

MACE: too. It goes up and down. It's an anticipated purchase; they can defer buying and not buy many while they are unable or unwilling.

EH: During the Great Depression in the 'thirties, were there many automobile dealers and service stations that went out of business?

MACE: Yes, there were. It's been a business that has been very hazardous. That's the reason I didn't take the Ford agency in '35 when it was first offered me. I didn't want to have all of my eggs all in one basket, and I didn't want the pressure of the factory although there was a big opportunity there. Like General MacArthur said, "Everything is a risk, but life is full of opportunities."

EH: What about the automobile dealers during World War II? What happened?

MACE: Well, there were no manufacturers. They quit manufacturing and used everything for the war effort. They people had to use the old cars; and they did a good job because they were able to get parts. Most used cars were better at the end of the war than they were at the beginning on account of they had a lot of replacement of worn parts. People cherished them as all they had so they took better care of them. I had several people thank me for selling them better tires before the war started because they had a lot of trouble with cheap ones and recaps during the war.

EH: We've covered 20-25 years in there. Some people say that the morality has declined due to the automobile. How do you answer that?

MACE: I don't believe that at all. I think we've just been too permissive. Recently the younger people have been fortunate that they haven't had any hardships much, and it takes hardships to make hardy people according to Longfellow. I believe that's true. We parents and we teachers and others nowadays buy our child a car, and we don't know where he is or what he is doing. We ought to spend more effort and put legs under the youth to stand on so that they will be successful after we're gone. I think that even though minimum wage is a good thing (and I was for it when I first read about it in high school economics), yet, these kids ought to be allowed to work at any rate the

MACE: parents bargain for them in order to give them experience because you learn by doing and if you haven't done anything, you don't know much.

EH: Do you employ young people now?

MACE: Yes, some, but not as much as I used to because of the attitude most of them have. They're not trained to be respectful of discipline and usually do not intend to stay long enough to warrant training them. Our kind of work is more complicated than it used to be. It takes longer to train, and there is a lot more damage if they make a booboo. But I have hired hundreds of them. I hired many, many blacks years before most others did. I hired ten students at once for Johnny Wooden when he was basketball coach at Indiana State Teachers College, now Indiana State University and ten students at once for his predecessor, Mr. Curtis. We have now two young men that go to State Normal Indiana State University working here. That's Mickey Hunt and Bill Jenkins.

EH: You spoke of Mr. Curtis. Who is he?

MACE: He was a coach at State Normal preceding Johnny Wooden. He was Glen Curtis; he was a famous Martinsville high school coach. He had two or three state Indiana champion teams before he quit high school and went to coaching college. When he left State, he tried coaching pro basketball, I believe.

He had, I think, coached Johnny Wooden in high school because Johnny went to Martinsville. I think Johnny went to high school under him. There was another famous player named Herb Curtis, but it was not him.

EH: The young people, then, did they own cars themselves?

MACE: Most of them did not. It wasn't common unless it was a child of an affluent person. The wages were real low then and it took a lot of hours of work to pay for a car. See now, you can buy a cheap car with a few months work. Of course, new cars were low compared to now. When we began selling Mercurys in 1945, a new Mercury was \$1,095, and now it is \$10,000 for the better and bigger ones or thereabouts.

EH: What was the first long trip you took and what kind of car were you in?

MACE: Well, it depends on what you mean by long. How far? I drove in my little Gray to Akron, Ohio. That is the farthest I went in it. Soon after I was married in 1924. Soon after, we took regular vacations and I have ever since. I think everybody needs them. I think I drove up to Wisconsin in '26 which was the first trip I took that far, I think. Every year I took one or two.

EH: What kind of car were you in when you went to Wisconsin?

MACE: It was a Buick, a 1924 sedan.

EH: Were there electric cars in the 'twenties?

MACE: Yes, there were quite a few in Terre Haute. I remember Mrs. Fairbanks had one. Most of the wealthy ladies in town had one . . . not most, but several. Mr. Lederer had one. I remember his driver run right out in front of me one day. I nearly ran into it. It was his daughter driving. She was a lifelong friend of my wife and me but she had run it [out in front of me]. This happened to me down here on South 6th [Street]. I was going along unconcerned and all at once saw this car turn the corner right in front of me and I pretty near hit her. I had another case like that over on 5th Street. I had bought my little Gray car then. It was a fellow who worked over at the Levi store. [He] drove up in front of me. I couldn't stop, so we had a slight collision.

EH: The electric cars, they didn't take them out of Terre Haute, did they?

MACE: No, they never did outlaw them. People just quit using them.

EH: Yes, but I mean that they wouldn't drive to Sullivan in those cars?

