

- R: This is Kenneth Rock, and I am in Denver on St. Patrick's Day, the 17th of March, 1977, and I am visiting with Mrs. Anna K. Burkard and Miss Laura Burkard in their home at 1090 Clarkson Street, Denver, Colorado. Mrs. Burkard, could you please tell us where you were born in Russia and when?
- B: I was born in Walter, Russia, in 1892. And my parents' names were, my father's name was Christian Braun, and my mother's name was Anna Katherina Hill Braun.
- R: Is this B-r-a-u-n?
- B: Yes. The color of brown, yes.
- R: That's right. And how do you spell your mother's maiden name?
- B: Hill.
- R: I say that, because we have a secretary up there who wants to type these things, and sometimes it helps to get the spelling as well. Okay. And you are Anna--is the K for Katherine, maybe?
- B: Yes. Katherina Burkard.
- R: 1892. Walter, Russia.
- B: Yes.
- R: Okay. Were your parents from the village of Walter as well?
- B: I was the fifth generation on the same place. And I don't know how many generations before. And our home place was called the Lintner Place, because one of our forefathers married the only child, the daughter of a family by the name of Lintner. And our place was never called the Braun home, no, it was the Lintner place.
- R: Is that right?
- B: That's a fact, and I was the fifth generation. Father don't know how many before. But one mistake my parents and all of them made is, if you'll excuse me, there were two items in the family that us children were not permitted to touch, even pick up. And that was a record, book of records. It was probably that thick, and the lower leaves were not, oh, they were almost black, split and curled, but the upper ones were fresh. Each year was events of that year recorded. And the Bible had just the record of the family. Now, we came to America just to visit my oldest brother and his wife, want to make their home here. And Grandfather listened in until all plans were made, and he stood up, he was six feet tall, beautiful hair and snapping blue eyes. He said, "Are you gonna let those two children take their journey alone?" Father said, "Why, yes." "No, you don't. You and your family get ready and go with them. You stay one year, but you'll be back the second year." And that's the way it went. Father said, "Do you

realize how much money it takes for all of us to go?" He said, "You know, we have some. And we have horses, cattle to sell, we'll get the money. You get ready." And I forgot how many people left at that time. It was a wagon train.

R: Hmm. From Walter.

B: From Walter at that time. And, I don't know whether I should, that would be interesting or not, the journey. Would that be interesting?

R: Oh, yes, yes. Let me ask you. When was this time?

B: That was in 1906. The fifth of November when we left. My birthday was the fourth and I was thirteen, and that was the fifth. I shall never forget.

R: The trip was something of a birthday present.

B: I don't know. We were not too anxious to go. We left our home, yes. Well, a couple of years before, a native, our folks had a granary across--that wouldn't interest you, all of that.

R: I'd be very much interested in finding out what you remember of your home and the village.

B: I remember, all right. I'll tell you that. We had a granary, lived one block from a canyon and across the canyon the folks had a granary.

R: Your parents?

B: My grandparents first, and then Father, of course, he was the oldest, and we were out on the street and we seen two people, and we were looking at something on the ground, and we called Grandfather. He said, "Let's go over and see. There's trouble." So we crossed the canyon. He was lame, but he did come, and we went over and there was a horse on the ground, bloated, and they had a load of feathers. And they heard there was a market almost a hundred miles from there where the price was so much higher than there. The year before they had a poor crop, and that year they were hailed out, so they wanted to make the most of it. So Grandfather turned to one of the younger boys and he says, "You run home and tell Karl to bring my horse." He had a horse, and each fall he'd go to a market miles and miles away. He'd go to sleep sometimes, but that horse found his way home. And so they brought the horse and, "Tell Grandmother to fix some lunch." And Father was a woman [?], he listened in, and he said, "Tell them to come here." So they hitched up their wagon and they came to the yard, and Father gave them a letter to a friend of his about thirty miles from town, and he owned a mill. He says, "You go and stop there." And the miller, some of the people came back from that market that had the big, paid the big price for

feathers, and they got cheated, so much poor stuff was in them. They had the bags about so high and so wide, and they examined this old man and his grandsons' feathers, and they sold every bit of it right there, and the miller gave them work. They covered the roof, a shed roof, and it was in the fall that late apples were ripe, and she helped him and they picked the apples, and she showed them how to cut them in half, core them. First they were washed, of course, and to dry them.

R: Dried apples.

B: Yes. They didn't want cash, "We want flour." Rye and white flour, and, oh, what do you call it? Sunflower seeds, and they were very fond of them. They'd eat them by the bushel. Sunflower seeds. And Hershey. Hershey's or Cream of Wheat.

R: Hershey. Eating food.

B: Hershey.

R: Nothing to do with chocolate, something else?

B: Oh, no, that's a grain, like our cream of wheat.

R: Oh, I see.

B: Yes.

R: I've learned something new. How do you spell that?

B: Hershey?

R: Yes.

B: Just like your chocolate, Hershey, is what it is.

R: Okay.

B: And they were gone week after week after week, they were gone pretty near seven weeks, the people used to say to Grandfather, "You'll never get your horse." "Oh, yes, if he's loose, he'll come home." So one day they came, and they were loaded up, they were both walking. When the people seen them, of course, it wasn't so long, our yard was full of people. They'd want to know how and why they stayed so long. But they seen the load. Instead of money, they took flour and, like I told you, and Grandmother said, "I have surplus vegetable seeds. I could give them some things. They were hailed out." And it wasn't so long, "You go home and tell Grandma to give you some vegetable seed. All kinds." And that's what happened. They had so much, Grandfather wired two buckets on the wagon they had, and they were filled. They gave them a sack and they were filled, and they both had to walk home.

R: I see.

