

INTERVIEW WITH DON COOK  
Interviewed by Cynthia Goldstein

Compiled under the auspices of the  
Henrietta Oral History Project

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## PREFACE

### About the Henrietta Oral History Project

Oral history is a field of study pertaining to the collection of living people's voices and memories of their own experiences with people and communities in past events. Oral history gives one a sense of accomplishment; through oral history, we have a sense of catching and holding something valuable from the receding tide of the past.

In 1984, active Henrietta community resident Cynthia Goldstein set out to capture Henrietta's history from the perspective of individuals who had a long-standing relationship with the town. She met with and gathered the reflections of several notable people, including Don Cook, Marian Deuel, Esther Kroeger, Stephen McNall, and Ruth Van Ostrand. Her interviews were captured on audiocassette tape and then donated to the Henrietta Public Library to augment to the established collection of local history materials.

In 2007, staff at the Henrietta Public Library decided to give those voices and memories new life, by making them more readily accessible to the public. All oral history interviews were transcribed by our generous and hard-working volunteer Nan Porter, and the audiocassette tapes were transferred to a digital format by sound engineer Robert Howland.

For more information about local history resources and the Henrietta Oral History Project, contact the Henrietta Public Library at 359-7092.

May 2007

## OUTLINE OF TOPICS

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INTERVIEWEE: Don Cook  
INTERVIEWER: Cynthia Goldstein  
DATE: June 27, 1984

**TAPE 1 SIDE 1**

This is Cynthia Goldstein for the Henrietta Oral History Project. I'm talking with Don Cook, former Supervisor of the Town of Henrietta, and former State Assemblyman. Today is Wednesday, June 27, 1984. Tape one, side one.

Cynthia Goldstein: Mr. Cook, would you tell me a little bit about your background; when you were born and where you were born?

Don Cook: Well, I was born in 1919 in Rochester, and we lived down in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ward, you know, off Lake Avenue. I worked at Kodak two summers and I had, I was on there full time, and went in the Marine Corps in '42 and was there until '44 or '45 – when was the war over?

Goldstein: '45.

Cook: Forty-five. And, uh, came home, and I didn't particularly want to go back to Kodak, so I worked for a feed company, selling feed. I bought this farm, which was a chicken farm in those days. Between those two we kept going until I got into - ran for Justice of the Peace ...

Goldstein: So you lived in the City of Rochester, you went to school there?

Cook: Yes, Charlotte High School, yeah.

Goldstein: And then after high school you went into the Marine Corps?

Cook: Well,

Goldstein: After you worked for Kodak?

Cook: Yeah, for a while, yeah.

Goldstein: And then when you came back from the Marines did you move back into the city before you moved to Henrietta?

Cook: Yes, yes. And then we bought this farm I think in '46,

Goldstein: On Lehigh Station Road?

Cook: On Lehigh Station Road.

Goldstein: And what was Henrietta like in 1946 when you came out here?

Cook: Well the population was less than 5,000 and it, uh, the main problem with this busy highway here, Lehigh Station Road, was farm equipment, rather than, uh, my wife had to watch the kids to make sure they didn't get out in the road then because of farm equipment. That has all changed, of course.

Goldstein: How many houses were on Lehigh Station Road when you moved here? Were there many houses between East Henrietta and West Henrietta Roads?

Cook: No, I don't uh – there must have been 30 maybe, something like that. They filled in the empty spaces now, where it's quite full.

Goldstein: So you were married, and then you moved to Henrietta, and you had a farm, and what kind of a farm did you ...

Cook: It was a poultry farm.

Goldstein: A poultry farm.

Cook: We used to raise broilers and turkeys and capons, and laying hens, and so on, a lot of work, and managed to eat enough eggs and chickens to keep alive for a while, and then I ran for Justice of the Peace I think it was '51 or '52.

Goldstein: Why did you decide to do that? What made you run for Justice of the Peace?

Cook: Oh, I was always interested in politics, even in the city and uh...

Goldstein: Was your family involved in politics in the city at all?

Cook: No, no.

Goldstein: In high school were you interested in politics?

Cook: Yes, yeah. In fact I ran for president of the Student Association and was elected. And uh, so they asked me if I wanted to – new people were moving in and they were trying to get some new people on the ticket and I was the first one to break the barrier, I guess, from the old timers that lived here.

Goldstein: Who was the supervisor of the town then, in 1952, was it?

Cook: Well, when I was nominated it was Earl Chase, and then uh, uh, [Almon C.] Kramer was elected at the same time I was, on the Republican ticket.

Goldstein: Do you remember who any of the Town Board members were?

Cook: Oh sure, Glen Tinker, he just recently died. And Lamberton, Frank Lamberton he died. Uh, Don Clark is dead and uh, they were slowly replaced by the uh, uh, by other people.

