

1973

Mr. W.D. Ulmer

Debbie Ulmer

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/happiness-lane>

Recommended Citation

Ulmer, Debbie, "Mr. W.D. Ulmer" (1973). *Happiness and Hard Times*. 28.
<https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/happiness-lane/28>

This book is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections at Lane Library (Armstrong) at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Happiness and Hard Times by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.

84

This is an interview of Mr. W. D. Ulmer, a retired plumber who has lived in Savannah about fifty-four years.

Interviewed by: Debbie Ulmer (granddaughter of Mr. Ulmer)

Q. How old were you when you first came to Savannah?

A. Seventeen.

Q. Where did you live before that?

A. Estill, South Carolina.

Q. Why did you come to Savannah?

A. Because I had a sister here and I went to work here.

Q. Where did you go to work and what did you do when you got here?

A. I tried a job at Seckinger and Garwes in October, 1918.

Q. Did you come here in 1918?

A. Yes, that's when I came here. October, 1918.

Q. How old were you when you got married?

A. Twenty-four.

Q. What kind of work were you doing for Seckinger?

A. Plumbing, plumber's helper.

Q. What was it like back then and how is it different?

A. Well, the plumbers and the helpers rode bicycles in those days. We rode bicycles as far as Pooler, Bethesda and Thunderbolt.

Q. How did you carry your stuff?

A. On the handlebars, between your legs. Some of it was strapped to the cross member bar of the bicycle.

Q. Are very many of the people you worked with now in business then?

A. A few, yes.

Q. What kind of people did you work for? I mean what areas did you work in?

A. All over.

Q. Did you ever hear of Tin City?

A. No.

Q. Well, what kind of areas did the blacks live in? Or the whites, was it different from them?

A. Pitiful. All the colored people lived in Yamacraw and Frog town practically and a few scattered on the Eastside. The white people were over all up and down from Bull Street, West to West Broad or to the Ogeechee Road and from Bull Street, East to the root of Thunderbolt.

Q. Was the layout of Savannah a lot different then?

A. The same thing. It was, Victory Drive was the city limits and we had a race track that ran from Victory Drive out White Bluff Road across on Montgomery Crossroads and back in Waters Road to Victory Drive.

Q. It was a race track?

A. Racetrack.

Q. What kind of racing?

A. Automobiles.

Q. Did very many people go to see it?

A. Oh, yes. We had, before I went to war, we had Bruce Brown. I was living here then. I had a piece of Bruce Brown's tire. It blew out in one of the laps. It blew a piece of it off and I had it for a long time. A friend of mine had his goggles. He threw them off. They were the speediest cars around. We had a few Savannah men that ran in those races.

Q. How old were you then?

A. I guess about twelve, I imagine.

Q. About twelve?

A. That was before I came here to work.

Q. Oh, you use to come here to visit?

A. Yes.

Q. What kind of people went to the races?

A. Everybody from wide and near.

Q. What did they do, just stand on the street on the side?

A. No, they stood on the side of the road, and carried a chair or stool, a lot of them. Then they had a Grand Stands out in what they called the Granger Track. Ardsley Park in those days was called the Granger Track. And Victory Drive was Estill

Avenue. The others were just the same, I believe - Montgomery Crossroads. We had quite a few bicycle races. and then we had what you called pushmobiles. You construct a racer of your own type probaby out of an Octogan soap box and put four wheels on it and guide it with ropes, and one would push. Get a little light fellow in it, and he would guide it. And one would push. You'd have so far to push, see, on a lap. And this fellow would push him so far. Take something like a broom stick and have a place that would catch on the beek of his pushmobile. That way it wouldn't come out, and then grab him and push your broomstick in that and push it as hard as you could. The one would win a prize that won, you see. That was in the park extension. Used to run round and round the park extension out there.

Q. Was that for the kids or for everybody?

A. Oh, up until 15, 16 years old.

Q. Where did you go to school?

A. I went to school here. I went to school in Astill.

Q. What kind of school was it? Was it different then?

A. Oh, yeh. In those days we had - well, for one thing, they didn't keep you in after school. They used a strap on you. I went to Professor Griffith at 38th Street School, and he ordinarily used a rope. And Mrs. Boston was principle at Henry Street, and she had a leather strap was split in nine pieces - nine different sections. And they all called it the cat with nine tails. And that's what she whipped you with. But you didn't have to do very much to get a whipping in those days. And you wasn't sent home, I'll guarantee you that. You got your whipping and went back to class. And then the drinking fountain was a big long trough in the yard with a piece of pipe with a number of small holes drilled in it, and you turn it on and it ran constantly. And it would shoot out about that high and loop over - turned on an angle where it would rebound, see. It'd go over and loop. One on the girls' side and one on the boys' side.

