

Oral History Interview

with

NEIL A. OFSTHUN

Director of Recreation and Parks  
City of Rockville, Maryland

November 9, 1971

By Maureen K. Hinkle

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PERSONAL DATA

Neil A. Ofsthun  
Director of Recreation  
City of Rockville  
Rockville, Maryland

Mr. Ofsthun graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Master's Degree in Recreation in 1956.

From 1956 to 1960 he was Athletic and Recreation Director for the Atsugi Naval Air Station in Atsugi, Japan.

In 1960 he became Director of Recreation for the City of Rockville. Since joining the City of Rockville he has seen the range and intensity of the City's recreation program expand dramatically. The City recently formed a Department of Recreation and Parks, and has recently constructed a Municipal Swimming Pool complex with indoor and outdoor pools.

Since 1961 he has been active in the Maryland Recreation and Parks Society; served as President in 1966. Mr. Ofsthun was Chairman of the District Advising Committee of the National Recreation Association in 1964 and 1965. During that time he was a member of the Board of Trustees of the National Recreation Association.

Mr. Ofsthun has received an award from the American Legion for Outstanding Service; a Research Award from the Maryland Recreation and Parks Society; an outstanding Citizen Award from the Rockville Elks; and an award for outstanding service to the District of the National Recreation Association.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Verbatim Transcript

INTERVIEWEE: Neil A. Ofsthun  
Director of Recreation and Parks  
City of Rockville, Maryland

INTERVIEWER: Maureen K. Hinkle

DATE: November 9, 1971

OBJECTIVE: To collect for the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County Oral History Project the taped words and verbatim transcripts of individuals who have made significant contributions to the development of Montgomery County.

SUBJECT: Public Recreation Programs in the City of Rockville.

HINKLE: This is Maureen Hinkle. It's November 9, 1971. For the League of Women Voters I am interviewing Neil Ofsthun who is the Director of Recreation for the City of Rockville. Mr. Ofsthun came to Rockville as Director of Recreation in 1960. Prior to that he spent four years in Atsugi, Japan as athletic and recreation director for the Atsugi Naval Air Station. He graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Masters Degree in Recreation in 1956. Mr. Ofsthun, would you comment on the early recreation programs in Rockville before you came.

OFSTHUN: The first tax-supported recreation program began after World War II.

Henry Giauque was the first playground director at West Rockville Elementary School. After that Eugene/<sup>Pat</sup>Moran played an instrumental part in the development of the playground program in Rockville. Most of the tax monies at that time went toward summer activities rather than year around. Subsequently Pat got involved in sports, primarily basketball which grew over a period of years. It wasn't until 1957 that the City employed a full-time Recreation Director, Burt Kurland, and he began to strengthen and broaden the program from 1957 until 1960. In 1960 I came to the City and I've been in Rockville ever since.

HINKLE: How was the program different from 1957 to 1960 before you came, in those three years?

OFSTHUN: I think that Burt began to provide classes for the citizens. The citizens in Rockville do demand services, and desire services in terms of recreation. In many cases you're responding to what seems to be demonstrated needs in

the community, trying to provide these services. He began to provide classes, and he began to broaden services in terms of the arts. He also provided support to the Rockville Boys Baseball Association. The Civic Center, of course, had been acquired. It's probably the most significant facility in the City. At least it was at that time.

HINKLE: When was that, 1957?

OFSTHUN: The Civic Center was acquired in 1957.

HINKLE: In 1957, before Rockville had a Department of Recreation, did Rockville participate in the Montgomery County recreation program? Were you a part of the recreation district and taxed?

OFSTHUN: To the best of my knowledge, Rockville has not been a part of the County District and therefore has not been taxed. The City of Rockville in that it is a municipality, within the County, the citizens have paid their own tax money for recreation services.

HINKLE: It was the City of Rockville who built the Civic Center and gave it over to the Recreation Department?

OFSTHUN: The Recreation Department is a department within the City Government. Now it's the Recreation and Parks Department. That just evolved recently, in the last year and a half. It is an integral part of the City Government. When the City Government assumed responsibility and purchased the Civic Center, somebody had to administer it, and the Recreation Department was the one who was assigned that responsibility. Now when we purchased the Civic Center, the mansion was there. The City paid \$125,000 for about 28 acres of land plus the Civic Center mansion.

HINKLE: That's all?