Goldstein: Mm hmm.

Cook: But they were the original, uh, I took, uh, Bill [?] place, who was Jack's father, Jack [?] father.

Goldstein: This was in 1952 you ran for Justice of the Peace; you were approached by people in the town to run for Justice....

Cook: Yeah, the Justice at that time served on the Town Board also, as a Councilman and a Justice.

Goldstein: Oh! How many Justices were there....

Cook: A hundred dollars...

Goldstein: (chuckles) How many Justices of the Peace....

Cook: Two hundred, er uh, two justices.

Goldstein: Uh huh. And they both served on the Town Board?

Cook: Yes, yeah. And then we became a first class town it separated; uh, justices were separated.

Goldstein: OK, so at that time Henrietta was not called a first class town, what was its designation?

Cook: Well, it's just - in our minds it was always a first class town, but the, uh, you had to get, uh, I think the qualification were 10,000 people.

Goldstein: Mm hmm.

Cook: Uh, that's, I'm sure that that was what the qualification is - to be classed as a first class town. That gave you more authority to enact certain laws and so on, than you had as a second class town.

Goldstein: Mm hmm. So what were your duties as Justice of the Peace? What kinds of things....

Cook: Well, the same duties that, uh, the justice has now, it hasn't changed much, but, uh, it's become a lot larger, and uh, I think the most cases I handled was twelve hundred when the Thruway opened and that was quite a few in those days but now they handle up in the thousands.

Goldstein: Mm hmm. So how long did you serve as Justice of the Peace?

Cook: Four years.

Goldstein: Four years. And then what happened?

Cook: Ran for Supervisor, and I was Supervisor for 11 years.

Goldstein: And how did you come to run for Supervisor?

Cook: Well, uh, the uh, Mr. Kramer had a heart attack and he had to retire, and uh, so I took his place.

Goldstein: Mm hmm. And who was your opponent at the time - you ran on the Republican ticket and who was your Democratic opponent?

Cook: Well,

Goldstein: This was in 19....

Cook: I don't know - I had 6 of them and I can remember their names, but I don't know which order they came, uh, in uh,

Goldstein: This, in 1956 then, you were elected supervisor.

Cook: Yeah, were elected. Uh, I think it would be '55 I was elected '56. For '56.

Goldstein: Uh huh.

Cook: I was there 11 years. I had 6 times.

Goldstein: And in 1956 when you became Supervisor, uh, what do you remember about the Town then, it hadn't yet started to grow.

Cook: Well, we had just started, we were in uh, zoning, uh, industry wanted to come in, we were starting to lay the waters because the city wanted me to, of course, run right through here. And uh, we laid uh, the main water range, which is still in use now, of course. Zoning was a tough thing, there was only about 2,000-2,500 voters and we got a petition for - seemed to me it was 2,000 people - *against* the zoning. I'm talking about Jefferson Road now, industrial zoning up there.

Goldstein: OK, at that time what kind of zoning did Jefferson have?

Cook: It was just farm land.

Goldstein: Rural.

Cook: Yeah. And uh, we passed it, rezoned it, and uh, the next election had quite a time getting in but we just made it.

Goldstein: So you wanted to rezone it commercial, er, industrial?

Cook: No, industrial. Where all that nice industry we've got now, yeah, yeah.

Goldstein: Do you remember what the first industries – did industry approach the town of Henrietta saying they wanted to come in, or did you seek industry...

Cook: Well, both. The first ones approached us of course. RG &E, Newmont Castle Regional Market, uh, were the first. Then of course we had to get into sewers when we did that and the subdivisions had started. It was right after the war and everybody was living with their mother-in-law. And you know, everybody was trying to get a home. And so Suburban Heights was the first subdivision up on East Henrietta Road.

Goldstein: So did commercial uh come in – did those industries come in before Suburban Heights was established, or was it around the same time?

Cook: Around the same time.

Goldstein: How did Suburban Heights first come into Henrietta? Mr. Wilmot – this was Mr. Wilmot's project.

Cook: Yeah, yeah. Those, it was in those days we had zoning laws and that was the first large subdivision. Those houses sold ten, eleven thousand dollars of uh, and uh, right today, I think those same houses are worth 25-35,000. I haven't seen any – but you can tell from the assessors' rolls how they went up in value over that time.

Goldstein: So until Suburban Heights came in there were no small housing, inexpensive housing for, for people....

Cook: Really not. There was Riverview Heights was a subdivision, and over on St. Patrick's was a subdivision. But that was the only thing that - where any real cluster of homes were, at that time.

Goldstein: So did Mr. Wilmot approach the Town of Henrietta saying he wanted to build?

Cook: He had to go through the same process they do today, in uh, in getting a subdivision approved.