- B: Yes. Well, then we left for America, that's one place we stopped overnight. Father sent a message, and "All we want," he wrote, told them, "is lodging and hot water. We'll make our own tea, and we have our own food." But you know, when we got there, that street was lined where our hostess lived. With people, [altige?] family and [altige?] family and [altige?] family. And they had roast geese and ducks and some Russian buns. That was our supper. They cleared a room, pushed all the furniture away and put straw on the floor, and they put a cloth across, and they had the nicest pillows I've ever seen in my life. Oh, just the softest, big square ones.
- R: Filled with goose down?
- B: Yes. No queen ever had nicer ones. And we stayed overnight, next morning we left, and the street was packed with people, and they all made the sign of the cross and wished us good luck. We left, and late afternoon we arrived near the railroad station. And there my mother had a cousin living there. He was part-owner of the mill, also. Father had sent a message to him, and he was ready for us. He had half of the depot chained off with food and all that. He had, you know what a samovar is, and he had a couple of them there, and he took each head of the family aside and they all had to write down their name and age and so on. Then they went to the depot agent and there they got their tickets. No confusion, and Father said that was just the nicest thing that happened to us.
- R: That's great.
- B: And then, it was right after the Russian and Japanese War.
- R: That would be right. 1906, huh?
- B: Yes, and a trainload of cattle cars went by and they were filled with soldiers.
- R: Oh, yes.
- B: And then, finally, our train came and we left.
- R: That was a passenger train.
- B: Yes, oh yes. That was as good as the Russians had. And my grandfather had been in America before, and he told Father, "If you ever travel, don't keep your valuable papers on your person. Give it to one of the children in a little suitcase."
- R: Oh-ho.
- B: Yes. Well, when we made the first stop, soldiers on both sides of the depot, they were playing with the accordion and they were dancing and drinking, and it was a mess. So Father said to Mother and my sister-in-law, "Take the children and go out and get the

luggage out." But they forgot my little suitcase, because I pushed it right against the seat, under the seat, and they didn't see it.

R: Uh-oh.

B: So he went into the depot agent, and he said, "I'll wire ahead." He did, and they couldn't find it. They wired to the next one, they couldn't find it. So we went to Libau, now, that's in one of the little nations.

R: Yes, one of the Baltic countries. I think it's in Latvia or Estonia.

B: Yes. It must be.

R: Maybe Lithuania?

B: Might be. Either one, I'm not sure.

R: Yeah, I know where it is, on the Baltic coast.

B: Yes. Well, we stopped there.

R: I need a map. I didn't bring one.

B: And there...

R: You went by train to Libau.

B: Yes. Well, we transferred to another train, and got there. Father got in contact with the ticket agent, a Jew, of course, and very nice person and so helpful, so every day they went down to the depot, nothing doing, nothing doing. A week went by, and when the others found out, some didn't, they had problems, you know, they examined you from head to toe. You had to be almost perfect. Well, some didn't pass. So they decided to go to South America. Well...

R: Now, do you mean this examination was still in Russia?

B: That was still in Russia, yes.

R: That was in Libau.

B: Before we crossed, we went into Hamburg. They decided to go to South America, and Father said, "I won't." He offered a Mr. Binner, they had two children, he said, "If you stay with us, I'll pay all of your expenses until we go to Hamburg." And he would not do it. He said, "I'm going with the others." So they left us alone. But we didn't care. Every day for almost two weeks Father and the ticket agent went through the depot, and finally the depot agent said, "I don't think you're looking for a suitcase." Father said, "Just let it get here, and I'll show you." He did. One day he said, "See that little one over there? That's it."

R: Oh, great.

- B: Yes. Well, the agent took it and he says, "Unlock it. What do you have in it?" Father told him, he unlocked it, and there it was. Next day we sailed for Hamburg. When we got there, a ship was sailing that night, and now, is this what you want to hear?
- R: Yes, very much so. I'd like to back up and talk a little bit more about Russia, too, if you'd like.
- B: Oh, yes, I'll soon be done.
- R: Go right ahead. I'm willing to learn.
- B: We went down to the depot agent and a steamer sailed that night, and we were told there wouldn't be any ready for two or three days. Father said, "Who wants to go take a walk?" I said, "I would." And I loved to go with my father. We walked up the hill a ways, and he said, "See that sign over there? Music store." He said, "That's where I ordered the musical instrument." They organized a band several years before, and...
- R: Oh. Back in Russia.
- B: In Russia, and Father was secretary, and the minister had quite an order of books and Bibles in eight missionary papers, and our grandparents took one of them. And he was talking to the clerks, and we went over and the clerk asked what we wanted, and Father told him nothing, that he had sent that order here and everything went fine. Then an older man was at the door listening, and he came over and Father repeated it and he said the clerk and he came back with the order. And he, the older man said, "My mother is so interested about the people that come from Russia through here. Could you visit her?" Father said, "We have two, maybe three days time." So he went back and phoned and a young man in uniform came and took us to his grandmother. She was rather a big woman, and she was dressed in black satin, that's the first time any of us seen satin material. And she was wonderful. She asked Father all kinds of questions, and I watched above the open fireplace was a big picture with one of the ugliest men I've ever seen. And she kept watching, and she smiled, and she said, "That was my grandfather. He was the first captain of the ship." Then her father, then her husband, then her son, and that was the fifth generation with the grandson. So we talked and talked and talked, and she took us up the stairway to show some of the family pictures, and, now, the her side of the family were on one side and her husband's family on the other. We went upstairs, and she told us about every one of them, and downstairs, and she served us tea and some of the nicest rolls that you could imagine. And finally the grandson came and we had to leave. When we got down to join the rest, why there, a sailor came with a cart, and he said, "You're

wanted at the ticket office." So we left the cart and took Father up to the ticket office, and that's the grandson was the son of the captain of that ship, the ship that was sailing that night.

