

Bradford Fleming Cochran
Narrator

Cole Steinberg
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Interviewer

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Transcriber

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Minnesota

CS: Cole Steinberg

BC: Bradford Fleming Cochran

CS: This is an interview conducted as a part of a larger faculty and student research project initiated by Dr. Julie Luker of Concordia University Saint Paul. Today is July 6th, 2022, and I'm here with Brad Cochran. My name is Cole Steinberg, and I am an undergraduate student at Concordia University St. Paul. Today I'll be talking to Brad about what life was like growing up in the Twin Cities. During this interview, I'm going to ask you to reflect on your childhood life experiences as they relate to a variety of social topics from that time period. For the purposes of this interview, we have defined childhood as birth through 17 years of age. To begin, please state and spell your full name.

BC: Bradford Fleming Cochran. B-R-A-D-F-O-L-D F-L-E-M-I-N-G C-O-C-H-R-A-N-E.

CS: Please identify your race and gender.

BC: Male and European descent. German/Swedish.

CS: Please state your date of birth.

BC: 04/27/1956.

CS: Finally, please share where you grew up, such as the name of the neighborhood or a nearby street intersection. Include any major moves you made during this time period.

BC: From 0 to 15, yeah, 0 to 15, it would be considered, I guess the Groveland area between Cretin and Goodrich and River Road and Goodrich across from what was then called the Saint Paul Seminary, which is today the St. Thomas University area.

CS: Okay, thank you. I'd like to learn more about your family—

BC: Oh, I'm sorry. Excuse me. Then at age, sorry, at age 15, moved right near Highland Park High School and graduated from Highland Park High School.

CS: I would like to learn more about your family life. Let's begin with the memories you have for immediate and extended family. Please share some memories that you have about these relationships.

BC: Well, I grew up the youngest of five, middle to late baby boomer, and we had what you might consider a typical family; two parents, five kids. For that period, considered a small family in my neighborhood because most families along that street and that area, it was not unusual to have 8 kids, 10 kids and a little bit more in some of those households. Basically, we were quite well off. My father was a doctor, well known ophthalmologist in Saint Paul, our neighbors were well off. I didn't get the sense that we bragged about our wealth because it was really about the kids in the neighborhood, and there were just kids everywhere. Really, I don't know if I have that many stories other than there always being kids around and something to do.

CS: Which family members did you engage with the most growing up?

BC: I think my next older brother who was five years older than me, and then again, that was really an entree into the neighborhood community more than anything.

CS: Did you have any family pets?

BC: Yeah, we had a dog. We had a Beagle named King, which was terribly overweight, and we could not get the dog thin at all, put the dog in all of these diets and everything. One day my mom had the neighborhood ladies over for brunch, and my dog walked in and every single lady said, "Oh, there's a cute puppy, comes by every morning and I give him a little treat." Our dog King had a route in the neighborhood that we were unaware of, that basically kept itself well fed.

CS: Did he—

BC: Then we had cats. We had cats like crazy, cats everywhere. Of course, the cats would go out at night and yell at each other, and that was always fun.

CS: I had a question about the beagle, did he escape from your yard a lot?

BC: Oh, well, see here, that's the thing, is that this period of time, there was no escaping from the yard because nobody kept their pets in the yard. Pets were free to come and go as they wished. It wasn't unusual—for instance, later on, we had a collie shepherd mix who made friends with another dog that lived half a mile away, and the two dogs would get together every day and play, and at the end of the day, go home. Didn't know this dog, found out it was one of my best friend's dog from grade school.

CS: Oh, wow. That's a cool coincidence. I have a question, how were household chores divided between family members?

BC: Basically, the boys, we took care of the yard and putting up storm windows and things like that. It was really traditional along those traditional lines. I didn't learn how to do laundry until I went away to college, and the first week of college was, "Uh, how do I do this?" Yeah, it was really traditional. Traditional male, female, what you might expect.

CS: Can you share a memory to help describe what mealtime was like in your family?

BC: We had, excuse me. We had a strict mealtime at, I believe it was six o'clock, but everybody came together, that was the one time of the day that we all got together, we had dinner and we had really fantastic discussions at dinner. Very, very smart, very intellectual, we kept up with what was going on. My parents followed politics, they were involved in politics, so I do remember the discussions really being challenging for a young five-year-old to try to keep up with what was going on, but I think that was good, it stretched everybody.

