

ADH1152

JUNIOR LEAGUE OF CEDAR RAPIDS

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with Erwin Wasta

Interviewer: Laura M. Derr
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Erwin Wasta was born in Vienna, Austria in 1906. He was born the son of Leopold and Francisca Wasta. In 1907, Erwin, his parents, and older brother immigrated to America. His father had decided to leave Austria because he no longer wanted to be a German soldier. During Wasta's early years, he attended Polk Elementary, Polk Junior High and Washington High School. He sold newspapers for the Gazette during this time. In high school, he worked in a clothing store, various drug stores, and for Holden Koehler Company. When Erwin Wasta graduated from high school in 1925, he went to work for Metropolitan Supply Company. He called on schools in southeastern Iowa, and businesses in Cedar Rapids. In 1928, he married Louise Lilja. They had four children. In 1935, Erwin purchased a printing company called Pioneer Litho. He served on the Young Men's Bureau of the Chamber of Commerce, later known as the Junior Chamber of Commerce. He was the president of this organization and helped be responsible for the building of Ellis Pool in 1941. His memories include being a news carrier, memories of his father, the Douglas Starch Works explosion, prohibition, the Seedling Mile, Hunter Airport, the Depression, and Greene's Opera House.

Ann Hampton Larson