OFSTHUN: That's all they paid for it, and at that time some people in the community had indicated it was a white elephant, but if you've ever been to the Civic Center and seen the mansion as it has been resotred and how beautiful it is, it is certainly an asset to the community.

HINKLE: That included the land?

OFSTHUN: That included the land. In 1960 the City constructed the auditorium, or it was finished in 1960. The Civic Center auditorium seats 500 people, and there is a social hall for parties up to 300 people. That basically provides for recreation services, plus the grounds. We have about 100 acres.

HINKLE: Are they community centers or schools?

OFSTHUN: School community centers. We have two and we'll have a third before the end of this fiscal year. We'll have three plus the community center at Lincoln Park.

HINKLE: Is Lincoln Park the public housing development?

OFSTHUN: There is a public housing development in the Lincoln Park area. David Scull, the new public housing development is by Red Gate Farm in the Maryvale area.

HINKLE: The League of Women Voters staffed that with volunteers six years ago before the concept of Headstart was known. I believe it was the Department of Recreation that started this little headstart program for the public housing families whose children were integrating into the school and they needed some help. They didn't know how to use scissors, for instance. It was very exciting, because this was long before anyone knew of Headstart.

OFSTHUN: Actually the federal government came out and observed our program before Headstart. They observed how it was set up. We have had a playschool program since 1958. I don't recall when Headstart began, but I know that 2 to 3 years before it began in the federal government, the thought in Rockville was why don't we go into these areas and provide this type of service at no cost, a preschool program, so children could learn to play together and also as they play together, learn, making it a learning experience. I recall now that the League did work with us on that. We have so many volunteer agencies that come in and help over the years. I can't recall them all, but I do remember the League.

HINKLE: Again, this is an example of the leadership in Rockville. They saw the need very early, and it's almost as though Rockville serves as a leavening for the rest of the community. Where Rockville goes, we follow.

OFSTHUN: They did see the need for that activity and it was financed by the City.

HINKLE: And that's where another community school center exists.

OFSTHUN: Yes. We have a recreation building there, recently constructed, and it actually will be enlarged. More social services can be provided. We

have a staff of two full-time people and one three-quarter-time person at that center. In our school community centers we have only one full-time supervisor.

HINKLE: In what sense is it a community center. Is it more than recreation?

OFSTHUN: Yes, the library is open. Primarily most of the activities go on after school and on weekends. It's part of the concept of open schools. The school facility is a big investment by the taxpayers, the concern is why have it idle in the evenings and on the weekends, and in the summer. We provide staff and activities and programs in there after school and on weekends. So that's the concept. The way we're working it is a joint effort between the School Board and the City of Rockville. The County is doing the same thing. The County Recreation Department is working with the School Board.

HINKLE: They don't have them now do they?

OFSTHUN: Yes, they have community schools in the County.

HINKLE: I thought there was only one, Piney Branch.

OFSTHUN: I don't know the number, but I know that they have at least one.

HINKLE: How else does it differ from the school. What additional facilities does it have to make it a community school?

OFSTHUN: Leadership is provided to encourage people to come in after school. We have an advisory council from the neighborhood that consists of people that are interested, or people appointed by the Mayor, people appointed by the area superintendant, Dr. Harry Pitt, and they meet and they advise on the establishment of certain programs and activities. The community school tends to serve the neighborhood that surrounds, or the feeder schools that go into the community school. For instance, Southlawn is a middle school. We have several elementary schools that feed into that school. Now we may have programs at Southlawn and at the

elementary schools after school and on weekends, so that feeder schools and the neighborhood tend to be served more. There may be events such as a city-wide table tennis tournament, or a choral group performance, that would serve all the citizens. The purpose, basically, is to get activities and people back in the schools.

HINKLE: Are these in problem areas? What determined their location?

DFSTHUN: The first location, Southlawn, was designed as a community school and it was in an area where people felt there was a need. This is in the David Scull-Maryvale area. The Rock Terrace community school, which incidentally is supported by State funds, serves the West End, Berlin Apartments and West Rockville Elementary school area.

HINKLE: How did you get the State?