MACE: Oh, you mean they weren't made for long trips; no, sir, they weren't. The batteries wouldn't have enough electricity to take any long trips.

Speaking of people driving right out in front of you, I was amazed when I went for the first time to Texas. They did that there; then, they'd come right

MACE: out of their lane and drive right out and turn right in front of you. You had to slow down or get hit. I saw that happen many times.

Back in the 'twenties and 'thirties, very few states had stock laws; and if you weren't careful, you'd hit a pig, a cow, or a horse and then you'd have to pay for it besides the damage to your car. They still have that in Illinois as I understand; if you hit an animal on the road over there, you have to settle for it. In Indiana, if you hit an animal in the road, then the owner has to pay as it's his fault for the damage.

EH: After they paved the National Road, a lot more traffic went through Terre Haute then. People started moving out of town, I guess, also, didn't they, and began building in the suburbs or going to the farms?

MACE: Well, I think they used to do that in the old days more than they did in the early 'twenties or 'thirties. That happened more than urban flight. It has happened a lot more in later times due to racism, I suppose. People want to get away from a situation they were compelled to live with. Of course, I always liked the outdoors, cleaner air, not so crowded, and you can relax better, I think. I like country life. I like country people. I have a lot of like for them because I'm one myself.

EH: Do you remember when the city of Terre Haute first started operating the buses?

MACE: Yes, it was back in the 'thirties, but I can't remember what year.

EH: They have operated them ever since?

MACE: Yes, the Traction Company operated them first. They owned them, I think. You know, they were the same ones who operated the interurbans at that time. That's the way I remember it.

EH: Were there periods of time, maybe then in the 'thirties or 'forties, when a lot of people rode the buses?

MACE: There were, yes. Of course, there wasn't such a large proportion of the total population that owned cars then. It doesn't seem to me like they used to be in such a big hurry to get there. Maybe it is on account of modern times or maybe it was on account of improved transportation. I don't know.

EH: Will Terre Haute ever have the kind of downtown that it used to have?

MACE: Well, I hope so. But, I don't know. All over the country they have this sort of problem. Uptown, I think, we have about a triple whammy here because we had urban renewal, and Indiana State took so much property off the tax roll, and then the city apparently decided to leave it the current tax rate and get most of the money that they could from uptown rather than reducing the rates so that people could build new or rent their empty places. A lot of them tore them down to avoid taxes. I sold quite a bit of downtown property myself because I didn't need it and didn't like the unfair tax rate.

Of course, we at Mace Service haven't been damaged so much by the trend here because we sell an anticipated purchase. If we sold convenient purchases, we'd be compelled to move or have a better budget in order to survive.

I would like to see everybody grow and prosper, and that's better for me and everybody else if they do. I would like to expand the demand for what everybody has to offer. But we need more teamwork in order to accomplish that.

I heard or read recently where our mayor was in favor of a better tax rate downtown and I think that would slowly do the job. It is now unfair because property should be taxed on what it would bring in the market place. People aren't in the habit of erecting or renting a building on a place where it cost more than another place that's available. We have more to offer than any other shopping center around. Our uptown problem is part of Terre Haute's problems overall. We need to grow and have needed to for many years. I like Terre Haute. It's been good to me and it's full of fine people, but we seem to not learn the lesson that Larry Bird taught us, that teamwork pays off. I'd like to see the time come when Terre Haute grows and in proportion to other towns the same size as in 1900.

EH: You mentioned the Drummond study, "Terre Haute, City of Non-Growth." Do you think that the way the roads were developed or anything connected with transportation caused that?

MACE: You mean, what caused our slow growth?

EH: Yes.

MACE: Well, I think it's a combination of things. I think the coal industry used to be all deep mines, and we had a lot of miners live here. They went to non-union fields that were getting a lot of business by stripping, and we lost a lot of residents that way.

Then the prohibition came and they the city lost a lot of the liquor manufacturing. Although we have a lot of advantages, we haven't recovered -- and I don't think there has been consistent, persistent concerted effort to make it grow.

I think success is the fruit of enlightened persistence, and I think you've got to stick with something until you win or lose if you want to do it. Of course, for years I heard the argument about the home of Debs, the AFL American Federation of Labor, a bad union town, and big companies wouldn't come here. I don't believe that. I think we could have worked around that if we had tried harder. Well, we've had a lot of industry come, but we've lost a lot. One great loss has been many educated young people for better jobs.

The trend wasn't urban and a combination of things, but I think Terre Haute uptown can build back up to what it used to be and can do what other cities have in similar circumstances. It will take a lot of investment and effort. It could be done.

