

A Fire, a Sale, and a Warehouse



"I think that's where the seed was planted."

“We had a big potbelly stove in the back of the store. We don't know how it happened but a few years after the store got started we had a fire. I remember helping to take all the merchandise out. A trucker brought a big van in so we'd have a place to put all the stuff. Pop had arranged for a building to store it in which was between Marion and Gas City, a building in what was called the MacBeth Evans area because there used to be a glass factory there. Since my main business today is industrial warehousing, I think that's where the seed was planted.

We took the stuff to this warehouse and rigged up some big clothes racks with 2 x 2 supports and an old gas pipe and hung up all the stuff. We had a tremendously successful fire sale because this friend of ours told Pop as long as you're going to have a sale, have plenty of merchandise and I'll get you a deal on this and a deal on that...

We brought all the stuff from the warehouse and the fellow from Cincinnati helped Pop put together the sale ad and shipped us a lot of merchandise: closeouts, odd sizes. People lined up in the morning to get in that fire sale. I'll never forget.”

Excerpted from an oral history of Frank conducted in October 1990 by Judith Pierotti in Madison, Wis.