R: Oh.

B: Yes. Father got tickets, and they took us up, my sister and I and two of my brothers, we slept in the storeroom that night, and they emptied a room and fixed bunks in there and we sailed. Our cabin was opened to the dining room, right by the dining room. Very nice. And the steward, or the sailor, he pulled down the mattress, stacked two on top of each other, and he'd throw sheets and stuff at Father, he spread them and he took pillows and he took a pillowslip and flipped and let it drop it in there. You can believe it or not, I tried that a hundred times or more, and I couldn't do it. And that's the way it was. We had a beautiful trip, a nice cabin, good food...

R: Do you remember the name of the ship?

B: [inaudible]

R: Uh-huh, right, a German ship. Right?

B: Oh, yes. Yes, right there. For the [inaudible], you know, was in Hamburg. And then Father took the two boys up on deck and they walked and he talked German to them. And an older man came and introduced himself, he was from New York, and he spoke German, and that was their daily companion. If Father didn't go up, the boys did, and he had them by the hand and sometimes we'd watch them and that man evidently asked them all kinds of questions. He'd double up and roar and laugh. He had the best time. When we got to New York, he helped us to get through and he helped us buy tickets, and then a boy came with a big basket full of fruit, and he talked to the conductor and the train went clear through. We went to Lincoln, Nebraska.

R: I see. Uh-huh.

B: When we got to Lincoln, Father showed a man standing by at my uncle's address, he had a brother living in Lincoln, and he shook his head. Another one came up and went like this, took them in the depot and went to one of the rooms and knocked at the door, and a well-dressed man came out, and he told him, do you know, he put on his hat and his coat and he took us from the back of the depot and helped us get into taxis and they took us down to Uncle's. We stopped and they pointed up to the door. Father went up and knocked on the door. It was about 6:30.

R: In the evening?

- B: In the evening, and Aunt came out, she was doing the dishes, and Uncle was across the street at the, a man, he was real estate. I used to know his name. And she looked at Father and screamed, and run down that step and across the street, and opened the door and leaned against the doorsill and talking and seven men came out like they were kicked out, across the street. Not one of them said later, or one of the drivers, said later to Mother's brother, he said, "I'd never seen so much backslapping and hugging in..." It was just absolutely wonderful. Uncle paid the taxi drivers and they left. We went in the house.
- R: What was your uncle's name?
- B: Henry Peter Braun. And Aunt, oh, she loved my mother. They were absolutely wonderful, and wasn't so long that house was filled with people, so many Germans, in fact, all Germans were all there. On F Street. And that Mrs. Amen, I think she's president of this organization.
- R: Yes, Ruth Amen. Um-hmm.
- B: They lived catty-corner from my uncle.
- R: Oh, I see.
- B: Her folks had a grocery store.
- R: That's right, yes.
- B: We used to, go over, and he was, he was something. He could make everybody comfortable. Like Father.
- R: Mr. Amen, you mean. I think his name was H. J. Amen, if I remember correctly.
- B: Yes. Which was where we bought our groceries. And that's the way it was, and I could tell you how we spent the next three years, but that takes too long.
- R: Well, I tell you what. Why don't we go back to Russia just a moment, and then we'll come back to Nebraska a little bit later on, if that's okay.
- B: Okay.
- R: I don't want to tire...
- B: How much time do you have?
- R: Well, I have really the afternoon, too, but it's entirely up to you how much time you would like to take.
- B: Oh, I've got all the time in the world.
- LB: She's got all the time in the world but she's got no money.
- R: Well, there are a lot of us in that position.
- B: Suppose we'd start in about the homes, how they were built.



- R: Okay, that would, and this was back in Walter.
- B: In Walter, Russia.
- R: Okay. Please tell me something about your homes.
- B: Our home was built of logs.
- R: Of logs.
- B: Yes, they were cut in half, and the smooth side on the outside. On the inside, of course, they were cleaned and evened up...
- R: But rounded on the inside?
- B: Oh, yes, they were round. They drove pegs in there, and filled it up with adobe. It was plastered with adobe, they had calcimine pits, and it was whitewashed, looked pretty nice. The foundation was of adobe and rocks, and made with plastered nicely and whitewashed. And the ceiling was of boards and had big beams, square beams across. And the floor was wood. And the windows were single during the warm weather, and then when just a storm window put in, I mean, the storm windows were put in, and they put cotton in and they had all kinds of dolls and some carved horses and everything else and they had them in those windows.
- R: Between windows.
- B: Between them, yes. In those that couldn't afford cotton, they had white wool. And they had all kinds of papers, I guess we would call it confetti, scattered over it. But it was nice, and it, but it helped keep the cold weather out.
- R: Yes, um-hm. Was it, were there several rooms in the house, or...?
- B: Yes, a number of rooms in the house, and they were huge, and there was an open fireplace in each room, and there was a bundle of straw was pushed in, and they'd stack wood around, and their main fuel for winter was--you won't believe it, but I'm gonna tell you anyway. The farmers here use the manure for fertilizer. There they had a [den (?)], and they hauled that manure out there, a certain amount, poured water on it and scattered it and had a couple of team of horses tromp on it. It was evened up, and they had square spades, and they cut a block out, and they'd have blunt forks, and they'd lift them off and set them in a row.
- R: I see. Hmm.
- B: Yes. When they were dry, why, they were turned over, and they really became dry, then they stacked them until fall. And that was their real fuel besides wood.
- R: That you burned all winter, then.
- B: All winter. They have shovel and they made, they built it around the fire.