One thing that we did is we had a tradition, Sunday nights we had a tradition of getting together and we either had, depending on the time of the year, in the winter it was vegetable soup on a big old tin pot that my parents had gotten when they first got married, it was all battered, but my mom made a vegetable soup every Sunday night, and we got together and shared that. Then we had something called toastmasters for the family, where we each have to get up and give a short little talk to each other about something, it didn't matter what it was about. During the summer, it was fruit salad but the same tradition. It was really nice because unlike today, where you can eat anything at any time, we really had specific meals at certain times, and my parents really understood that that was an important thing to do.

CS: How often during mealtimes, if ever, did you have a TV or a radio on?

BC: Never.

CS: Never?

BC: Absolutely never. No phone calls, and that was an interesting thing coming to phone etiquette at that time, and this was the mid '60s, is that you knew when your friends, what their mealtimes were, and you never, ever called during mealtimes. It was really—it was interesting, it was one of those unspoken rules of just how you conduct yourself. Never call anybody after 9:00 p.m. at night. Very respectful in that way.

CS: Next, please describe the ways in which your family's economic status influenced your childhood.

BC: I think my family was well off, my dad was an established doctor, well known. A couple of things; first of all, we never really—I never really felt like we flaunted any money that we had, but we were well off in ways that we didn't realize other people weren't. It wasn't later on until I got into some of the bigger schools, Ramsey Junior High, that I began to understand that not everybody had a summer place, not everybody didn't really have to worry about money, had extra money to invest, things like that.

It was very idyllic because I grew up right across from this huge field, the Saint Paul Seminary, and it really was this huge playground right out my front door, we were well off, we didn't really have to worry about anything. I think that took a lot of the worry out of childhood if you will. What was interesting about the neighborhood in that sense was that I was thinking about this. What was interesting was that what everybody had in common was having money, and so I was thinking about this, is that my best friends growing up, one was Catholic, one was Jewish, one was Unitarian, I was Presbyterian, I had friends that were Muslim, Asian friends, and nobody ever really thought about some of this religious racial divide, we were all this—we really wore this big melting pot. I think that was really valuable growing up to just understand that people were just people.

CS: Who in your immediate family was employed and what did they each do for a living?

BC: Yeah, it was my father who was a well-known ophthalmologist, which was interesting because he was so well known that when I was going to school at Groveland Elementary, kids already knew me because they knew my dad. They were like, "Oh yeah, your dad, he's my eye guy, my eye doctor." It was really interesting that very early on I got a sense that I had a

reputation in the community and that I had to put that reputation forward well.

CS: Did your father stress that as well? Just that you guys had a reputation to uphold?

BC: Yeah, absolutely, absolutely, because his business was based on word of mouth, and the last thing he wanted to do was to have the kids have a bad reputation 'cause that would reflect back on him and his business. My mom was also very politically well connected. It was not unusual to have Easter at the mayor's house, and so really it was all about being on your best behavior, present yourself well.

CS: Now I'd like to know about your experiences with religion such as Catholicism, Lutheranism, et cetera. Describe what you can recall about your family's religious practices when you were growing up.

BC: We were Presbyterian, we belong to the House of Hope, which is the big Presbyterian church on Summit Avenue. It was really a regular thing where Sunday morning, we would put on our Sunday clothes, hop in the car, and go to church. Now, the important thing to remember about that era is that your shoes that you wore to Sunday school, to church, were the only shoes—those were specific for going to church. They were made out of leather, they were very, very tight, they hurt like crazy.

There was this tradition of, and you'll find this with other kids too, is their big memory of going to church is my feet hurt all morning. My feet hurt all morning. We would do that, we would go to the morning Sunday service, afterwards we would go out and have brunch together as a family, perhaps at the Saint Paul Athletic Club, which was a whole other interesting scene, we would have Swedish pancakes from the little old Swedish lady that would make Swedish pancakes, then we would come home, finally tear off these clothes that didn't fit, and then we would relax, and our Sunday afternoons were spent listening to classical music and reading the Sunday paper and hanging out. Those were really special times for me.

CS: How important—

BC: Do you want anything more about the religious thing?

CS: Yeah, if you can recall any, otherwise I have a couple prompt questions that I can go through.

BC: Yeah, it was just—House of Hope was again, it was a very social thing where you had to be on your best behavior, and that was stressed again and again. I would see a quarter of my neighborhood there, of the neighborhood kids that I knew, kids that lived up just down across the street. Now, the interesting thing about this is that the person that I have known longest in my life lived just down the street. We were part of the same, today you would call that a preschool group, but it was a nursery, I guess we called it a nursery school, and we would carpool together to nursery school. We have known each other since from about the age of four, and we are still in touch today and have that lifelong memory and that connection through that initial socialization experience.