DFSTHUN: We applied for it in a joint effort with the Board of Education. The County Recreation Department has the same procedure. The County receives a certain amount of funds, we receive funds and the School Board receives a certain amount for community school purposes. Governor Mandel was interested in opening up the schools after school and over weekends, and he's encouraging local jurisdictions to do this by providing funds for that purpose. At first it was on a matching basis. We had begun our Southlawn operation, therefore this was a base to get money for Rock Terrace. Rock Terrace is a very interesting area for a community school because of the diverse backgrounds of the people who live in and around the Rock Terrace school. It's near the Berlin apartments. It's near the municipal pool, across from the swim center. You have a great variety of people from different social and economic backgrounds. That was our second site. The third site for a community school will be in the Twinbrook area, selected because of the high density of population and lack of outdoor play space in Twinbrook. We don't have large areas of parkland, so the feeling was to try to provide a building where there was a great amount of recreation use rather than start buying up existing homes, which is extremely costly. So the City went into a mutual arrangement with the Board of

Education to finance half the construction cost of building the gymnasium at the Twinbrook elementary school site. The City is to provide the professional recreation staff to operate Twinbrook as a community school.

HINKLE: The children can walk there?

OFSTHUN: Yes, it's relatively close.

HINKLE: What is your population/recreation land ratio?

OFSTHUN: We have a population of about 43,000 people, and we have about 700 acres of land. We have what can accurately be described as a good neighborhood park system. Most playgrounds are located anywhere from a third of a mile to a half mile from any home in the City. So we have pretty good disbursement of playgrounds. We began over the last 6-7 years to provide playfields in addition to playgrounds. A playfield is an area that consists of anywhere from 20-30 acres of land. It may have lighted facilities on it for baseball, football, tennis, handball, paddle tennis, etc. We've tried to do this in different areas in the City so that the playfields will serve several neighborhoods. Usually our playfields have one or two features that serve the entire City. For instance, Welsh Park has a playfield, yet it has the municipal swim center which serves the entire City. Dogwood Park is our one major lighted park. The baseball and football fields there serve the entire City.

HINKLE: Do you have a relationship with other municipalities?

OFSTHUN: We get together periodically mostly through the Maryland Recreation and Parks Society. We don't have an formal arrangements to get together. We correspond or communicate. In fact, the Director of Recreation of Gaithersburg called me today and talked at some length about the class program they've begun there, and about procedures and practices that have evolved over the years in our department and may be helpful to them. We also talked about several other aspects of the program, including the community school. We communicate with people outside the City, but we don't have any formal arrangements with them.



HINKLE: How are the recreation programs financed?

OFSTHUN: Most of the recreation programs are financed through taxes. We do charge fees for some of them, such as class programs. The Mayor and Council have asked the Department to net 20% on all classes to pay for overhead. By and large, most of our activities are tax-supported. The municipal swim center, of course, is fee-supported. The auditorium takes in a certain amount of money, but it's really quite negligible, and it doesn't pay for the operating costs at all. The Civic Center auditorium is there to provide a service, and the taxpayers are going to have to pay for that type of service.

HINKLE: Does that mean that Rockville citizens pay for the Civic Center but anyone can utilize it?

OFSTHUN: Yes, Rockville pays for it. There's no question about the fact that they probably benefit more from it than non-residents, but non-residents certainly use it. Of course, a non-resident will pay more to use it. The fee is greater, but the Civic Center Commission has found over the years that you just can't charge too high a fee, because then the building could conceivably stay empty, and that isn't the purpose of having it there. The purpose is to have it used, used by the community and used by other groups that certainly members of the community, if they go to watch the performance, will benefit too.

HINKLE: Do you have any lay people who work with the Recreation Department in establishing policies or hearing what various people's needs are?

OFSTHUN: We have the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board which is appointed by the Mayor and Council and we work directly with them, and the Mayor and Council seek their advice on many issues.

HINKLE: What is their composition?

OFSTHUN: It's a 15-member board and generally they try to distribute the membership throughout the City and they also try to provide people on the board who have balanced interests, if at all possible. If the individual doesn't have balanced interests, at least to provide some kind of balance on the board, so that

you don't have an overwhelming number of people who are arts-oriented, or an overwhelming numbers who are sports-oriented. The best thing is to get a balanced person who is interested in all activities and wants to provide better service. Sometimes it's difficult, because each individual wants to push his thing.

HINKLE: Do you have women on your board?

DFSTHUN: Oh yes.

HINKLE: Do they have hearings on the budget?