Q. That was out in the yard?

A. Out in the yard.

Q. They had the yard separated? The boys played on one side and the girls on the other?

A. Yeh, had division - fence.

Q. Did the girls go in the same classes the boys went in?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Did you finish school?

A. No. I didn't finish school. When I went to school you graduated in the tenth grade, and the next year they put it to the eleventh. Now-a-days, ya'll go to about the twelfth, don't you?

W. Yes.

A. And I quit school in the ninth grade. And I would have graduated that next June.

Q. Did ya'll start in September and go to June like we do?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember much about the beach?

A. Yes. We had to ride the train down to the beach. You didn't have any of the highway down there. We rode the train down there. And I remember on one occasion, a storm came up. And if a storm came up, everybody would beat it to the train to catch the train away. They had a depot on Randolph Street called Tybee Depot. And you caught the train down there and went to Tybee and you came back on the train. But if a bad looking cloud came up and looked as if it was going to storm the people would panic almost time, and they'd climb all over the top of the train and everywhere else to try to get away from there. And sit on top of one another and everything else.

Q. What was it like down there then? Didn't they have a big pavilion and everything?

A. Oh, yeh. Had Tybrisia Pavilion and dancing - just a big dance hall and it was very much like it is now, only it wasn't as nice. The people sat on the pavilion. I think there was two down there. I don't remember for sure. I think the Tybee Hotel was down there then. Wasn't no getting away from there except by train.

Q. How much was it to go down there - to ride the train?

A. I don't remember. I don't think it was over a quarter. I'm not sure what the price was, but I don't think it was over twenty-five cents - something like that.

Q. Did a lot of people used to go down there?

A. Oh, yeh. Particularly on holidays and George Washington's birthday and Fourth of July and all the big holidays that we celebrated and weekends was just about as bad - Saturday and Sunday.

Q. Did they used to have parades like the Christmas parades and stuff like that?

A. I don't remember about that. I don't think we had that many of them in the street like we do now.

Q. How about radio and television? Do you remember much about when television came out?

A. A mouth organ came nearer being a radio than anything else in those days. Never was heard of in those days.

Q. A mouth organ?

A. A mouth organ - harmonica. No, the first television, I remember, came out about 1917 - 16 or 17. It ran on batteries. Didn't have them hooked to the lights - DC current. It ran on AC.

Q. Were you in Savannah when television came out or was that in Estill.

A. I don't know. I don't remember. We had one we used to take the automobile battery out the car. When something special was coming, and you didn't have a battery, you'd use the automobile battery and hook it up.

Q. Did ya'll have a radio and listen to the radio programs?

A. Yeh, had a radio. I don't remember the make of it. It was battery operated. I remember you had to put batteries in it to get anything.

Q. Do you remember much about the Depression?

A. Yes.

Q. A lot?

A. Well, it didn't effect me so much because I was on a salary. But I remember you got scrip. They paid you off in scrip. You could spend it - buy groceries, shoes, anything with it, but not money. You didn't get money. Tickets - scrip - banks issued scrip. Well, it would take the same place as money. The banks would cash it in - would honor it. Of course they put it out, not money. Money wasn't in circulation at all.

Q. What about WPA? Do you remember much about that?

A. Yes, I remember WPA. Every poor person in Kingdom Come worked for it. Dug ditches. They were doing scrip business, and they'd go buy shoes and all stuff as that. There was a joke told about WPA. The lazy people in the world plus some good ones worked for WPA. They needed the work, and I'm glad they got it, but some of them didn't deserve it. It was told a joke that the manager - the boss of one of the gangs of the WPA called in to his boss and told them to send an ambulance out there that a man was dead. So they rushed an ambulance driver out there, and the ambulance driver asked him said, "Where is the man that's dead? I came to pick him up and take him in." He said, "You'll have to wait till five o'clock when the whistle blows and see which one still lies there after the rest is gone, and that'll be the dead one."