Maybe if they lower the taxes enough, that might be all that they needed, I don't know. I think urban renewal came along just at the right time to give the shopping centers the biggest boost they ever had and it forced a lot of people to go to them, because they couldn't afford to build a new place. They took the place away from them at market value, and they had nowhere else to go unless they built a new one. But not everyone can build a new place, especially if they're renters.

EH: Shopping centers offer parking. When did it become congested in the downtown Terre Haute and hard to find a place to park?

MACE: Well, before the shopping centers come, it was. I think it was due to the scramble that there was then to get parking paid for by the whole city. A lot of people didn't want that to happen. I personally think the merchants needed more parking, but they weren't willing to pay for it. They wanted the whole city to pay for it and I advocated us uptown people pay for whatever parking we needed ourselves.

Of course, all over the country there's always deals where the whole tax base did pay for what I call socialized parking. But I always had plenty of parking room because I had a lot of ground and it wasn't needed by Mace Service. I had no other purpose for it other than that, but I never agreed to keep it strictly for parking because I would have been glad to have more income on it if I could've gotten it. But I believe that whatever parking problem there was then could have been handled by the uptown people that needed it if they had been willing to pay for it.

They did buy and rent some lots and they soon unloaded them. But I suppose they lost money on them. But there is a great surplus of parking uptown now, and there is no immediate need for it. If it would grow and be like it used to be, there would be need.

I went to meetings on that subject, and the way they'd recommend is have key lots and then have outlying lots for the employees and make them use them. Our lots uptown and our meters are used largely by employees, because it is convenient for them to park near where they work. That should never have been allowed in the first place.

I've had a lot of criticisms about my stand on that, but I believe that it is not right to tax everybody in town to have me and a bunch of uptown merchants have subsidized parking by the taxpayer. I think the shopping centers pay for their own parking for their customers in the rent they charge. Everybody knows that is a fact.

EH: I think we're just about to the end of the 45-minute side of the tape. How does this sound to you . . . I imagine you're getting tired

MACE: No, I'm not tired.

EH: You're not? Well, I have some more things I'd like to talk to you about. Would you want to continue or would you like to wait about a week, and we'll give it another shot?

MACE: Well, is it all right for you to wait? Whatever is convenient for you.

EH: Why don't I turn this tape over then, and we'll relax a second.

MACE: Okay.

END OF SIDE ONE

TAPE ONE-SIDE TWO

EH: Mr. Mace, there have been many different types of cars, and you have owned a number you were telling me about. Tell me some of the early cars that you thoroughly enjoyed.

MACE: Well, I'll answer you like this. I was like the old maid -- just come on anybody. You know, when they asked her if she wanted a rich man or a good-looking man or a smart man, she said, "Appearance! The sooner the better!" Laughter

I was a poor boy and I used to go to a Poland picnic and admire those big, nice, pretty cars. I dreamed about the day, maybe, that I could have one. But in those days in the teens, in my early life, the car wasn't owned by very many. They didn't get to be owned by everybody until more recent times.

My first car, I was fortunate, I bought it for \$350 in 1923 from a lady who got it for a quarter. The eastside businessmen gave it away as a promotion on a lottery deal, and I was glad to get that car for that low price. However, I think that Ford sold for

MACE: less than \$300 in 1919, but my first car was several years later.

The thing that is interesting about [early] cars is that there were so many kinds, and some of them were really expensive, you know. Some of them were \$4,000-\$5,000. I wish I had a list of all the different makes that were made. [There were several hundred.] I've got some models of old ones in there in the office you can look at.

EH: You said after the Buick, you bought what kind of car?

MACE: A new Hudson. I always bought cars through gratitude from someone who was helping me to succeed in business. I wanted to pay them back, and I wanted to keep them coming. I buy about everything that way yet. I like to buy quality, but I think it's a pleasure to reciprocate business.

EH: You've had a long-time love affair with cars, haven't you?

MACE: Well, no . . . I like the service business and I like to merchandise tires, but I didn't become a car agent until 1945 at the end of World War II. I was diversified in business before that. I had the farm store, appliance store, and the petroleum business and a T.B.A. set up here. That is Mace Service. I'm not a pioneer automobile dealer in Terre Haute at all.

EH: But everything you say about cars, you say it with a feeling and a fondness and you accept it as a total way of life.

MACE: Well, I think automobiles have done a lot for the country and I have made my livelihood in associated lines. [There are] between a fourth and a sixth of the people of the country whose livelihood depends on automobiles or associated industries. Part of the reason we have this depression is that reduced sales of cars makes people lay off. They use half the steel and half the rubber that is used in this country and a great many other things.

EH: Were you ever involved in racing?