Goldstein: Why do you suppose he came out to Henrietta rather than going to some other suburbs?

Cook: Well, with the water coming in everything was going – the whole growth went south. It had gone east and it had gone west and uh, so south was where the growth, uh, uh, economically with the Thruway out this way and that type of thing that uh, it just made a ideal spot that this was gonna grow. Because it hadn't had much growth, up until then.

Goldstein: Um, was there much controversy when Suburban Heights wanted to come in to the Town? How did the people of the town feel about Suburban Heights coming out here?

Cook: Well, I don't remember – there, there had to be some because there's controversy in anything that's new but I don't remember a large, uh, block trying to oppose it, uh like there was in the rezoning.

Goldstein: Mm hmm. What was the issue in the rezoning, what kinds of things....

Cook: Industrial.

Goldstein: Yeah, and...

Cook: Well, they didn't want to uh, uh, and some of those were my best friends that oppose it, uh....

Goldstein: These were people - citizens of the town who were opposing?

Cook: Citizens of the town, yes. They didn't want industry in here, and at that time most towns were turning industry down. We missed Xerox because we didn't have the proper water or sewer at that time to take care of them, and that went to Webster.

Goldstein: But you felt you wanted to have the industry come out here?

Cook: Well, we planned the towns as uh, as uh. In those days – there's nothing like it now this growth right after World War II, uh.... We were the second in the state – second fastest growing town. Levittown, Long Island was the first. And uh, percentage-wise now I'm talking about. And we planned the town for a middle class town, with, with industry and commercial, which has to go on in any growth in population.

Goldstein: Now you said, "We planned the town." Did you sit down with other people on the Town Board and say this is what we want the town to be....

Cook: Oh yes, and the Planning Board. Yeah, it wasn't any hodge-podge, it was planned that way.

Goldstein: OK, so the Planning Board and the Town Board sat down and said, "We want the Town to be a middle-class town...."

Cook: That was the general aim.

Goldstein: With industry.

Cook: Yeah.

Goldstein: I see. So then you sought industry, and some industry came to the town and said, "We want to build in Henrietta."

Cook: And uh, yeah, that was generally the pattern. Now there's some people want to make us another Pittsford, and there were other people didn't want any restrictions at all. I mean you go to each end of the spectrum on thinking.

Goldstein: But you personally felt you wanted the town to move in the direction that it finally did move?

Cook: Yes, yes.

Goldstein: I see. So the first industries that came out here were uh, Wilmot Castle,

Cook: And RG&E.

Goldstein: And RG&E. Followed by – do you remember what industries followed...

Cook: Well, I don't remember the order, but Roehlen Engraving came in, and uh Strasenburgh and uh, well everything mainly along Jefferson Road.

Goldstein: So Jefferson was zoned industrial to allow for those industries to come....

Cook: That whole area there was.

Goldstein: Industrial Park

Cook: And that was the big fight we had, and uh, I think that uh, we got, uh, next election I don't think we won by only a hundred votes.

Goldstein: Because people were upset with that decision.

Cook: Upset. And I think right today, or ten years ago today that people would have changed their minds and said we did the right thing.

Goldstein: Do you remember who particularly, or what group, didn't want industry to come in?

Cook: Well, it wasn't any organized group, it was just, uh, and they're sincere people, they're interested in, in keeping the town, uh, forever green, forever wild. But in those days, there was another duty I had; all these servicemen returned, got married, they had children. And really, uh, you had to provide housing. You know, the other ways had grown before the war, or this way was the ideal place, uh ideal direction. And uh, we felt that it was a duty to have this inexpensive housing around so people could afford to move and have their own home. So, the basis of this country is people owning their own homes.

Goldstein: So Suburban Heights was established, and then what was the next big thing that you saw as uh, something that changed in the town after that?

Cook: Well, you just, you just keep, we were building 800 to 1,000 houses a year in the boom times. Uh, I don't know what they're building now, but it's probably less than 200 a year if they're building that many.

Goldstein: So this was between what years and what years would you say the big booms....

Cook: Between fifty - '58 and '68, somewhere in there. And uh, then, the commercial comes along with it – fast food places, and the other place, stores and so on. That comes along with the population. You don't uh, we put out a beautiful brochure sent it all over the country trying to get industry in here. Industry, you see, helps pay your taxes and you've got the sewers and water and the road is all there and you build this building and uh – all the services are there and it doesn't cost you any money to get industry – and that was the theory behind it, you keep the tax rate down.

Goldstein: Now, what about commercial rezoning, uh, did you have to rezone a lot of East Henrietta Road to allow for some of these commercial....