- R: Nice bricks. Uh-huh.
- B: Yes. That was the house, and there was a small gate, and then a big gate, and then the summerhouse.
- R: Now, was this out back, or...?
- B: No, that was on the street side.
- R: On the street side.
- B: On the street side. Oh, I forgot to tell you that each block was the same size and it was divided in four. There was a pole in the center, and each grandmother had a little hot bed in there, probably fifteen, twenty feet square. And I've seen those four grandmothers stand around that pole and exchange seed or news or, you know what I mean.
- R: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Was it over a fence?
- B: Oh, yes, each one had...
- R: Four quarters, with a fence.
- B: Yes. And then there was the summerhouse, was next to the street side, and then the storage room. The summerhouse consisted of a big room, cupboards and shelves and so on, we had most of our meals there when the weather was nice. Summers. And then there was...
- R: So you cooked as well as ate in the summerhouse.
- B: Yes, there was the big room, and then there was the big oven. It was made of adobe and oval, and it had two metal doors. And there's your big oven, and then here was built up with two holes in them, and they had metal rings around the top. And a door, and there was one of the cookstoves. They had two holes in them, and the cooking utensils were iron, skillets and kettles, you know, with the handles you always...
- R: Oh, yes.
- B: Oh, yes...
- R: Out on the...I was gonna say spigot, but on the arm that was going up?
- B: And then on this side was another one, just like, they were alike, so there were four places they could cook. And then back of it in the corner was the big kettle built-in. I don't know, you'd have more than a barrel of water, and it was warm there, if you wanted warm water, it was there. And that's where they took their baths, in that corner, and have a shelf built, a number of them, and they had the tubs and some of the cooking utensils on one side and so on. And then was the neighbors. Their storage room was built right next to ours.

- R: I see. As, or part of the same building, or...?
- B: It looked like it was the same building. And then they had their summerhouse and the house on the corner. So one block had each house on the corner. And the rest was all enclosed. Because when they first settled there, there were many wolves, according to the story of the older people, and oh, Turks, robber bands, I think, yes. And they had to keep things enclosed, and they just kept doing it.
- R: Right. Now, did you call this sort of a courtyard, you called it a [inaudible]?
- B: [inaudible], yes.
- R: This was the enclosure.
- B: Well, each one had its own, it was...
- R: Okay.
- B: Each one had its own, that's the house you're on. Then, like I said, the gates and then the summerhouse and then the storage room, and then they have a fence. And the other people had the same.
- R: Now, when you say summerhouse, and you cooked and you baked and you ate in there in good weather. Where did you bake or cook in the wintertime?
- B: We ate in the house.
- R: In the main house.
- B: In the main house, yes. But much of the baking and much of the cooking was done (end of side of tape).
- R: Okay.
- B: Where did we stop?
- R: I was just asking you about the summerhouse not being used just in the summer.
- B: All year round, all year round.
- R: And you said all year round.
- B: We took the harness in there in the front part, and they oiled them and all that type of work.
- R: Now, was there a barn or stables or something of this nature, too?
- B: Oh, yes. Now, the house was on the corner here, and then the gates, you know, like I showed you. Then next was a board fence, and then an open shed. Winters for the sled and summer for the wagon. And then next was the granary, and next was the fuel barn that those blocks that I told you about, and then there was the small, that was all under one roof, and a small room for the mother pigs, where they had their little ones, and then there was a fuel shed, and then the horse barn. And the driveway, and the

cow barn, and the hogpen, and from that storage room was an open space where the wood piled, and then the shed went clear down against the little garden, I told you about, and an open shed. And there they did a lot of work when the weather was nice. That was the front yard. In the back, on the alley side, was a calf barn, and then a driveway, and then a sheep barn for the lambs.

R: So this was a big area, then, wasn't it?

B: Oh, yes. Them blocks were big. And then there's the fence across, and there was, you could look in and the other people's corral and all, and then on the other side, the partition side, you know, between the next people, there was a long shed, and that's where they had the sheep.

R: Hmm. How many sheep would they have, for example?

B: Well, just enough for the whole family.

R: Okay. So, not a whole herd of sheep, as such.

B: No, not a whole flock. Just enough for their own use.

R: And this is where you got the wool, then, for your mother to make cloth?

B: That's right. When it was shearing time, they took them down to the river, and they washed those sheep one after the other, and we children had to keep them, we had long willows, and we'd keep them from laying in the sand. And...

R: Keep them nice and clean.

B: Um-hmm. And then we took them up to the where, across the canyon, where they had the granary, and then we fed them until the wool, until they were dry.

R: Now, do you remember the name of this river?

B: Well, it was Russian it might be a nickname, they called it [inaudible-Russian word?].

R: Okay, all right. I've heard that name.

B: Have you? It's beautiful.

R: It flows into the Volga, I think.

B: Yes, yes. I was at the Volga.

R: You were there, too. Was that far from Walter?

B: Yes, about eighty miles or more.

R: I see.

B: I believe it was. I'm not quite sure. I was too young.

R: I see. All right. But that would have meant a trip in a wagon, to go to the river.