Q. Do you remember anything about the city market downtown?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. Where was it?

A. It took in the square where it's the garage that -

Q. Park and Shop?

A. Park and Shop garage. It's in the same old building there. You could buy anything there - shrimp, oysters, crabs, meats, vegetables. We got better service, whole lot better than we do from the farmers's market out where it is now. You could get preserves - stuff that was put up in the country - from over in Bluffton and Beaufort and all those islands over there. Pickles, shrimp. It was quite nice.

Q. What about vegetable carts and wagons? Did there used to be a lot of those?

A. Yes, mostly the women pushed them, too, a few men, but mostly women. A lot of them took it on their head. They had a big basket - homemade basket - on their head, and they toted it on their head - their produce, what they were selling - crabs and shrimp, particularly and oysters - seafood.

Q. When you first got here was there mostly wagons, or did a lot of people have cars or bicycles or what?

A. Yes, they had quite a few cars, because the shipyard was running then. The three shipyards were running, and the people working at the shipyards were making quite a bit of money, and there was every make imaginable on the road. We had three shipyards then.

Q. What about streetcars? Did a lot of people ride them?

A. Yes, they ran from here to Port Wentworth. And Thunderbolt had open cars; a seat all the way across, and the conductor walked back and forth on a fender on the side of the car to collect your fare. He'd reach down there from one side to the other and get your fare, and he could ring it right over his head.

Q. What was it like during the World Wars? Do you remember World War I or just World War II?

A. No, I remember World War I and II. It was very much alike. The boys all had to go. It educated quite a few people that wouldn't have otherwise had the education they have today if it hadn't been for the war.

Q. How was that?

A. Well, because it pulled them off of the farms which they never would've left if it hadn't had been for the war. It sent them overseas to different countries and all. A lot of them studied, and they made more money. They saved their money and went to college. It was quite educational to most everybody that went. Now World War II was little more aristocratic. They had a little better times. They had more things for pleasure and stuff than they did in World War I. In world war I, we didn't know anything. None of us knew anything about war. It was a new thing to us. And by the time, World War II come in, most of our officers and all were World War I veterans, see. And they'd been through with it, and they were experienced, in other words. It made it much better for World War II than it did for World War I. I think they fared considerable better.

Q. Were times harder in Savannah during the war?

A. No, things thrived pretty well, because it took a lot of the men away to war. For another thing, the shipyards were running everywhere. We had three shipyards here. And then up North and all around they had these shipyards building ships, because they were sinking them in world war I. Hitler - the Germans - were sinking about as fast as we made them.

Q. Where were the shipyards in Savannah?

A. Well, we had Terry's and the Foundation in the Westside up the Savannah River. There was Terry's and the Foundation, and I believe it was the South one then. Then we had Southeastern. That was World War II. I believe there was another one in there. I can't think of the name of it. There was one out here on the East Savannah. And the Foundation was down between here and Port Wentworth. And Terry's was out there where the Continental Can Company is out there now.

Q. Do you remember when Union Bag came to Savannah?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. How did it start out?

A. Well, that was first the Diamond Match Company. They made matches. And it stayed vacant for a long, long time - idle. Then Union Bag came and started making paper out of wood - bark. And it was quite an experience for us, and it put a lot of people to work, too.

Q. Did it bring a lot of people into Savannah?

A. Oh, yes. They had to bring a lot of experienced people to instruct these how to do.

Q. Where did most of these people come from?

A. Oh, Louisiana, for one, sent quite a few, and all around. I think, they'd an original pulp business in Louisiana.

Q. Were there a lot of immigrants coming to Savannah during the War?

A. Well, I don't think necessarily so. During the war that-a-way, people traveled from one state to the other. Naturally they followed work. If there's a lot booming down here. Now down in Florida, down there once, they had a boom down there. And when the boom broke, those that were from Georgia and North Carolina and all likely to starved to death, because the bottom fell out all of a sudden. And there was no work for them, and those that hadn't saved enough money to survive on were handicapped. And a lot of them had to walk. Men and women had to walk or hitchhike the highways to get back to where they were going. Quite a few from North Carolina and South Carolina.

Q. What about famous people that visited Savannah? Do you remember any of the government people or famous people that came to Savannah?