Cook: Theoretically, the west road from uh, roughly St. Patrick's and roughly Calkins north was where it was designed to put most of this uh, uh, commercial business – the shopping centers and so on, the gas stations. The east road to some extent - there was a little bit on east road when we started, up around Jefferson. And uh, then as it smoothed out and more uh, places like that were required, to take care of the people, it spread down a little. East Road never was visualized to – at that time – to handle the Wegmans and the shopping centers like that. And of course we had to do that because of the mass of the population was on that side.

Goldstein: What other decisions do you remember as significant during your time as supervisor? Things that, uh, decisions you made that might have shaped the town?

Cook: Well, I think that – and I didn't make the decisions – we did it as a group. We had Lou Morin, John Girecky, and Reed, and Tom Hall and later Bill Robinson. Uh, we kept expanding the sewers, the main sewer system was laid there, and uh, and expanding the water system was all expanded as the subdivisions came in where it was required. Last thing we did the sewers were layed over there for RIT and Kodak, and uh, over on the river road. But uh, I don't know, it was just, uh, you had, or the Town Hall, the new Town Hall – we were in the old school building, over on Erie Station Road. And, we had a referendum on that, it just passed by 20 votes, 23 votes something like that. And uh, that whole complex at that time cost 575,000. Highway, Garage, the Library, the Town Hall, the whole works. My gosh, the additions are, are more than that today. But we got in a little trouble on that because they didn't think we should spend the money, but, as you look back, you had to do that. The park wasn't on that. We got State aid on that, and Federal aid; the park didn't cost us hardly anything.

Goldstein: Has the Town of Henrietta grown in the direction that you had foreseen it, are you pleased with what has come from that .....

Cook: Oh, I think so, it's just expanded from those original plans.

Goldstein: What other kinds of things do you see that you did or you influenced as Supervisor that have gone on in the town, besides zoning?

Cook: Well, uh, let me go back to the park, I thought the ideal place for a park was along the river, and we had about five sites, and I had a friend who was the superintendent of Letchworth Park. And, I don't remember his name, he's been retired, maybe he's still, maybe he's dead by now. Anyway, he had to approve any park, so he was a friend of mine, I got him up here to pick of these five sites – one of them was along the river over there, which was the best site for Henrietta. He picked this one over here, and I wouldn't of picked it but he did, and it's worked out well, being by the Town Hall and so on. And he knew what he was doing, he had to approve, initially approve it to send it to Albany to get the state money, so, there was a method in the madness to get him up here to pick his own site.

Goldstein: People have always said that you were interested in parades. Do you think you started the Memorial Day parade?

Cook: Yeah, we, the city parade was the only one was any bigger than ours, we had a huge one. Gee, we had more uh, more little uh, Cub Scouts and Brownies, and Campfire Girls. I don't where they all went! There was more Campfire Girls marching in that parade – we had it on television one year. We got the subdividers, and the banks and so on to sponsor it. Then we televised it the next week so everyone could see themselves in the parade.

Goldstein: Then did you appeal to the city to get other bands to march in the Henrietta parade?

Cook: They used to give us a thousand dollars, and in those days you could hire a good band for a hundred dollars, it used to be in the budget. And uh, the city, uh, anything that was Henrietta the city uh, wouldn't help ya anyway, it had been that way all along.

Goldstein: Really, why do you suppose?

Cook: Well, Henrietta had the Regional Market and in recent years they've got Marketplace Mall, and uh, the city felt that Henrietta was hurting, 'cause the industry from the city was moving out here - most of that industry came out of the city, it didn't come from New York or California. It came right out of the city; they were old plants, and they had to get out of them, and they built new ones out here. The city never was too happy with Henrietta, and even in recent times they haven't been and Marketplace Mall they closed that for quite a while, as you recall.

Goldstein: How do you feel about Marketplace Mall? Would it have been something you would have foreseen as supervisor?

Cook: Yeah, the, I tried to get people to put it down at the uh, where uh, the uh, what's the number of it, the Southern Tier, er no, the expressway going south there.

Goldstein: 390

Cook: 390? Is that the number of it? 490, 590, I can't keep the numbers straight. When that was built and the Thruway I thought the ideal place was up in there somewhere where the dragging the people from Batavia, Newark and Geneva and so on. And uh, at that time, or just a little ahead of that time, because the sewers weren't out that far, it was quite a costly thing and I ... thought it would be better there than having it where it is because of the tremendous traffic problem, which has more or less been solved. That was the thought then, and I, I tried to get developers interested in that site and I had one, but he just couldn't raise enough money to put it in there. But what a success that's proved, I'm amazed.

Goldstein: I know it. I know it. So your years as supervisor spanned 1950 – what year?

Cook: '56 to 'bout '67 I think.

Goldstein: And then you decided that you were interested in Albany. How did that all come about?