- B: Oh yes, oh yes. Since you're at the Volga, my grandfather's oldest brother had what they called a general store and father did his freighting, they'd go to Saratov, and sometimes at the Volga for some things. And then Father...
- R: Was the store in Walter?
- B: Yes, oh yes. They had three of them.
- R: I see, uh-huh.
- B: And they would go to Saratov and get the goods. And Father contracted to build a building, it was to be adobe on the outside and, course, they had to have some lumber for frame on the inside and floors and partitions. Father contracted that to get at the Volga River, and I went with him. It was, I don't know how many wagons.
- LB: [inaudible]
- B: I don't know how many wagons there was. But anyway, I was at the Volga and I've seen it, and I drove a wagon at the age of eleven. And my brother had a wagonload, there was a wagon tied on mine, brother was in the back, Father was the head. And, oh, it was beautiful. Just, it was a beautiful country. All the way.
- R: Let me ask you. What was your father's profession?
- B: He was a farmer.
- R: He was a farmer, but he...
- B: They all lived in town and farmed outside.
- R: Okay, all right. So he had land, your family had land, then.
- B: It was handed down from generation to generation. And they had the feedlot where they hauled the grain on the edge of town, and that's where they had that, where they fixed those squares I told you about, and a den on the outside and one on the inside. The one on the inside was for the grain. All right, I think that's about all there.
- R: Now, was there a church in Walter?
- B: We used to have church in the schoolhouse. A big, wood schoolhouse. We'd have church, but later on they built a beautiful, brick church.
- R: While you were still there.
- B: Oh, yes, and the architects were from Finland. And they were Lutherans. You know, this entire town was 100% members of the Lutheran church.
- R: Okay, I was going to ask you that.
- B: Yes, and every child, as far as I know, had to go to school until they were sixteen. Then they were, received special training in Frank. That was not too many miles from Walter. And then they became members of the church.

- R: I see.
- B: At the age of, well, most of them by that time, were close to seventeen.
- R: Now, was that about confirmation time? About seventeen?
- B: Yes, yes. Confirmation time. Then many of the boys well, the girls, too, we always had a hired man, one of whom had been with us ever since I could remember, and then a boy named Carl, he was in his second year with us. And so was the hired girl. In her second year. Yes.
- R: How many people, then, were there in your family? Were your grandparents in the house, too?
- B: The grandparents, my father, and an uncle and his wife.
- R: Okay. So...
- B: Three families.
- R: Three sets of adults, I guess, and then a number of children?
- B: A number of children. Yes.
- R: And you had, you mentioned a brother, and I think, a sister as well?
- B: My oldest sister was married when we came over. Her husband was in the Russian and Japanese War. And do you know, I forgot to mention that? We were probably three hours on our way when Father said, "Let's stop. I know that horse." And that's Chris Hill, that was my sister's husband. He got home that night, and they told him we were leaving the next morning. So he cleaned up and had a few hours rest, and he came from [inaudible] to Walter, there he took my sister's horse, she was, spent two weeks with us, and he followed us.
- R: So then your sister and her husband came, too.
- B: No, he just got home. He just got home from the war. But they did come here later.
- R: I see.
- B: And so he tied his horse on the wagon, and we visited. For about three, four hours, and then he went back home. He said, "We'll see you," which they did.
- R: I see. Very good. Now, do you recall, you got in this whole wagonload of people, that went from Walter, and you went somewhere to get on the train? Did you go to Saratov for the train, or where was the railroad?
- B: No, no, the opposite from Saratov. Yes.
- R: Ah-hah. West somewhere, I guess.
- B: Well...
- R: Or do you remember the name of the town, or where the station was?

- B: No, no, there was hardly any town. Yes.
- R: Just a station in the countryside?
- B: A station and...
- R: A depot?
- B: It seems to me was where the [inaudible] was.
- R: Uh-huh, that could very easily have been the case.
- B: Yes. And that's where we got on the train.
- R: Does Rutna sound at all familiar to you? R-u-t-n-a?
- B: No.
- R: Some people have told me about getting on the train at Rutna, but that wasn't the case, I guess.
- B: I just don't remember any of the towns, except where we stopped in Libau.
- R: Okay. All right, fine.
- B: Now what else?
- R: Now, let me see. What, do you have some favorite childhood memories of Russia before you left? Things that you really didn't want to leave behind?
- B: Oh, many of them. Just many.
- R: Were there orchards, for example? Fruit?
- B: Beautiful orchards. Grandfather had one near the river, and he had all kinds of fruits. Every fall he went to the big markets, and he'd come home with something. Now take potatoes. We had white potatoes, and he came home and had a big, he could weave baskets, and he had some big ones. He took them along. He had one full of red potatoes. Now, I believe most people really have the white, don't they?
- R: [inaudible]
- B: They had red potatoes, and it was in a couple or three years, everybody had red potatoes. And that little garden I told you about, they would plant the, grandmothers, they would plant onion seeds, and cabbage seeds, red beets, sugar beets, they had sugar beets.
- R: Sugar beets were there?
- B: Yes, sir. We had them.
- R: In Walter.
- B: In Walter, Russia, and all the other towns. When the sugar beets were ripe, they brought them home, and they were not peeled, but they scrubbed them with brushes and cleaned them up, cut in pieces, and I told you about that big kettle built in.

R: Yes.

B: And they'd put them in there and boil them, and they had a press when they were done, they'd put them in that press, and there was a cloth in the press they put them in and covered them up and they were squeezed by hand, you know, and then they took the syrup back in that big kettle and boiled it, and that was their syrup. Yes.

R: And so everything, you really made for yourself, there in Walter.

B: Everything was made. My Uncle John made the shoes. My grandfather's brother across the street, they were professional felt boot makers. Did you ever see a felt boot?

R: No, but I've heard about them.

B: They're made, now, they're shaped like the rubber boots the farmers use for irrigation. And then my father, of course, Uncle had a son just about my father's age, then Father learned to make, help him, and they made the family's felt boots. So the shoes and the boots were made by Father and Uncle. And now, let's go back to the crops.

R: Okay.

B: The machinery was a plow and a harrow. And all the ground was summer fallowed. They, rye was planted in the fall. They had no winter wheat.

R: No winter wheat.

B: No winter wheat, and then next spring they went over the ground with a harrow, then someone would scatter the wheat, we'd broadcast the grain. And then they went over it with a harrow again, and that's all there was to it.

R: I see.

B: Yes. We raised rye, that was planted in the fall, and wheat and oats and barley, hershey, sunflowers, and flax.