CS: How important or relevant is religion to you now as an adult?

BC: I would say spirituality is more important than religion. Even though there's some things I

remember from Presbyterianism, I have gone a slightly different direction into unity, which is really more inclusive, which is bringing everybody in. It's not exclusionary as it is inclusionary. I would get some of the basis from Presbyterianism, but it's evolved, I would say. Now, it's interesting you bring that up because I think in terms of how I grew up in Saint Paul, it was really, everybody was your neighbor in Saint Paul, and it didn't matter where you lived in Saint Paul, everybody was still your neighbor. They might come from different areas, but there's the sense of connectedness to the community, which I think I've incorporated into my own personal spiritual outlook.

CS: Now I'd like to learn more about the neighborhood in which you grew up. If you move during childhood, you may wish to reflect on more than one neighborhood. This is fine to do, but please indicate as you do it. Please describe what comes to mind when thinking about the neighborhood in which you grew up.

BC: I grew up on Goodrich across from the Saint Paul Seminary, and my biggest memory are kids. Kids, kids, kids, kids, kids, kids, kids. There were between—well, let me describe a typical day is I would have my sugar-coated cereal in the morning, I would feel a boot on my backside, I would get kicked out into the backyard. At the top of my arc, I would look at all around the neighborhood, and there were between 15 to 20 other playable age children, we were all at the top of our arcs, we would all land with a thump, and we were given one instruction for the day. It was not safe. It wasn't even “go have fun”, it was “stay away until dinnertime”, and we were left to our own devices. We didn't have any devices, of course, we just had each other.

The big memory is that we learned how to play with each other, and for us growing up that way, I realized that relationships are really important because for us, we would have these games that would last all day long. In fact, we would have games that would last more than one day.

Capture the flag, we would have these army games going on, people had parades in the neighborhood, we would all get together and just play together. Relationships, absolutely important to me, I've carried that throughout my whole life. I remember we would have pick up baseball games, where you would just start playing baseball and the neighborhood dog would always pick up the ball and run off, and you just dealt with that kind of thing.

Now, one of the central social areas was the big field out in front of our house, and every winter, the Saint Paul Seminary folks, they would put up a hockey rink and they would flood it, and all the kids in the neighborhood would flock to this hockey rink and it became the social center.

Kids would play hockey; other kids figure skate. I remember going out there—because when you're four years old, your life is all about cartoons. I remember the Chilly Willy cartoon with this penguin, and he is chopping through ice to go ice fishing.

I'm out there in this big rink and I have a little bread knife, and I'm sitting there chopping a hole in the rink, 'cause I wanna go ice fishing, and I remember this older kid comes skating up to me saying, "What are you doing?" I said, "Well, I'm going ice fishing." He says, "No, you don't chop holes where people are skating now. Get the heck out." Then we would have, it wasn't actually broomball, it was shovel ball where there were all these shovels around and we'd have a big ball, and we would shovel that around like a hockey game. To do that, it was really, that field was

where we all centered our social life.

CS: As far as transportation options, how did you typically get around?

BC: Well, now that's interesting; because it was idyllic, of course, you started off on your feet. In the same way that dogs weren't caged or put into a yard, we were free range kids. We really, really were. I remember one of my earliest memories of probably four years old is I would go out and I would just start walking around the neighborhood, and the place that I would walk to was at the corner of Cretin and Grand. There was a little corner store called Orthes, O-R-T-H-E-S, Orthes inside of this apartment building there, and I'd walk in and there was Mr. Orthe and I'd say hello, and I'd go through, and I'd pick up candy, and then I would just leave, and he was always happy to see me.

What I didn't realize until later, of course, was that our family had a charge account there, so he was happy, and all the families had charge accounts there, and so he was happy to have the neighborhood kids in to just grab candy and go home. It started off with feet, and then of course you graduated to the bicycle, and everybody had their bicycle. Didn't start locking up the bicycle until you were old enough to take it to elementary school 'cause everybody knew everybody else's bicycle and you just stayed off of that. Bikes would just get just left where they were. My red bike, my red Schwinn, I remember that. My favorite bike. Then as I got into junior high school, probably sixth, starting at around sixth grade on, I discovered the bus system, and that was so cool. Frequently, the way I would spend Saturdays is that my family did belong to the Saint Paul Athletic Club, my dad would drive us down there on Saturday morning and he would work out and us kids would play games and have programs like that, and then from there, I would go to the Saint Paul public library, spend some time there 'cause I loved libraries, and then I would take the bus home. When you're in sixth grade, that was considered, yeah, this is what everybody does. We really learned how to transport ourselves on the bus.