Cook: Well, I'd been 11 years there, 15 years really ... and after a while it was just a routine there was no more challenges to, you know, everything was a repeat of what we'd done before. So, the opening came in Albany, and that was the reason that I got down there and wished I was back here!

Goldstein: (Laughs) What was the experience like, in Albany? Did you live in Albany during the week or not?

Cook: No, no. The first year I went down there, we got through, uh, March 31<sup>st</sup>. Got ALL the business done, budget, everything passed, because the constitutional convention was coming and we had to get out. But as it went on, you went 3 days a week. You went down on Sunday, then you stayed Monday, Tuesday, and came back Wednesday. Then as the session went on you maybe stayed 10 days in a row early on, but we didn't live there. Stayed in motels mostly.

Goldstein: As State Assemblyman what areas did you represent beside Henrietta?

Cook: Well, before it was reapportioned, I went uh, from Pittsford and all Orleans county. It went to Niagara county lines, it was quite a, quite a run. It was all generally the southern and westerns towns in the county. Hamlin, for instance, on the west, little towns - Mendon, Rush, and Pittsford. And they rezoned it, and it was all - or reapportioned it, it was all Monroe County, they had it Perinton. And, uh, I don't – it's still - Perinton was as big, pretty much as big as Orleans County. They took that one away, but uh .... I had Chili, I added Chili, but it uh, was about the same size, about 120,000 people is what they were aiming for.

Goldstein: What did you think you would particularly do for Henrietta as a State Assemblyman?

Cook: Well, you really, there's not an awful lot anybody can do for their own hometown unless it's roads or something like that. Uh...

Goldstein: Were you able to do anything about roads, or you know, that kind of issue? At the state level?

Cook: Yes, yes, uh, the uh, uh, of course we pushed this 390 and uh, pushed the Orleans expressway that now goes out to Spencerport. That, theoretically, is going all the way into Niagara but it just ended right there, and uh, and uh... Any local home road bill- The bill for the new library, for instance, which you would be interested in. That was park land, the state had money in it, and there had to be uh, uh plans approved in, in the state to get them to allow us to build a library on that piece of ground. And uh, things that home road bills, like that. The Town Board was (fire siren begins) the fire commissioner's, and uh, uh, it got so big that - actually it should have been separate fire commissioners and that bill I put through, uh, as it is now, you know it as, as uh, as the, as having Fire Commissioners separately elected. I don't uh, there were a lot of other ones, there was little piddling bills that anyone could have done, but there was no controversy on it.

Goldstein: Did you have people from Henrietta approaching you, uh, with their interests, you know saying would you please do whatever it was for Henrietta - what kinds of issues might those have been?

Cook: Well, uh, I remember one fellow gave me the idea, Earl Chase, he said "You oughtta put something on the rural mail carriers so they know we're rural mail carriers, for their protection as well as everybody else's." So that sign you see on top of the - not the U.S. mail trucks but on the rural carriers you see 'em through here, when you're - or anyplace in the state. Uh, that was my bill and I found out afterwards they had an association with a man, the devil, that uh, that bill went through and I didn't even know they had an association, so, uh, that sign on there....

Goldstein: So these are signs....

Cook: ...was strickly due to Earl Chase up here, who, it was his idea.

Goldstein: So these are signs on ....

Cook: Says "U.S. Mail".

Goldstein: On the vehicles?

Cook: On the vehicle. It's a specified size and has to go on the roof- and uh, some of them aren't obeying the law - unless it's been changed, uh, they're smaller. Then I found out a lot of them had Jeeps - you couldn't put a sign on the top of a Jeep, or a convertibles in those days. So we had to change it so they could put it on the back a, of a car. And now some of them got fancy lights and everything, they really went all out. (sirens end)

Goldstein: What are the kinds of bills like that do you think that you introduced in response to things that people here wanted?

Cook: Well, I must have passed into law a hundred bills while I was there. Uh, uh, generally nothing that I can recall that would directly affect the people of Henrietta. Had a lot of railroad legislation, 'cause I was one of the few uh, people down there pushing for the railroads, to try to – this was before Amtrak and so on and Conrail. Uh, I, I don't know – I probably couldn't name 5 bills that I passed right now but I – I probably had at least a hundred. There's one year I remember that I had 16, 18 that the governor had signed.

Goldstein: You said that after you got to Albany you wished you were back here. Why?

Cook: Well, after a while – we were in the minority when I first went down there, we had 6 years in the majority, with Rockefeller and so on, and Dewey and those were good years, you get things accomplished. And then we went the last two years were, uh, it was a Democratic governor and the Senate was Republican, and you just sat there, you didn't get anything done! They were always arguing on and on, and uh, the Assembly made laws. It just, it was the 2 party system really bogged down. It was just a waste of time to sit there it seemed, for hours you'd sit there doing nothing but waiting for them to agree on a bill. And uh, all the trouble I've had with budgets in recent years – we never had that trouble – they all, put your five cents in, and you know everybody comprised, but... There'll never be another governor like Rockefeller. People didn't like him. Look what he did for the state with the school system and the Albany mall ....