DFSTHUN: Yes, we have public hearings. We have one tonight in regard to the development of Redgate Farms. The board has made a practice whenever we have a neighborhood playground that's being developed, to encourage the local neighborhood to participate in the preliminary planning of that playground. Usually what happens is that once we've come up with the preliminary plan, we visit the elementary schools or junior high school in that area and invite residents to attend and ask them for comments on design, etc. In addition to the Recreation Advisory Board we have the Civic Center Commission that is largely responsible for overseeing the Civic Center operation. That again is appointed by the Mayor and Council. We have advisory boards at our community school level. We also have committees that we work with in terms of developing certain events such as the Memorial Day parade, which is a major special event in the City. The Antique and Classic Car show is another of our significant events. We have committees that we work with in terms of program. We used to have a park committee. Now we don't have park committees, but we do have people who are interested in watching parks and advising us on maintenance needs in each park. They communicate with us. We call them park overseers.

HINKLE: Why don't you have park committees?

DFSTHUN: Before the Recreation and Park Advisory Board was formed, there was a neighborhood park committee established for every playground in the City. They would be active periodically, depending on whether there was a need, or whether a problem arose, or if there were some new development that had to take place in

the park. Then they'd become active. Otherwise you didn't hear from them. Finally it became apparent that there needed to be one body that met frequently and was concerned with parks and the program rather than several neighborhood park committees. That's when the Recreation Advisory Board concept evolved.

HINKLE: Can you tell me about how you plan and try to determine what you're going to have in a recreation center such as the Redgate Farm?

OFSTHUN: We had done several feasibility studies over the years on different needs. We did a feasibility study on the municipal swim center. We did a feasibility study on the need of an 18-hole golf course, a gymnasium, an ice rink, and a tennis center. The interesting part about Redgate Farm is that most of the features on it, hopefully, are going to be revenue-producing. That is a different kind of a concept, because the City has been building facilities for years that have not been revenue-producing. But here it appears that there is such a need that the people who use the facilities will pay for it, pay for the operation and the construction.

HINKLE: They will pay for the golf?

OFSTHUN: They will not only pay for the operation of the golf course, they will pay for the construction of the golf course, primarily through green fees.

HINKLE: It will be like a membership then?

OFSTHUN: No, it will be open to anyone who wants to come there.

HINKLE: Even non-residents?

OFSTHUN: Yes, but to determine needs, it doesn't come from above. Sometimes perhaps, but the needs for activities in most cases come from below. The people let you know what they want. People indicate that there is a need for a certain thing, and we have a tremendous number of volunteers. Our program just wouldn't work if we didn't have the volunteers we do, mostly parents serve as volunteer coaches, etc.

HINKLE: What do you see for the future for recreation in Rockville. What would you like to see?

OFSTHUN: I think that the Redgate Farm proposal is certainly one of the most interesting things that has happened in the City in a long time, at least since our swim center. If it happens, it will certainly be one of the most popular, if not the most popular center in the City. People will really flock to go there, hopefully.

HINKLE: Is there a question about it?

OFSTHUN: There's a question if it's going to be developed as proposed. The hearing tonight will determine to some extent what happens, and the Mayor and Council will have to make a decision. I see probably more community schools developed. I think there's a need for a large lake in Rockville, the problem being that in all of our areas where you could develop such a lake, streams and valleys, we have sewerage lines, so this is a problem. But this is definitely a need, some place where we have a large body of water. Whether we'll ever get this I don't know. We also need riding stables, the ice skating rink as indicated at the Redgate Farm plans, and the 18-hole golf course. These are some of the features and facilities we need, and, of course, we need other playfields. We have land for that west of the City, in the Watts branch area. We've acquired sufficient land to provide a good playfield over there. Our facilities will definitely grow, and I think that people are interested in the City's providing such facilities. We do need a gymnasium because the school gymnasiums won't be able to cope with growing demands. We have women's volleyball, girls' volleyball, girls' basketball, boys' basketball, men's basketball, and sports nights. All these activities require gymnasium time, and I think that the city is going to have to face this issue at least within the next 3-5 years.

HINKLE: Will this be a large...

OFSTHUN: It probably will be a large facility. There's one built over in Virginia where the county school system--I believe it was Arlington County--got together with the local jurisdiction and built a huge gymnasium that actually has

nine indoor tennis courts and nine full-length basketball courts. It was one of those facilities that you could use for tennis or basketball.

HINKLE: It must look like an airplane hanger!

OFSTHUN: I've never been there. I just saw the plans about two years ago. I assume that it's done now. Someday we may have to do that.