Now, what was really cool about the bus, and one of my favorite forms of transportation was after a good snowstorm, the streets really were yet to be plowed, and there was snow everywhere, and it was slippery, but the buses would run, so we would do something called sketching. Now, sketching means is that you grab the bumper of a bus, and this was the bus on Grand Avenue, and you had the big old, oversized boots, rubber boots, grab onto that, and the bus, we would basically slide through Saint Paul grabbing on the back of this bus, we called it sketching. We would go for miles, it was just insane, and everywhere you saw all these kids were on the back of these buses. It worked wonderfully until you hit a manhole cover, which of course was all melted, and you'd hit that and go tumbling, but then you'd catch the next bus, so it was no big deal. The bus system very, very, very big.

Then in high school, we got cars. Oh, cars. Now, you have to remember that to my generation, cars represented freedom, 'cause then we could really go anywhere. Gas was really inexpensive, relatively, and at this point, this is when I had moved to the Highland Park neighborhood, right into Highland High School, and my neighborhood expanded from this one little area into the city of Saint Paul.

A couple of things about that; first of all, when it comes to Saint Paul, you stay in Saint Paul. Minneapolis was across the river, it was like a quarter of a mile away, oh but going to Minneapolis, oh boy, that was a big, big deal. You never went to Minneapolis 'cause you didn't know anybody in Minneapolis, but you knew everybody in Saint Paul. In high school, we had cars and we would drive the river road, and I'm sure that this story will come up again and again, but there was this high school culture where everybody would drive the river road, either at the end of summit, we'd pull in park, see if anybody was there, and then we'd drive down and we'd end up across from, I think there was a Jewish temple, we would end up there or maybe further down by the Ford plant.

It was just this continuous movement of cars from parking lot to parking lot on the river road, and this was our socialization in high school. Again, it's all about everybody getting together and developing those relationships. I think that when I was in junior high school, there were other modes of transportation. I had a friend who rode his unicycle to Ramsey Junior High School every day. Great guy, [Rouch 00:26:46] I think, and he just rode a unicycle. Skateboards hadn't really become a thing yet except for the smaller skateboards, but you really wouldn't use those for transportation. Did I answer your question?

CS: Yeah, absolutely. Every form of transportation, for sure. Next, I would like to learn about the values shared by your family and your neighbors. Values are principles or standards that help guide behavior. What memories come to mind that demonstrate what these values were for your family and your neighbors?

BC: Yeah, I think behaving well in my neighborhood was a big deal. You didn't wanna be one of those families where there was some kind of scandal going on, where your teenage son would end up on the front page of the Saint Paul Pioneer Press, which was one of my neighbors. I think that, again, navigating relationships was really big, being respectful of people, that was also a big thing. I remember that it was—you didn't make friends with your friends' parents, and they knew you and they would keep an eye on you. I know that this is a newer term; it takes a village to raise a child, but in Saint Paul, it really was a citywide neighborhood. People knew each other, and I wouldn't say that people were always watching, but you kept on your best behavior.

I would say also, when it comes to personal family practices, everybody had their own family practices, but it was really, really respectful. It was like, I remember in Groveland in my first or second grade, somewhere in there, it was like, "Hey, how come a quarter—how come all these kids get to take Wednesday off? What the heck is going on with that?" It was the Jewish kids, 'cause it was a Jewish holiday. I was like, "Huh, that's odd."

Now, when it comes to grade schools, and I'm gonna go off topic here a little bit, but there was Groveland Elementary, and then there was Nativity. Now, Nativity was the Catholic school that was like a block and a half away from Groveland, and there were definitely two different kinds of schools, but occasionally you would get some kids from Catholic families going to Groveland. There was a back and forth between those two schools. I'm sorry, I got off topic.

CS: It's okay. We were just discussing values shared in the community between your family and neighbors.

BC: Yeah, it really was, yeah—it wasn't really based on religion, it was just based on living in the neighborhood and getting along with everybody.

CS: Now I'm going to ask you all about leisure time. Describe some of the ways in which you, your family, and your neighbors engaged in leisure time when you were growing up.