A. Yes. Every once in a while we'd have some big celebrity to pop up. Henry Ford - he came here quite often. Dr. Tory.

Q. Who was Dr. Tory?

A. I think he was brother-in-law to Henry Ford. Owned Ossabaw Island. Quite a few governors came through here. I don't remember any of the presidents - only coming through on the train. I don't remember any of them stopping here.

Q. Do you remember Daddy Grace or any of them coming through?

A. I know him. I knew of him. Yeh, he was a preacher. He was the colored peoples' God.

Q. He used to have parades here, didn't he?

A. Oh, he lived here. He had two homes here.

Q. Where were they?

A. One was on West Victory Drive. I did work in it for him. He had a wonderful home over there on Victory Drive. It's still there, a beautiful place. Where was the other one? I don't remember now, but I'd always heard that he had two. But the one on Victory Drive, I did a lot of work out there for him.

Q. What about the political leaders in Savannah - mayors and things like that?

A. Oh, yes. We had Colonel F.O.D. Hunter. Hunter Field was named after him. He was born and raised here. The founder of Girl Scouts.

Q. Juliette Low.

A. Juliette Low. She was raised here. Her old home still stands

Q. When did the Army move out to Hunter Field or the Air Force, whichever one it was?

A. It hasn't been so long - so many years, but I can't tell you the date. But it hasn't been very many years that Hunter Field was established out there. The road used to go right through Hunter Field from White Bluff Road to the Ogeechee Road. I've traveled it many a time. That was since 20. Since the twenties.

Q. Did that cause a lot of changes in Savannah?

A. Well, we had to provide more homes. There was quite a few of them came in for the officers and all of them. But not too much. I never did see where it made too much difference until they got settled. And the groceries and stuff they were buying - why naturally ran the city's income up, considerably.

Q. What about prohibition?

A. Well, that was a problem from beginning to end. They made whiskey all kind of ways - corn and rye and barley. If they couldn't get good whiskey they drank that. Then quite a few people made their own beer. In the grocery store you could buy the ingredients - the syrup and stuff to put in it - and make your own beer.

Q. There was a lot of that going on in Savannah, then?

A. Oh, yes. There was a considerable lot of it. It was made in the country in the swamps where they could hide and a little of, they did sneak in some in these back streets and these colored quarters and still it. But most of it was done in swamps and out in the marshes, places like that where they could see to run or maybe have a boat to get away in.

Q. Do you remember much about when back in the early sixties, I guess it was, when Kennedy was really worried about Cuba threatening the United States? The Communist scare and all that?

A. Yes, he sent soldiers down here to raid Cuba and Castro backed down. They had the soldiers ready in Florida to go over there to land in Quantanimo Bay.

Q. There was a lot air raid drills and things in Savannah, too, weren't there?

A. A few, not many. There wasn't very many air raid drills. Of course, we practiced, you know. But never had an air raid here at all. But we went through the drills. A lot of them practiced. They had the, what they call, tracer - the thing they have up there, you know, to trace ships coming in and spot them and identify them. There was a lot of that went on. We never had anything to actually blow up like that.

Q. What about during the Communist Scare when there were so many people brought to trial because they were convicted of being in the Communist Party and stuff like that? Was Savannah affected by any of that?

A. No, not to a great extent. What did they call that kind of religion some of them had affected more than anything else. But we never were worried with the Communist other than in the papers - writing a story or something about them. But any results from the Communists - I never knew of any of them coming down here trying to pull anything over us.

Q. What was that religion you were talking about just then?

A. It's gotten to be quite a big thing. Some man - not too many years ago. I can't think of it. There's a lot in the paper about it now all the time.

Q. What did they believe in?

A. I think more or less infidelity than anything else. They call the religion by his name - by the man.

Q. It affected Savannah, though?

A. Oh, no. Just all over. More or less the government agencies - the FBI and such like.

Q. How did it affect them? Just causing trouble or something?

A. Well, not particularly causing trouble. In other words, things would start, just like a tale would start here and keep going and leave its signs everywhere it went. You know what I'm talking about. They didn't believe strictly in our religion.

Q. Did you used to do things like picking cotton or tobacco when you were little?

A. I was raised on a farm, but we never planted tobacco. We planted watermelons and cotton and corn and sometimes truck such as beans and Irish potatoes and cantelopes, cucumbers in the section where I was. Tobacco was planted mostly in Georgia in those days. And cotton and watermelons was our main crop.