R: Flax, as well.

B: Yes. Now, the sunflowers were harvested and threshed. They were cut with a knife, and they were threshed and cleaned and they were taken to the mill, and that was the cooking oil. And the flax then was the commercial oil, that is, for whatever, harnesses, they'd, and I think they used some in paint, if I'm not mistaken. And then the wheat, that was of the rye, and the wheat was for bread, Father would buy rye and wheat and fill the granary. When harvest work was over, he took it to the mill and had it made into flour and hauled it some forty miles to a Catholic town. And they were also weavers. Only Father had a loom, it was the size of a bed, and theirs was probably as big as this table.



- R: This is at your...
- B: In the Catholic town.
- R: So your father was a weaver, as well. And the loom was in your home, too?
- B: In your home. Yes. It took him a long time to weave, that is, to get it started. He had to tie every thread. Well, after he was done with the flour, then he would make the felt boots. No, yes he did. Second was the felt boots. To get it out of the way. Then he'd put up his loom and he would weave the woolen first, because it had to be sent to Frank to be dyed.
- R: Oh, I see.
- B: Yes. And navy blue. And then he'd weave the rest of it. In the meantime, there were professional spinners in the next town, Russians, ladies, oh, they spun beautiful. And there was the grandmother and daughter-in-law and granddaughter. And if Father was in a hurry, they'd bring two other women with them.
- R: Do you remember what the name of that town was? The Russian town? Or was it a Russian town as opposed to a German village?
- B: It was, oh, yes, a Russian town. But, what in the world, I don't believe it. I, just not at this time, I haven't thought of them for years.
- R: All right.
- B: And they would spin, and when Father had the wool done, why, they'd have it ready. And made into linen cloth.
- R: Okay. Now, this I wanted to ask you. You said a moment ago that the lady in Hamburg had this black satin dress. And that was the first time you had seen satin?
- B: Yes.
- R: What kind of cloth or clothing, then, did you have in Walter?
- B: In Walter there were woolen skirts made from this, what Father weaved. And then bought material at the store, dry goods. Then [inaudible] we wanted.
- R: Cotton and everything else.
- B: Yes, cotton and some silk, more in the satin line than really silk. Yes. And they made their own coats, our coats were, oh, what do you, quilted.
- R: Quilted.
- B: Wool, and quilted. And the lining was satin, at least ours was.
- R: Well, did the men have some sheepskin coats?
- B: Oh, you bet they had sheepskin coats. We took it to the tanners. They lived one block below us, next to the canyon. And they would tan those. They were just, really

just like our sheepskin here, kind of a light brown or tan, you know. And they wore them inside. The fur inside, and they had short ones and what Father weaved, they had some, some had to spin a heavier thread. And after he was done weaving it, he felt them, and they made kaftans out of them. They were tight-fitting and belted skirt, so, you know, they had plenty of room to step and climb and so on. They were warm.

R: That's sort of a Russian fashion, isn't it? Like that?

B: Oh, yes, yes. Russian fashion.

R: Did women have these sheep coats, too, as well?

B: No.

R: They had the quilted ones.

B: On this they went on a journey in winter and they had long ones with big collars. You tied a handkerchief around them, and the sleeves, they would knit, probably that long, and they sewed it on the inside, a cuff.

R: A cuff, huh?

B: Yes. And they were long and bundled them around, and they had a scarf, tied them around the waistline, and wear your felt boots, why, you could stay out all night pretty near.

R: That's right. What about fur caps?

B: We had fur caps, Father came home one time and he told Grandmother, "Now, you knit a cap, real loose. Real big." And he felt it. But, by the time he was done a felting it, it was too big, so he gave it to one of the boys. Grandmother made a bigger one and it was still too small for the hired man. They wanted some for the hired man. And they finally got them big enough, and Father felt them, and oh, they enjoyed them. And [inaudible], they were all winter. Yes, that's, let's see, what else was there? We talked about the grain, didn't we?

R: Yes. Uh-huh. Did the street have, or did the village have wide streets?

B: Quite wide, and no entrance from the, there was not porches or entrance to the street side. It was all enclosed. There was only one entrance, and that was near the yard, in the yard, the front yard, as we called it.

R: A gate into the front yard.

B: Yeah, yeah.

R: What did you call the front yard in German? What was your term?

B: What was the word? What did we say?

- R: You speak such good English, without any accent, really. But you were speaking German in those years, were you not?
- B: Oh, yes, oh, yes. German and Russian.
- R: And Russian. Well...
- B: We wouldn't dare speak Russian in the house.
- R: Not in the house.
- B: Not in our home. But we had to take it in school.
- R: Okay. Tell me about that. I mean, some people say that one of the reasons they left was because they didn't want to learn Russian.
- B: Oh, yes. First we went to school, I was younger, almost a year younger than any of them. Our Russian teacher was a nephew of my grandfather's. His mother was my father's sister. He was the Russian teacher.
- R: Was he German or was he Russian?
- B: Oh, no. He was German. Just as German as the rest of them. They lived right there in town. After he came back from the army, he went to school and became our Russian teacher.
- R: I see.
- B: And you didn't have to take it until you was in, say, the fourth grade. Then you had to learn Russian. Because they wanted them to learn German and start on religion. The German was really all religion. We had to memorize a song each week. School started with prayer. First we sang the national hymn, and then a religious song, the minister said a prayer, then we all joined in the Lord's Prayer.
- R: Uh-huh. Now, was it the Russian national hymn?
- B: Oh, yes. Yes.
- R: Was there a picture of the Czar in the school?
- B: No. Nothing like that, but later on they had them.
- R: Was there a flag?
- B: No flag.
- R: Okay. But just the hymn.
- B: Um-hmm, just the hymn. And then after you was in the fourth grade, then you took your Russian.
- R: I see. Um-hmm.
- B: And the parents, my mother's family, especially, they spoke Russian fluently.
- R: Hmm. Did they associate with a lot of Russians, or do business with them?