BC: For us kids, it was getting out in the neighborhood and playing with friends. Parents really had—they also had their neighborhood groups. They would have neighbors over, they would go visit neighbors, there were, I guess you would call them the brunches and the teas, if you will. People would get together in that sense. Now, leisure time was really just not doing much of anything. Sunday afternoons sitting, listening to classical music, reading the newspaper, that was how we would spend our leisure time. People would go off and work on their own projects, their own things to do.

When I was in the fifth grade, I remember Saturdays, another way I would spend Saturdays is I would bicycle to the Highland Drugstore, go down to the basement where they had all the models, I would get a model of a car, or perhaps the Starship Enterprise, something like that, I would come back and work on that for Saturday afternoons. I think it was very much you're on, you should be active in your leisure time doing something, making something, but it really was your own leisure time.

CS: Can you recall if your family ever took vacations, and if so, to where?

BC: Well, yes. We spent quite a bit of time on the St. Croix River. We had a place on the St. Croix River, and in some ways, it was mini-Saint Paul. We happened to live on a section where some of our neighbors also had places. It was really interesting that there was a contingent of Saint Paul people in the same area, and we all ended up 30 miles away, I guess, 30, 40 miles away on this river in the same neighborhood. It was interesting to develop relationships where you would have summer relationships and then those would evolve into year round relationships. Some of the vacations that a lot of folks took, it really was, at least in our neighborhood, it really was about we're going to the cabin, whether that cabin was east or west or south, but most often, everybody was going up north. Let's go up north. That was really a big deal. I guess our leisure time was spent summer vacations, water skiing, swimming, in some cases fishing, but it was really about enjoying the 10,000 lakes of Minnesota as much as possible.

Occasionally we would take winter vacations to go skiing, again, with other families that we knew that were part of the neighborhood, and we would just get together and go off in that way. It was not unusual to have a group vacation. My best friend, who lived two doors down for me, for many decades, our families would vacation together and spend Thanksgiving together and really become a kind of a cousin relationship, if you will. Getting together quite often, and we spent a lot of wonderful time together.

CS: What television shows did you watch growing up?

BC: Oh, boy. Let's see. Of course, Lunch with Casey. Got to watch Lunch with Casey when you're in grade school. Come home, Groveland Elementary, you would—I guess we had an hour for lunch, I don't know, but you would come home, have the chicken noodle soup with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, sit down in front of the TV and watch your old pal Casey Jones, and

watch Casey Jones. Now, the only thing that was frustrating about Casey Jones was that I had to leave before the show was over to get back to school at one o'clock, which means that I missed the happy birthday song. Happy, happy birthday, and all of that stuff. That was the one thing that brought all the kids together, is Lunch with Casey. We'd go to school, and we'd say, "Hey, what'd you think about today's cartoon," or something like that. That was a really big one.

I would say that when I was starting in the third grade, third to five to six, it was the spy shows. It was the Mission Impossible, Man from U.N.C.L.E., and then, because we had this wonderful big field in front of us, we would play Man from U.N.C.L.E., and we would go out on these missions, and we would run around. Now, I was a little toe headed blonde kid, so I was always [Illya Kuryakin], and then my two best friends, Dean and Todd, they would fight over who got to be Napoleon Solo, but I was always [Illya Kuryakin]. That's what I would do. By the way, my best friend Dean, Dean McGraw, is a very famous Saint Paul musician today. Those were some of the other shows.

Of course, there's situation comedies, we would sit through and of course we would learn that every problem had a happy solution in 22 minutes, so we grew up with this sense of, gee, it's not the pursuit of happiness, it's the delivery of happiness. That was a really strong memory. Let's see, some of the other shows growing up. You had your bonanzas that you would watch, the ones that were always there, not so much into gun smoke. For us it was the news. It was the 5:30 p.m. news, Walter Cronkite.

Later on, as I got older and I got to be a teenager, we would—in fact, I think all the time is we would watch the 5:30 p.m. news and then have dinner at 6:00 p.m. I think that was our routine. It was always that as a regular thing. Name a really bad situation comedy, we'd watch it. We'd even watch My Mother the Car, which was an awful show. An awful show. Here's the thing is we learned how to time ourselves, time our days based on our TV shows, and time our weeks. You would know when your friends were available and when they weren't based on what television show was on at any given time.

Saturday morning cartoons, absolutely. Growing up at that early age from zero to about, I guess fifth grade or so, then things changed at the fifth grade. If you were ever sick and home from school, of course you'd watch the Matinee movie with [Mel Jass]. Mel Jass Matinee movie, and the big tagline with Mel Jass was, "Oh, he's got a good job," which had to do with every day he would talk with another housewife. When I use the word housewife, I don't mean it like in the pejorative, modern sense, but that's basically what it was. There were housewives and there were the husbands.