Goldstein: How did you feel about the Albany mall?

Cook: Well, it was in progress when I first went down there and I, I voted for all the appropriations on there, (another siren goes by) I thought it was the greatest thing, I wish we had it in Rochester. It's, it's really done a, a nice thing for Albany. We got a State Capitol we can be proud of. It cleaned out all those slums there, in Albany. Now it's become a great tourist thing, it's really helped the city of Albany.

Goldstein: Did you feel you didn't have the influence as State Legislator that you did as Supervisor of the town of Henrietta, when you were head of the town?

Cook: Well, in a different way probably I had more influence in Albany because I got to be about third or fourth in the "Peck" system, and uh, uh, by "Peck" system that's an old term, but uh.... I was Chairman of the Republican conference in the 7, 8, 10 people that uh, were in the uh, uh, shall we say the [?] Executive Committee of the Republican Party in the Assembly there. I was on that and a lot of things uh, uh, we got done because I was in that position.

Goldstein: What years were you in Albany?

Cook: I think '68 to '77, '78.

Goldstein: Mm hmm. And then what happened? Did you decide....

Cook: I retired. My wife was a big factor in that. She was sick of me being away all the time.

Goldstein: Mm hmm. When you retired you came back to Henrietta.

Cook: Yeah.

Goldstein: And, what have you done in the Town since your retirement from Albany?

Cook: Well, nothing really. They don't ask me to do anything, so. Once in a while if they hit a problem they'll call. I had more calls when the Democrats were running the Town than I had with the Republicans. Uh, and then I ran two years ago, as you remember, uh, ran in the- Kelly was going- and the Republicans I ran and mainly, and I thought, hell, I ought to do a party, too, and uh. I'm glad I didn't get elected, I lost by 50 votes there, something like that. It's interesting, but as you get older, you don't have that drive anymore that you did when you were younger, though.

Goldstein: Can you think of any things that you would have done differently when you were Supervisor of the Town of Henrietta; any decisions you might have made differently .... when you look back?

Cook: Well. (pauses) I can't think of any big things. Uh, there's probably a lot of things where I made mistakes but, uh, on the big things I, I, I think it's been proven that we uh, did it the right way. Cause they're doing it practically the same way now.

Goldstein: Mm hmm. So you think the Town has moved in the direction that you would have foreseen it and that you would have approved of, of when you made those decisions?

Cook: Yeah, yeah.

Goldstein: 'Cause you really were a large influence in shaping the town in the direction in which it has gone.

[?]

Cook: Well, not only me again, I was working with some pretty good material there with Morin and Hall and uh, Girecky and Reed and Robinson. They were pretty good boys, and they didn't, uh, get along on everything. Sometimes, uh, we fought behind closed doors on a lot of those things, and uh.... I think one of the mistakes that I really don't like is the damn leash law, uh, for dogs. Now, uh, I know a lot of people, and most towns have a leash law, but you've got uh, all kind of wildlife running around because there's no dogs. You, you would have fewer rat...

**END OF SIDE 1**

**TAPE 1 SIDE 2**

- Cook: The fellow that's really interested in the dog, uh, uh, keeps his dog pretty close to home, without a leash law. The fellow that doesn't pay any attention to the leash law is the same fellow that, uh, the dogs were doing damage before. They've had more trouble in court with that thing and so on.
- Goldstein: Was there a lot of controversy surrounding the leash law? Were, were there, uh people ...?
- Cook: Well, most people really wanted it. I wish today I'd voted against it. It's still in the past, but there was one man, I don't remember - I think it was Bill Robinson who voted against it and I wish I'd voted with him because I think that was a mistake.
- Goldstein: Mm hmm. Now can you think of anything else you would have uh, done differently, or you wish the Town Board had done differently at the time?
- Cook: (Long pause) Well, there must be some things, I don't recall anything. It musn't be that important, and uh, the leash law isn't that important. I mean, the bigger things I think we did all right.....
- Goldstein: So you're satisfied with the decisions you made?
- Cook: Yeah.
- Goldstein: So you came to Henrietta when it was a rural town, and uh, you saw it grow from a rural town into a busy suburban town.
- Cook: Yeah, as I say, we were second in the state in percentage of increase in population. When you think of the people that moved in here and what had to be done to take care of them, uh, uh, we didn't do bad. There's people now that'll criticize what we did, but, uh, and uh, the mistakes - we had uh, two or three building inspectors and somebody brought out that uh, somebody missed something 10 years ago or something and uh, that uh, that is happening today in uh, with a bigger staff and less buildings to inspect. But these guys did a tremendous job in those departments.
- Goldstein: What kind of restrictions did you place on the builders when they came in to build, like Wilmot and whoever else the developers were?