- B: No, no. Occasionally they did come over and buy horses or cattle or, the Russians. But it didn't, not. Now, ask questions. (Laughing)
- R: (laughing). Ask questions. No, I'm just curious. Did you know any Russians?
- B: Oh yes, oh, yes. I often went with my father. My sister and brother were older than I am, and then I was the next one, and I loved the outdoors. And he often took me along. Sometimes he'd take me along fishing or hunting. I remember one Saturday afternoon, late like this, dressed warm, and "Come on," I dressed warm and came out and got onto the sled and just stopped and picked up three other men, and we went west of the town and there was a meadow and oh, it snowed and I had a bunschick over me. A bunschick is, we have our canvas here, and there the poorest quality of wool is felted. Waterproof and warm, and I had one of them, and a dog at my feet.
- R: It was a blanket-type thing, then.
- B: It was heavier than a blanket.
- R: How do you spell this bunschick, you say?
- B: Bunschick?
- R: B-u-n-s-...
- B: Something like that.
- R: Okay. All right.
- B: And when we came home, Grandfather stood on the porch and he said, "How in the world could you take that child out?" Oh, he gave him a scolding. He just grinned and left and I went in. And he helped me undress, and he was a wonderful grandfather. I could talk about him till morning.
- R: Uh-huh.
- B: Well, ask more questions.
- R: Well, were you just out hunting with your father that day?
- B: Yes, oh, yes.
- R: Okay.
- B: We picked up, they shot rabbits. And there were a number of poor people alone, like every town. We drove around and he brought one rabbit home for the dogs. And the best he divided. Our folks had two nannygoats and the children would play with the little ones until fall. Then they'd say, "Well, it's time to take them out to pasture." So they took them and gave them to the poor people. They fed them a while and butchered them. Some they kept to milk, and so on.
- R: But was there, what you call an oberdorf and an unterdorf? In your town?

- B: Oh, yes, yes.
- R: And...
- B: East and west.
- R: East and west. Did it have any meaning for more wealthy people, or poorer people?
- B: Well, yes and no. Mostly the better, or the wealthier, they were in the center. Yes. Now, take our family, we had a nice house, they were well-to-do. Across the street lived Grandfather's brother, they were well-to-do, and above them lived the mayor of the town, and he was an older man, and his son, his older son's wife, was my mother's cousin. Then a block down from us, across the street a block down, was a dry-goods store. Their name was Scheschlear. And Mrs. Scheschlear was another cousin of my mother's. So there were the three cousins just within calling distance, you might say. Yes.
- R: S-c-h-l-e-s-c-h-l-e-r?
- B: l-e-a-r. Yes. Scheschlear or something.
- R: Right, right. Okay. I think I'm gonna run out of tape here. Well, no, I have a little ways to go. We can go on a moment yet.
- B: Now what else?
- R: Well, I wanted to ask a little bit more, what did you, your family, think of the Russians?
- B: Very, very little.
- R: Well, this is what I've heard from other people. I just wanted to follow up on this.
- B: Yes. They were lazy, they were indifferent. Do you know, they had a horse and a camel hitched together and plowed.
- R: A horse and a camel.
- B: And a milk cow and a horse hitched together. And a steer and a horse.
- R: Is that right?
- B: That is God's fact.
- R: Huh. Rather than a team. Of some sort.
- B: They didn't have a team.
- R: No team. Hmm. But the German farmers had teams.
- B: Oh, yes. They were proud of what they had, and every Saturday the streets were raked and cleaned and the stuff piled in the alley. At least where we lived, they did it. But the streets were clean. And I wished you could have seen the people Sunday

morning, how they came out of those gates, both sides, and walked down the street. Sometimes, I can't hardly believe it. It was just beautiful. Dressed in their best.

R: Uh-huh. Going to church.

B: Going to church. Yes. They had a beautiful choir. My grandfather's oldest brother, the one that had the store, he was the songleader for the minister, because the minister was the only one that could play the organ. So he'd play the organ and then he would give out the songs, and he had a beautiful voice. My father sang bass, and here in America one of the ministers said, now, "If you had trained, you would have been a second Caruso." That's, I'm not bragging, that is a fact. He had a beautiful bass voice. And his favorite song was [inaudible].

R: Yes, I know it. Um-hmm, that's a good one.

B: He used to say, "That's so beautiful." Mother sang soprano. She went, she sang in the choir until I came, and then she quit.

R: Uh-huh, uh-huh. So there was a lot of music in your family.

B: Oh, yes. They organized a band, I think I told you about it.

R: Yes, you mentioned your father and the band. And ordered instruments from Hamburg.

B: Yes, yes. And they played beautiful. They practiced in our home so many times, we children would go to bed and go to sleep, we'd wake up and they were still practicing.

R: Um-hmm. Was there a town square or anything of this nature? Would the band play out on the square?

B: Yes, they did. There was the street across from us went straight west, and then there was the parsonage and the schoolhouse and [inaudible] in one block. And in back of that was the firehouse.

R: I see.

B: In the back of that was the church. The new brick church. Oh, they were crowded.

R: Ah, yes. The church was built before you came to America?

B: Oh, yes, yes. Yes, we talked to some of them and Grandfather insisted we had to entertain some of them, and one of our neighbor boys, their name was Reisbeck, I mentioned that, the oldest one, he was so in love with those people, and he actually got a job as a waterboy and a messenger boy while they were building.

R: Building the church.

B: Yes. And when they left, he went with them.

R: Oh.