CS: Next, let's discuss your experience with schooling. Please describe what it was like going to school as a child.

BC: Oh, I loved school. Absolutely loved school. One of those weird kids. My grade school was Groveland Elementary. Fantastic school, good teachers, mostly good kids. Again, it was this routine where starting in kindergarten, you were either a morning or an afternoon. It was a half day in kindergarten. I distinctly remember going to kindergarten, and having to get home from kindergarten, but they would give you a big dot that you needed to pin to your jacket.

Okay, what does that mean? That means if you were green, you had one direction, a blue or a red, a different direction, 'cause that's—no parents came to pick up their kids, no, no, no, you had to make your way home, and until you learned the route, you had to wear these big circles with the big color on them. Then of course there were the police patrols, the police kids, the older kids that would help you along.

In grade school, I remember really some good classes, and I remember—here's the thing is you had to dress up for school. In the same way that you had to dress up for Sunday school, you had to dress up for school. That meant that if you had tennis shoes, tennis shoes you kept separate, brought to school, and you only wore those in the gym. That means that we had these leather sole shoes.

I'm in the first or second grade, I think it was second grade, ice storm, big ice storm the night before, I meet all my friends, the kids that I'm walking to school with at the corner of Cretin and Saint Clair. Now that includes Ann Hughes, Ji, and Tom Garretts, perhaps John Nelson, but anyways, I distinctly remember that we met at the bottom, and we're standing there at the corner and there's no police kids. We're like, "Huh, police kids didn't show up today." On our own, we're very careful, we cross Cretin Avenue and we start up the hill up Saint Clair along this ice covered sidewalk and we're all wearing flat leather sole shoes, and we couldn't make it up, we could not make it up the sidewalk.

We'd run up and we'd slide back and we'd run up and we'd slide back, and at the same time, we were having fun, we were also terrified, 'cause you can't be late going to school. Sure enough, we finally figured out how to get up to school and we had to go right to the principal's office and try to explain to the principal that we were not having fun, even though we were, but that we really couldn't make it up to school because of the ice. The principal, of course, just laughed and sent us into class. It was a very social thing going to school. Now, once you were in school, you had a lot of fun, and you had some good teachers and some teachers that were just okay.

It was this mix of this idyllic leave it to beaver kind of a world, but the modern world started intruding a little bit. This was the mid '60s and so this sense of women's equality was really taking to the forefront. This made it into our class, and I'm in the second grade and we're at the end of the hallway at Groveland and we have to get back to our room, and for some reason, the teacher picked me to lead the boys' line, and my really great friend Anne, to lead the girls' line, and says, "All right, kids, Anne and Brad take us back," and we start down the way, and I'm walking along and I'm a little bit ahead of Anne and I look over and she looks at me and she starts speeding up.

Well, I'm not gonna let Anne get ahead of me, so I start speeding up. We're looking at each other saying, "Okay, which group is gonna get there quicker?" Before you know it, we are running down the hallway with this group of kids screaming and laughing behind us, racing back to the classroom, and the teacher was just like, "I can't believe I just lost control of these kids." It was this rivalry between the sexes at that point, and that was the outside world influencing them. Really, Groveland Elementary was one of those centers of our neighborhood and also some of

the other neighborhoods around there. There would be activities at night. You could go back to school at night and play dodge ball or they might have carnivals. The recreation center was right nearby within that same block, and that drew kids in. Our world was small, but it was also very big at the same time. Elementary school, do you want me to go through all the schools at this point?

CS: If you would like, if you have some specific memories, but, yeah, go ahead.

BC: I think—so that was Groveland Elementary. Oh, the other thing is that kids would go home for lunch, that was a big thing, except when you couldn't, and if you couldn't go home for lunch for some reason, you would go to Bridgeman's Ice Cream, and King Drugstore on the corner of Cleveland and Saint Clair. I have really nice memories of going there, going to Bridgeman's and getting the hot dog and the, what did I like? Oh, a cherry phosphate, love the cherry phosphate, and again, you had a nice small group of kids that would do that occasionally. You would meet your friends and then you would go back to school.