HINKLE: That's what you mean by a gymnasium, a large complex.

OFSTHUN: Where you can put a lot of people in at one time, and not only that, but a gymnasium that would be something different from what you find in the school system. I'm thinking about one with a basement where you could have an

indoor pistol range, indoor archery, gymnastic rooms, weight rooms, exercise rooms.

HINKLE: Like the Boys' Clubs have. The Boys' Clubs gymnasiums have hobby rooms.

OFSTHUN: That's right. In fact, it's in the master plan at the municipal swim center for this type of facility.

HINKLE: What are some of the problems? Do you have problems you wish you didn't have in regard to recreation?

OFSTHUN: I don't think we have any major problems. I think one of the biggest problems was to become a Department of Recreation and Parks. As Forest Gustafson has indicated, that is a difficult arrangement to bring two separate bodies together. Parks over here and recreation over there. They should be together. With that overcome, the problems that one copes with in the operation of the program, plus growth, the tremendous growth we have. The Redgate project is a problem in terms of whether you have sufficient public support. The Mayor & Council are very much concerned that they do, before they make a decision. Other than that, there are no major problems yet.

HINKLE: What are you proudest of in your eleven years here?

OFSTHUN: I think that from an acquisition standpoint, I guess I would have to say Dogwood Park and the municipal swim center at Welsh Park, and now the Redgate Farm. I must say that in a lot of cases it isn't whether I should be proud, because the Planning Department was involved. Bob Lanham has done a tremendous

amount of work; he's the Planning Director in the City. He conceived the innovative approach to acquire Redgate Farm. We've had other Planning Directors who've been interested in parkland acquisition. Those are three significant acquisitions, plus Watts Brank which will be playfields. Now in terms of development and construction, surely the municipal swim center is number one. Our new playgrounds and playfields is another. Program--I feel that we've made tremendous strides in women's and girls' activities. Dale Rickman is the supervisor of those activities. We've made a lot of gains in the arts, particularly drama, the Street-70 program. June Allen has done an excellent job.

HINKLE: What's Street-70?

OFSTHUN: We have now what we call core leadership in which one person is employed three-quarter time, other people are employed half-time. June Allen is our full-time supervisor in charge of the performing arts. Street-70 is a group of youngsters ranging in age from 14 to 23-24 who actually write their own productions and music, so they have original productions. Plus, they put on other productions. They just finished "The Odd Couple." They perform throughout the City and they bring the arts onto the playgrounds, into the shopping centers, onto the streets, into the schools, and into our Community Centers. Just the overall arts program has made tremendous strides. Incidentally, we've just formed a children's choir. We had a children's orchestra last year, and now we have a choral group that's forming. We have from 60-80 singers. The arts are one area I'm particularly proud of.

I'm proud of the way we've grown in the sports program for girls and women, as I indicated before. Ralph Prior is now the supervisor of sports. Bill Edwards, my assistant, is supervisor for all activities as far as program is concerned. Saul Honigsberg is supervisor of our park maintenance. Both have done excellent jobs. You take individual sports such as golf and tennis, archery and bowling, lifetime sports like that--we've made great gains, plus team sports, soccer. We started

soccer this year for the first time for boys. Last year we did it for girls. We had a number of girls' teams in soccer. We started boys at the third grade level, third and fourth grade level, and fifth and sixth grade level, because we felt a lot of boys weren't playing football. Although we have a football team from every elementary school in the City, we felt that other boys weren't necessarily interested in football, but wanted a robust physical activity. We thought that we would try soccer. We'd been trying and never got it going. Now we have succeeded with twelve teams this year. I envision boys' soccer to grow. In other words, we've taken a sports program and provided a lot of different types of activities, so that it's not just basketball and baseball. That, I think, is good.

The other significant thing I think I talked about was special events that they can remember, like the Fourth of July fireworks display. That's a big one! We get about 25,000 people to that event. The Antique and Classic Car Show, and the Easter Egg Hunt take a lot of time and work on the part of the staff, but they're significant events in the community, because they give a community identity. We've gotten into our summer camp program to augment playground activities during the summer. We have an arts day camp, basketball camp, sports day camp, overnight camp, and regular day camp. These are fee-supported activities. We find now there's an interest in this, and most of the camps have been very successful. Bill Bullough at the municipal swim center has one of our outstanding programs. Nancy Grave runs our classes which have grown considerably. She handles not only the classes in all the community centers, she also handles the after-school classes. We thought about five years ago, why not provide ballet, art, gymnastics right after school in the elementary school. Mothers know that their children are going to be there for an hour after school going to ballet, gymnastics, or art, or guitar, or whatever it might be, and then the children are going to be home. This way you don't have the problem of transporting the children all over the city for classes. They're in the elementary area. That has worked out very well; the only problem is most schools do not have space to give us. We could program more and more.

