

Taped Interview
Mr. Charles Dapprich
January 20, 1971

Dearborn Historical Museum

Oral History Program

Interviewee: Mr. Charles Dapprich

Interviewer: Mr. Donald Baut

Topic: Charles Dapprich Working At Wagner Brickyard

Mr. Donald Baut: This is January 20, 1971. We're talking to Charles Dapprich, whose family has been in Dearborn just a little over a hundred years, I guess. Mr. Dapprich, you were born, I believe, on July 8, 1885, were you not?

Mr. Charles Dapprich: Yes.

Mr. B: And your parents were Theodore and Elizabeth Sullivan Bean Dapprich, right?

Mr. D: Yes.

Mr. B: Now where was your father from in Germany?

Mr. D: That's something I couldn't tell you. My mother came from Switzerland. Her father's name was Bean.

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Mr. B: Did they talk German around the house?

Mr. D: Where they lived was out in the brickyard. It was all Germans.

Mr. B: Where did they live around the brickyard?

Mr. D: They lived on Elm Street. Elm Street stopped at Michigan Avenue, you know. The first house from the track. We had a lot. It was a hundred feet frontage and it ran two hundred feet. We grew all our vegetables. Right along the fence we had turnips.

Mr. B: Did your dad work in the brickyard then?

Mr. D: Oh yes. He was a foreman there. The Wagners owned the brickyard.

Mr. B: Anthony Wagner.

Mr. D: Yes.

Mr. B: Did you work in the brickyard later?

Mr. D: Oh yes, since I was able to hop around. We edged brick first out in the open yard. We had trucks that took six molds at a time. There's a fellow out in the yard that's called the "dumper." He dumped it in the yard. After a while, they were put in racks. They dumped them right in the machine on pallets. They were called pallets. There was a man under the racks that put the pallets on the racks. We brought an empty one back to the machine.

Mr. B: How old were you when you worked in the brickyard?

Mr. D: Oh, the last time I worked, I was around sixteen or seventeen years old.

Topic: Charles Dapprich Going To School

Mr. B: What about your formal education? Did you go over here to the Dearborn Public School at all?

Mr. D: Yes. Well, there used to be a school at the corner of Park and Monroe. There's a big brick building there now. That used to be the first school I went to.

Mr. B: You went to the Upstairs-Downstairs School?

Mr. D: Oh, they only had one floor there just a little while. Then they built what they called the Dearborn High.

Mr. B: How long did you go to school?

Mr. D: Oh, we just went to school in the wintertime. We worked in the summertime in the brickyard.

Mr. B: The brickyard did not operate all year round, did it?

Mr. D: Oh no. They made bricks, then late in the fall, they had a tile shed and made tile, too.

Topic: Charles Dapprich Working On The Michigan Central Railroad

Mr. B: Then you started out in 1905 on Michigan Central. Who was the depot agent then?

Mr. D: Let's see. Moon, Thad's dad. He used to be at Denton when they moved down here. Station agent they called them.

Mr. B: What did you do on the Michigan Central?

Mr. D: I worked on the section repairing the tracks. In the summertime we put in ties that needed them and resurfaced the tracks. In the wintertime we'd tighten the belts, change the rails whenever they'd get a broken rail.

Mr. B: Was that around Dearborn here that you did that?

Mr. D: Oh yes. Yes. You see they had two sections out in Dearborn. One section, of course, was just the other side of Monroe. That ran pretty near to Miller Road.

Mr. B: Where did the other section go?

Mr. D: West to Middlebelt...