Q. Were there a lot of people moving in from the farms to the city during the Depression or the wars?

A. Before the Depression?

Q. During or before, anytime - like to get jobs?

A. Well, yes, a lot of them would come - a few, not so many - came here to go to work for the shipyards and such like. But most of them stuck to the farm; cause they had plenty to eat on the farms, and if they left, all probabilities they wouldn't have.

Q. Most of the people used to live in inner Savannah. When did they start moving to the outsides - the outskirts of Savannah?

A. Well, recent years more of them have gotten out to the suburbs for privacy and tax elimination. That is such high taxes. They get in the suburbs and they don't have city taxes. They eliminate city taxes.

Q. What about the way Savannah was run back then?

A. Oh, much better than it is now. Very much better.

Q. Why?

A. Because, the mayor - he didn't buy his way in there. He was voted in by the majority. Now, they buy their way in there, and all they think about is tax, tax, tax, and getting money - thriving - and chiseling and everything else to get money. And taxing you for every dime they can get. We had Lee Mingledorf, who was quite a nice man. And Mr. Owen Fulmer and Murray Stewart. They were all good men, wonderful men.

Q. Do you remember anything about during the time when the Blacks started moving into politics and things like that?

A. Well, that's just in the last few years. There wasn't nothing like that in those days. They didn't have this here holding you up and pocketbook snatching. And when you hired one of them - Black and white - they worked. They gave you a day's work and that was it. You never heard of snatching people or colored people grabbing white women and snatching their pocketbooks and kidnapping them and that stuff. If they did, they were lynched, most of them, if they caught them.

Q. Was there any lynching in Savannah?

A. No.

Q. Around Savannah?

A. Yes. I remember that a colored man by the name of Phillip Gathers attacked a girl - a lone girl - at Blandford, which is right South of Rincon. She went up on a train. It was the old Brinson Railroad. And went to Blandford and got off the train, and this nigger attacked her. Terry Shipyard was in operation then. It closed down. They got word out there that they had captured Phillip Gathers, and he had attacked this lone girl. She went home for the weekend, and she had to get off the train and walk a short distance, and he attacked her. There wasn't a high powered rifle could be bought in Savannah in a hardware store. They all sold out. They went up there, and they brought him back and cut him up in little pieces. Some of them had parts of him dragging behind the automobiles.

Q. Was the Klu Klux Klan very big in Savannah?

A. Was one of the best organizations Savannah ever had for the simple reason that lawbreakers were afraid of it. They never beat or lynched anybody. The only thing is if a man wasn't doing right, and if he was chiseling or didn't treat his family right, he got a report. A lot of preachers belonged to it. I did myself. And they went to them and told them, "Now, listen, you straighten up and fly right, or else we're going to take to you out and give you a flogging". Then they burned crosses in front of people's houses to warn them, not to scare them; warn them that they had their eye on them.

Q. Did they ever carry out any of their threats?

A. I never known them to. I belonged to them for many years. Brother Wilder belonged to it.

Q. John Wilder?

A. Yeh.

Q. Do you remember much about him? Did you know him?

A. Oh, yeh. I knew him since I was a little boy. I had more respect for him than any preacher I ever knew.

Q. How long was he preacher At Calvary?

A. Oh, me. Ever since it became a Calvary. When they was on 35th and Barnard - that old wooden, they used it for a Sunday School building. And then the members built most all of the church there on Barnard and 33rd. All the members knocked off from work in the afternoon and went over ther and went to work.

Q. He was a pretty important man in Savannah back then, wasn't he?

A. Oh, he was one of the most wonderful men. He and Reverend Leroy Cleverdon, retired pastor of First Baptist Church, is two of the best men that I've ever known, barring none.

Q. Do you remember any of the other people who were important people in Savannah during that time? People like that?

A. Well, Lester Henderson was always a big shot, carried a big part in the home guards. Oh, ther's quite a few of them. And Ormond Hunter, he took a big interest in it.

Q. Big interest in what?

A. In the Army and government soldiers and so forth. They had what falled the Houzars. It was a mounted battalion that was here for years.

Q. What was the name of it?

A. The Houzars. Georgia Houzars. Had the stalbe out there on Bee road for ages. Then it was once over there right in front of Inneckens's Florist.