Cook: Well, we adopt the state building code, and they had to follow that. That says you've got to have that size beam and such-a-such-a size 2 by 4, and such-a-such-a size plywood for the roof and the siding and so on. Basically, it's a lot more technical than that, but... But we adopted that and they had to build to that, on these size lots. Well, that was another thing we did, I don't really know how well it's working. The size lots were 100 by 150. So this idea came up, out on Long Island where you took a piece of each lot... a lot of people didn't want that big a lot, they didn't want to mow and keep that big a lot up, so. Took a piece out of each lot and put it in a central area for kids to play. Now that was called greenbelt, do you remember that? Were you around when we did that?

Goldstein: Yeah.

Cook: And we were either the first or second in the state to put greenbelts in.

Goldstein: They had that in Wedgewood, I know that.

Cook: Wedgewood and back here, I don't know if they're still using it or not, but uh, it uh, it was a new concept and I really don't know how well it worked. I never really talked to anybody. It came in toward the end of when I was here. But the guy that didn't want the big lawn to keep up, it was an ideal thing. If they've gone on and put swings and that type of thing in, I don't know if they have or not. Or whether they're keeping it mowed or not, I don't know that. The town had to do that – it was, it was a few bucks taken out from each member of the subdivision to take care of that. I don't know how, uh, really how well it's worked, I've never really heard anything for or against it since.

Goldstein: What about requiring builders to put in sidewalks and curbs and that kind of thing?

Cook: Well, we never did, because of this reason. Uh, you can require them to do that but who pays for it? It's the guy buying the house, and uh, (telephone ringing) we had tremendous pressure for underground wiring, instead of the overhead coming into houses. Some, some subdivisions had that but the underground wiring was seven to eight hundred dollars more. The sidewalk was another \$1200, curbs were another – it all went back on the guy buying the house. Uh, uh, sooner or later you price that house out of the market, you're not accomplishing what you set out to do, to buy uh, uh, moderately priced house for middle-class people.

Goldstein: So it was your philosophy to keep the cost of the housing down so that the average person could afford to own their own home rather than living in an apartment.

Cook: That's right, that's right. 'Cause basically, as I said before it's the basic theme of the country. Apartment dwellers are not – and I don't know if you live in an apartment or not, I don't think .... The apartment dwellers are really not the solid citizens. 'Cause they're here a year or two years, and away they move. Some of them are here six months and go somewhere else. But the guy that owns his house is always interested in the Town and keeping it up.

Goldstein: So you wanted people to come in and put down roots in the Town of Henrietta.

Cook: That's right.

Goldstein: Contribute to the town.

Cook: Yeah, yeah. I think it's proved it. I've talked to people down in Suburban Heights when I was going door-to-door two years ago that uh, came in as young people, and their kids have grown up and left now, and they're, they're uh, older middle-age people and uh, they recall the old days... Those people generally are very satisfied with what was done with the town. The ones that have gone through it, so.

Goldstein: Were you supervisor when some of these apartment developments came ...

Cook: Yeah, yeah. In fact I thought it uh, balanced the town as it should have. The first was in uh, West, or uh, East Henrietta Road there.

Goldstein: The Wedgewood.

Cook: The Wedgewood, yeah. Is that the name of it? No.

Goldstein: The one – East Henrietta near Castle? That one?

Cook: Yeah, is that Wedgewood?

Goldstein: I don't know...

Cook: I don't know, they're different names on 'em. But that was the first one, and uh, we urged that one.

Goldstein: You just felt it would give a balance to the town?

Cook: That's right. And after that we were a little sorry there were so many of them. But uh, that was the first one we originally let them do that, got a developer interested in putting it in.

Goldstein: Mmm. So you feel pretty satisfied that the town has developed in the direction that you would have foreseen it and that decisions you made at that time were good ones?

Cook: Basically, yes. We made mistakes, but, uh, you gotta with that kind of growth and so on.

Goldstein: Yeah, it was a tremendous responsibility to, to uh, to shape a town and that's what your group did.

Cook: Yes, that's what we did and we got that satisfaction out of it. But uh, but you know, but, there's something that you can....

Goldstein: How closely did you work with the school district?

Cook: Oh, very close.

Goldstein: Yeah, because with all of these outlets....

Cook: When John Parker was uh, was uh, superintendent there, particularly close, see. School district was an independent uh, body of course. They weren't elected through politics, and Parker and I used to work very closely. He knew the minute we were going to build another subdivision, the number of houses, and from that he could figure the number of kids and how much, uh, uh, expansion he'd have to do. They, they were expanding the school here in those days.