I remember with Groveland, things were very, I wouldn't say regimented, but just done a certain way. We had cloak rooms, of course, and it was like a room off the main classroom where you would bring, and you would hang your coat, you would wear galoshes over your nice shoes, you would have rain boots. It wasn't as casual as it is today. You really did dress up for school, and that was really interesting. Then our school got split. Ooh, after the sixth grade, because Saint Clair is the divider between Ramsey Junior High School and Highland Junior High School, and suddenly your group is split into two. Okay, what are you gonna do?

I went to Ramsey because I was on that side of Saint Clair. You had your choice of how to get to school at that point, and for me, it was taking the Grand Avenue bus or walking, it was actually close enough to walk if you got an early start or after school, if you wanted to walk home. The Highland Park High School kids and the junior high school kids, they had to load themselves on city buses, and I remember that on Saint Clair Avenue. Loved Grand Avenue, loved Grand Avenue, going up to Ramsey Junior High School but things changed because now a different slice of Saint Paul started coming in, and it was a larger slice of the world.

This was also the time of the beginnings of integration going on, and so we had kids that were living a little further out from Ramsey that were traveling into Ramsey. We had the black kids coming in, and now you had an obviously integrated school. Now, this is interesting because Groveland was integrated, but nobody knew it. One of my best friends at Groveland Elementary was Milo. Milo and I had the best time, then he went off somewhere, I lost track of him, but I did come across an old picture of him. Milo third and fourth grade, we were really close, and I came across an old picture of Milo, and I said, "Oh my God, he's black." Had no idea he was black. It wasn't that same thing.

In Ramsey Junior High School, there was the influence of Malcolm X, and there really was this division, and it was, you're black, you're white, you're Hispanic, and we had a lot of Hispanic kids coming in. There was tension within that school with all of these kids trying to get together and trying to find their own identity, I think. You did have this wider Saint Paul, the sense of a larger Saint Paul coming together. Wonderful teachers at Ramsey. Also, this is where I started to

integrate more and more into the world.

Ramsey Junior High school, close relationship with McAllister, 'cause McAllister was a teaching college, or there were people getting their teaching degrees at McAllister so they would come into Ramsey, and they would practice on us, or we would go there, and they would practice on us. I did very well in Ramsey. Really, really liked the school a lot. Trying to think of some specific memories of that other than really getting a sense of the larger, larger world.

Now, I'm gonna talk about the dark side a little bit here of Saint Paul because there was a store, a corner store between McAllister and Ramsey right there on Grand Street called Larry's. I don't know if you've heard of Larry's. Larry's was this tiny little store, and Larry was a character. Larry was a character. He always had half a cigar in his mouth. This guy would always have a cigar in his mouth. He was nice to the kids, but there wasn't always a lot of activity except occasionally you would see adults come into Larry's and then they would go into this back room, and then they would come out again.

Well, it turned out that Larry was a bookie, and Larry was running his bookie operation out of his grocery store, and everybody knew about it. All the adults knew about it, the cops knew about it, everybody knew that Larry was a bookie, and that's where they would go to take his bets. Us kids would hang out in the front reading comics, and Larry never cared that anybody was reading comic books because he had his bookie business going on. That was one of my fun memories of that particular neighborhood right there.

Now as far as schools go, now from seventh to ninth grade, junior high school, Ramsey, ooh, and then things break up again, and you're either going to Highland Park or Central. This is the year that we moved from right across the seminary, right near Highland Park High School, about three blocks away from that. That was nice for me because I could walk to school, I didn't have to hop on a bus. The other thing that was nice is that I could do independent studies and I could come home, work on my independent study and go back. Again, this sense of being close to school was something that was really good.

All your friends that you got split from at Groveland, oh, you get to see him again in high school. Again, this larger community, this larger Saint Paul community comes together in Highland Park High School. Now, there was a little bit of a divide there because the Highland Park Junior High School kids went right into the high school, and they were already an established group. For us outsiders from Ramsey, it was a little tough, but we managed to put our best foot forward and to come in. By the way, us Ramsey kids always felt that we got a better education at Ramsey than the folks did at Highland High School. Just to put that on record, we got a better education than them silly Highland Junior High School kids.

We're back into this larger Highland Park community, a couple of things about that, this is again, where we discovered cars. By the way, our class, the class of 1974 was a very tight class, we are still getting together for reunions and a lot of close friends from that class. Very strong class. Again, very social coming together. Now, what was interesting is that Saint Paul wanted to integrate its school system, but Dr. George Young, he didn't wanna force kids to bus anywhere,

so he introduced this idea of what you would call a magnet school or learning center where you could leave your high school for part of the day and go to this learning center, and really do an intensive on certain topics, and I was asked to be one of the first kids to do that.