Q. what did they do?

A. They practiced just like these boys go to drill once a year. They practiced the same way. A bunch of them belonged to Houzars. Kenneth belonged to some other thing up there, and they'd go to two weeks training each year.

Q. What about telephones in Savannah? Did a lot of people have telephones?

A. No. Businesses mostly and the better people, and the poor people didn't have but very few telephones. Well, they didn't want them. We didn't have the M and M and all those places in those days to shop. The corner grocery store was where all the people traded, most of them. You wouldn't run all over the world to get a quart of milk. You'd run right down to the corner grocery store and buy it from your neighborhood grocery. Sears and Roebuck was one of the first to come here. We had Silver's Five and Ten and Woolworth's and Kresses and Sears and Roebuck. That was about all of them. Then the A & P and Colonial, I think, were about the first grocery stores that I remember.

Q. First ones in Savannah?

A. Yeh.

Q. what about department stores and stuff like Sears - what kind of stuff did they sell back then?

A. Oh, about a general line of everything - just like they do now. They go along with times as usually. Sears has always done a big business with country people through their mail-order catalogues. Montgomery Ward and Sears - about the same. I believe Sears would be more than Montgomery Ward.

Q. What about the theatres - like the Weis and all? When did they start coming to Savannah?

A. well, they had Savannah Theatre, and the Bijou and the Odeon and the Arcadian. Savannah Theatre was the only one wasn't on Broughton right near Abercorn. They were all scattered near Abercorn and Broughton.

Q. Did they show still pictures when you first came to Savannah, or did they have talking pictures then?

A. Bijou and Savannah were the only ones had live pictures. They had engagements when various different ones would come here - just occasionally, wasn't always.

Q. What about the others what did they show?

A. Just movies.

Q. No talking?

A. Yeh, they'd have talking one - it'd be movies. They'd be on the screen, and there they'd have the voice with it. But they wouldn't be live. But Savannah and the Bijou would have live women such as Mae West occasionally. There were various different ones.

Q. Oh, the others were animated like cartoons and all?

A. Yeh.

Q. Oh. Did a lot of people get to go the the movies or was it just something for the richer people?

A. Oh, everybody went to see. I remember once, Gone with the Wind was one. I think I saw it three times. I was at the Savannah Theatre. The Bijou, mostly young people liked it better, because it had dancing and acrobatic acts and all like that. And Savannah, course they had it, but not as much as seemed like Bijou. The Bilou's up there handy on Broughton Street, too.

Q. How long have you been in the Plumbers' union?

A. Oh, about 30 years.

Q. Was it organized when you first came to Savannah?

A. Yes, I know it was. There was a few. It wasn't so widespread, but there was a few. Along about the latter twenties, somewhere along in there, or early thirties, they unionized in Savannah. That is, if you didn't belong to the Union, there was a lot of jobs you couldn't work on. You to carry a card to work on them. And we went Union - all the men we had. Up until then, we had mixed some union, some not.

Q. Who were you working for then?

A. Some people. I worked nine years in business for myself and about forty years with M.O. Seckinger - people I learned my trade with. It was Seckinger and Gerves and they dissolved partnership in the late twenties. And I stayed in there long as he lived. And when he died, I left and went in business for myself for nine years. I was superintendent there before he died. When he retired, I took his place. After he died, I left and went in business for myself. And then four years before I retired, I went back down there just to supervise and piddle.

Q. Was work different then like tools and stuff like that? Was it a lot different when you first started out?

A. Oh, man, yes. Yeh, everybody had a truck of their own. And they improved on the tools. And when you cut thread, you had to cut them by hand. You cut and thread pipe by hand and pull your eye-teeth out doing it. Now, in the last forty years it's all done by machinery, motors and electrical motor pulled the die for you. The tools are made differently.

Q. When did ya'll first start driving trucks instead of riding bicycles?

A. About 1921, I guess - '22. I got a truck in about '22 after I served my apprenticeship. They gave me a truck. And old T-Motel truck.

Q. With the Union as prevalent as it is now you have to have a lot more training for plumbing now than you did then, don't you?

A. Well, boys in those days were eager to get the training. Today they don't care if they do or not. All they looking for is payday. We turned out much better mechanics in those old days than we do today.