HINKLE: Would you have people to teach all of these activities in the school?

DFSTHUN: Yes, I think we would. The problem in most cases is facilities--space--  
in the schools. Jane Loiselle runs the Civic Center. The art gallery  
is there on the second floor of the Civic Center mansion. In terms of program  
growth, that covers most of the areas I think we've made strides in. The fact  
that we've grown from acquisition from 100 acres in 1950 to 700 acres today.  
We've picked up quite a bit of parkland.

HINKLE: It sounds as though you have been so positive you haven't had to do  
anything in the negative such as move in on juvenile delinquency.

DFSTHUN: No, we haven't. There are problems in the City, there's no question  
about it; and the community services program has roving youth leaders.  
We like to think that the roving youth leaders can identify problems and in many  
cases if they can identify problem kids at an elementary age to try to get those  
youths on teams or get them involved in what we consider constructive activity,  
and wrap up their energies in something that would be of benefit to them. We have  
made some progress along those lines. We have three staff members at Lincoln  
Park, and a lot of the work that they do over there is not always in the area of  
recreation.

HINKLE: It's counseling.

DFSTHUN: It's social problems and counseling and working with the kids.

HINKLE: It's being there.

DFSTHUN: It really is being there, getting to know them and, of course, provide  
a way to communications. In other words, whenever we start an activity--  
basketball is starting now--they can get the kids involved, placed on teams, etc.  
At Rock Terrace that same type of thing takes place. We certainly have our prob-  
lems in Rockville, just as any other jurisdiction, in terms of juvenile delinquency  
and drugs; and it's hard to measure whether recreation is a deterrent. We like to  
think that it does help. We can't back that up with statistics. But it seems to



me, if a child gets involved in an activity whether it be in the arts or in sports, or service projects, or with clubs, I think that that's helpful, so that the child can identify with a certain group. This is where I think it's important to get neighborhood community centers, because when we become too big we get away from getting down and servicing people in the neighborhood. I hope we've made strides, but it's pretty difficult to determine.

HINKLE: I think usage says something.

OFSTHUN: Yes, we have good use of our parks and our centers.

HINKLE: Finally, I think that I should ask you how you feel about how some other people feel--I think it's a mixed attitude toward Rockville. Part of it would be a bit of envy, because Rockville has a Civic Center, an indoor municipal swimming pool, several community school centers, and many things that other areas in this very wealthy, well situated county do not have. So they look at it, one, with envy, but two, also thinking, Why doesn't Rockville come into our backyard and become a part of the County. How do you feel about how these people feel?

OFSTHUN: I haven't been in government that long. I've been in Rockville for ten years, but I really feel strongly about government, in terms of providing service on a local level. I think that the bigger you get, the lesser the quality of service. This may not hold true in some cases, but I think you could present a case that the bigger you get in terms of government, the less the quality of service becomes. So I like the idea of municipal and city governments. I think a lot of people who advocate county governments could present valid arguments in favor of county governments, too. There's something about bigness that takes away the quality, the responsiveness, in terms of service. I may want to be with a county department of recreation and parks someday, but if I ever had that position, the first thing I would do would try to decentralize. In fact, that's what Baltimore County is doing. They've got area superintendants. They go into areas and they are responsible for providing service to that area. I think that you have to decentralize. I think that's really the answer in local government today. It just gets too big. People get away from you.

HINKLE: That's a very good message for the future, which we hope this tape will be used for. Do you have any other words that you would like to put down for the future--words of experience derived from your time here?

OFSTHUN: I'd like to make one thing clear about the recreation services in the City. The people in Rockville want a high quality recreation service. Citizens have more leisure time and more money today, and transportation is not the problem it was in the past. People are spending money on recreation, and recreation is big business. Really, the growth of recreation in this city is due in large part to the citizens. Some people don't want it, but by and large, the citizens in Rockville support recreation.

HINKLE: Thank you, Mr. Ofsthun.

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Montgomery County Library

MARYLAND COLLECTION

ROCKVILLE