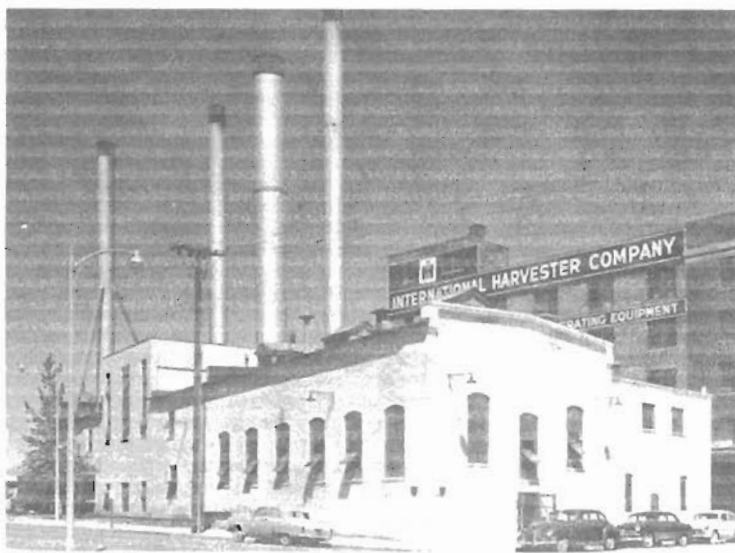
(different city employee) Another person you could talk to is Laura Olson, Apt 117 at the Brentmoor is my husband's aunt and she is 97 years old and she loves to tell stories.

We were looking at the plates from the assessor's office and Warren told me about loading railroad cars to send illegal Canadian whiskey to Chicago.

The front of I Keatings is all built on; they're used to an incline that went down toward the tracks and a Standard oil station. That's where they unloaded the booze and put it into railroad tanker cars to ship to Chicago. See that's a spur line that came right to the building so they could load efficiently. It was big business.

You know that ramp that runs up behind I. Keating's? One night in the 60's we (a couple of buddies and me) were buying booze on third street and for some reason he didn't pay. He just took off real fast and missed the turn. We were heading up that ramp with all these big black guys yelling and chasing us. I was real worried, but he stuck that big old Chevy into reverse and jammed gears to get us out of that one.

You really need to get to talk to Jerry Filler he has a lot of good stories about that part of town.



Old Power Plant providing heat to all of downtown photo courtesy of Dean Caldwell