These learning centers, I think it was New City School was the first one that I went to, but all these kids from all these other high schools came together. Now, this is how the Saint Paul community has built itself, a small community gets larger and larger, and now all these high school kids are coming together and I have even really great friends from Harding High School, all the way on the other side of the city. All those kids are really different 'cause they live on the other side of the—oh, maybe they're not so different. Maybe the east side and the west side isn't so different.

I think these learning centers were a really great way to bring Saint Paul together as a community, and that's really where I got to really meet a lot of folks from all over. Interestingly enough, of course, I didn't stop there because eventually I went to McAllister College for college, right in the neighborhood, and that's where my parents went so there was a whole sense of everything is right, right here. Of course, in Highland there were divisions that you find in high school, different groups, but eventually we all came together.

CS: For our final topic, I'm going to ask you to reflect on local and global issues such as war, poverty, discrimination, social unrest, et cetera. In your opinion, what were some of the biggest local or global issues affecting the people in your neighborhood when you were growing up?

BC: Again, I think the big one was integration. It was really learning how to get together. Now, the black kids in junior high school, I guess they were terrified. They came together as a group, they tended to be aggressive, and it was a level of aggressiveness that the white kids were not used to. Again, this, in the black community, it had moved from Martin Luther King and the NAACP, more to a Malcolm X more confrontational kind of a thing, so there was some racial tension in Ramsey Junior High School. It really didn't need to be there, but it was.

On the other hand, the Hispanic kids at Ramsey were wonderful. I really love that community. It was interesting the conversations that we would have around different terms, and it was very open, and it was like, okay, what does spic mean? Oh, spic is a good thing or a bad thing or whatever. It really didn't matter because we were having some really good open discussions. Then of course, I think moving out of junior high school into high school, I think drugs were a big thing. Marijuana in Highland Park was really a big thing, and so there were those issues to deal with from a social issue, as well as some—well, I wouldn't really call them crime issues, but some of that kind of stuff was happening.

Also, the Vietnam War was happening during this junior high to high school phase. I remember in junior high school, we would have walkouts around the Vietnam War, and some of that influence came from the nearby McAllister College. I think in high school, yeah, we would basically leave school and protest. I was, what you might consider an anti-war kid, and I'd be out there after—in high school, I would be out there passing leaflets out, trying to organize kids, that kind of stuff.

There was this division, this generation gap that was becoming very pronounced at that time. The

older generation seemed to take the attitude of, "Hey, I grew up having tough times. You're eating, you have a place to live, you have nice clothes, that's all I need to do." The younger generations had this attitude of—well it was interesting. It was one of the main themes in high school was, "Hey, when I have kids, I'm not gonna raise them the way my parents raised me. I'm going to do this differently." There was really this huge generational divide on expectations and what we wanted out of life.

Some of the other economic issues, I guess we really didn't have that much of an economic divide. Life was pretty inexpensive at that point, and you could follow whatever career path you wanted to follow. However, there was a recession starting to take place at the end of high school, and so I think kids were feeling like they did wanna accomplish something, that they wanted to have a good career at that point. Some of the city issues at that point, yeah, things were fairly cohesive. There were some political, like how do we divide the city council up, things like that, but really it was all pretty cohesive except for these larger issues. Did I answer that question?

CS: Yeah, absolutely, in its entirety I believe you did. Is there anything else you wish to expand on in that realm?

BC: Yeah, can you gimme the topic again?

CS: Yeah, just local and global issues at the time within your neighborhood, how that affected people.

BC: I will say this though around this time. Growing up, early age, basically in my elementary school age, in that period, we had these neighbors, the Bush family, Bush kids. They would organize these army games that would last all day long. They had World War II helmets, the name of their dog was Serge, and they had a little—their doghouse was basically, that was the stockade, and they would organize these huge war games.

They moved away, Vietnam began happening, and all those kids are thinking, "Oh, those Bush kids, I bet they're enlisted. I bet they're in Vietnam fighting like crazy." No, they reemerged 10 years later as these huge anti-war activists, very well known in the Twin Cities, shutting down the—blocking the trains from the ammunition plant, all this other stuff. It was just interesting like, "Hey, wait, these are the kids that were really into war and now they're totally anti-war. I guess they've taken their organizational skills up another level."

CS: This is the end of our interview. Your responses are invaluable, and we really appreciate that you took the time to do this today. Thank you so much for participating.

BC: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.