Goldstein: Mm hmm, yeah, I remember that. The population has changed considerably since then, now they're closing schools.

Cook: Oh yeah. Yeah, it was... again I gotta refer to the state – we were first in the state in, in children, per population. That was a tremendous job for that school board to, to do. But everything we had they knew about, and we worked very closely. I don't think it requires that close a cooperation nowadays, but it, it uh, it did then.

Goldstein: So was the idea to put schools within the developments, uh, I know at that time I think....

Cook: Yeah, uh, Gillette school, were you here when Gillette school was built?

Goldstein: Yeah.

Cook: That, uh, that particular piece of land Wilmot offered to the school district for nothing, and it's, (chuckles) people turned him down and they still built it, uh, he sold it to them after a few years. Can you imagine that?

Goldstein: Whose decision was it to put the schools in the developments was it uh, the school district's or the town's?

Cook: No, I think it was basically the schools came to us and uh, uh, so then when the developer came in with the new subdivision we'd ask the school are you interested in this, and if they were, uh, a piece was set aside in the subdivision and the school of course had to purchase it from the developer, and uh, and uh, as I say, we worked very closely together. It made so much sense, because you saved the uh, bus, busing and uh, so on. And, and the children were around their own home rather than carting them way over in a central place. But uh, I'm talking about grade schools now, not high school.

Goldstein: Did you have any requests to increase public transportation in Henrietta, to put a bus line out here?

Cook: Oh, yeah. We had a, a fellow who had been fired by the rest of us and was in private hands then. And uh, he was going to put a bus from uh, Midtown Mall probably, out through Brighton/Henrietta. And uh, in order to do this we had to get a franchise through Brighton and the city. Now, they said we won't pickup or let off in the city. This is a private company. And uh, we uh, Brighton – the supervisor was a friend of mine and he said, "Look, if the city gives in a franchise leave it with them, but don't get us involved". Well the city turned us down on the franchise so it never went through but this was before it became the Authority and the public took over the bus system. 'Course now we've got [?] here and we've got our own bus service. He's the one who put the money in this all [?] the Town would have spent the money for. But the City wouldn't give us the franchise, again I refer back to mainly – the uh, the bus driver union was uh, opposed to having – cause this would be non-union drivers you see, so the City Council got a lot of pressure. Now I'm on the other side 'cause I'm on the Transit Authority here, we run the bus line.

Goldstein: Oh you are now? You're on the Transit –

Cook: Yeah.

Goldstein: Oh, I didn't realize that. Oh, what are your duties on the Transit Authority? What kinds of things do you do?

Cook: Well, it's kind of like a Board of Directors, uh, for the bus company. And then we have the bus companies in Batavia, and Wayne County and Livingston County. They're separate entities, and Lift Line is another separate entity. And uh, new projects that – those articulated buses. I'd seen those in Europe and they're, they're just coming into this country in the last five years and .... I pushed on that until I finally got the 17 of them. I don't know if they're going to start, they're coming out here – these are nice busses. They'll hold more people and less maintenance and less uh, labor expense.

Goldstein: Hmm. Was there ever any request for medical facilities in uh, in Henrietta – a hospital, a clinic or that kind of thing?

Cook: Naw, the only thing was the ambulance and uh, the people uh, started that. Uh...

Goldstein: This was a volunteer....

Cook: Volunteer ambulance. And uh, Fire company didn't want any parts of them. I remember meeting with the groups and we helped them. They had a little Cadillac they bought somewhere for I don't know \$800 was their first ambulance.

Goldstein: Uh huh.

Cook: Well you've been there quite a while. How many years have you been there?

Goldstein: '61.

Cook: '61

Goldstein: Uh '65, I guess, originally.

Cook: Well you've been there – you're one of the old timers now.

Goldstein: Yeah, I know it. I know it. Well, it sounds like you've had a, a very interesting influence on the Town of Henrietta.

Cook: Yeah, it's been an interesting career, life, and I don't regret any of it.

Goldstein: And your name is not Donald, it is Don, isn't it?

Cook: Generally, yeah. As long as they uh, the state signs my pension checks Donald so I don't –

Goldstein: I noticed in the phone book it is Don.

Cook: Yeah, yeah.

Goldstein: And you call yourself Don.

Cook: Yeah.

Goldstein: Well thank -

Cook: My mother originally had uh, in uh registered somewhere - wherever they did in those days as "Don". So.

Goldstein: Well I appreciate –

Cook: But, I say, my checks come "Donald" so I don't object to it. I –

Goldstein: (chuckling) As long as they come!

Cook: Yeah, as long as they come.

Goldstein: Well I appreciate very much your talking to us -

Cook: Well it's been enjoyable.

Goldstein: - our oral history project.

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