B: Yes, he did.

R: You mean back to Finland? Or was it just the architect.

B: No, from there they went to another, Catholic town. They were gonna build a Catholic church.

R: I see.

B: But I can't remember the name anymore. It was very nice, very nice.

R: Was there much interaction between Protestant towns and Catholic towns?

B: Not a bit, not a bit. And not, there wasn't a Catholic in our town nor a Russian. It was just all Walters, it was just all Walters.

R: Uh-huh. And everybody knew everybody else?

B: Oh, yes, yes. When there was a fire...

(END OF FIRST TAPE)

R: This is second tape on March 17, 1977, with Mrs. Anna Burkard, Denver, Colorado. Now, let me just ask you a little bit more about...

B: Ask anything you like, and...

R: Thank you very much. Did you go with your father, I guess, on several of his trips? Business trips, like this, away from Walter?

B: Oh, yes.

R: Did you visit many of the other villages?

B: I was in Frank, and [inaudible], and my mother had a sister living way off, and I went with her.

R: Um-hmm. Did you ever go to Saratov?

B: I was at Saratov once. And Father told a story, and I think it's worth repeating. There was a Jew, he said he was the biggest man you have ever seen. And he talked politics and religion, and one of the men out of our town said, "Now, you're a Jew." He said, "What did you think when Judas betrayed Christ? That was pretty rotten, wasn't it?"

R: Yes. Yeah.

B: "Well, he got paid for it." "Oh, yes, he got paid for it, but what did he do?" "I wasn't there." He said, "I'd sell my birthright for thirty pieces of silver." One of the German men took him up. "I, so-and-so, sold my birthright. I, a Jew, so-and-so, sold my birthright for thirty pieces of silver." He gave him thirty pieces of silver, it was a man my father knew quite well. He often stopped when he went on some of the trips to the village. They were Lutheran, also. And Father, for some time, probably two, three, four months, before he got to Saratov again, with Uncle and what they have to store

,"And he came and put his big hands on my shoulder," Father said, "and he shook me, he says, 'You was there when I sold my birthright.'" "Yes." "Do you know where the man lives?" "Oh, yes, he's a friend of mine." He says, "Take me there." Father said, "Not today. I have business, but I'll take you out in the morning." So he took him up there, and he stopped at his friend's and Father told him who he was and what he wanted, and it was another man. Father also knew the other man. And he wanted to go right away, and he said, "No, we'll go after supper." "No, now." So they took him there, and the man, the Lutheran man, took his Bible and pulled out the sheet of paper, and gave it to him. He gave him the thirty pieces of silver.

R: Is that right?

B: They went back to Father's friend, and Father said, "That man ate. I've never seen a human being eat as much as that Jew did that night." He was barely done, "Where do I sleep?" So he showed him where he was to sleep, but before that they went out and this man also had beautiful horses like most of the Germans, and he showed him the new ones and the colts and so on, he went with them, and Father noticed he talked to the oldest son of the family. And they went to bed, the next morning when they got up, the Jew was gone, and so was the boy.

R: Oh, the boy, too?

B: He took him to Saratov, and when he came home, he had a new suit on, he had a new hat and boots...

R: The son.

B: Yes. He said, "I didn't want to. He made me take it." He wasn't gonna charge him anything, "He made me take it." I heard Father tell that story a number of times.

R: Were you aware of many Jewish people?

B: No. Hardly any. Sometimes peddlers came through. They were Jews. Yes. And no Russian in our village or any other nationality. With the exception, I won't mention names, and I doubt very much whether his descendants will ever know. They wasn't very proud of it. Denied it. But one day a Turk came. He wasn't very dark. Came and went to the mayor and told him, he said, "I've camped," above our town, was a big hill. And he said he camped there three nights and three days, he said, "It's the nicest, the quietest place I've ever been. And I'd like to build a home here. I'm a tanner by profession." So they had a meeting, and people allowed him to build a house and all, and some years later he married a widow.

R: From the village?



- B: From a poor family. And they had one boy. But he was fair. He looked more like the mother. But you won't believe this. The fourth generation, I know the man, they called him "Black So-and-so," his last name, you know. And he was darker than his forefather.
- R: Is that right?
- B: Yes. But he married a very nice woman, she was a blonde, and there was no other black children. Four generations.
- R: It sometimes shows up. Strange ways, strange ways.
- B: Yes, sir. In strange ways.
- R: That's true, that's true.
- B: Well...
- R: Well, let's. One more thing. Do you remember anything about Saratov itself? That one time you were there.
- B: Big buildings. And a lot of traffic. Big warehouses. That's really as far as I got.
- R: Right, okay.
- B: And the Volga River was froze, boats going back and forth and so on and smaller boats and steamers and so on. And uphill, when we were there, they loaded up and we went home. I didn't get to see, just from a distance. But it was beautiful. Russia is really a beautiful country.
- R: I agree with you there.
- B: And where we lived, and where most of the German people lived, there was fertile soil.
- R: That's right. Good farming.
- B: They had everything. The river, and forest, and meadows, and all.
- R: Well, now, do you remember your father giving any particular reason why he wanted to leave Russia?
- B: No. No, he had no reason. He came because my grandfather insisted. Father's family to go with my oldest brother and his wife.
- R: Just, as you said earlier.
- B: Yes. Yes. And we came here to America, and I told you how we happened to get there.
- R: That's right.
- B: And...
- R: Had your uncle in Lincoln written to your father, inviting him to come?

- B: No. He didn't even know my father was coming. Father didn't notify him.
- R: Oh, I see.
- B: Yes.
- R: And so it really was a surprise, with all of this welcome.
- B: You have never in your life seen such a surprise. Especially my aunt. Honestly, she just sparkled.
- R: That's marvelous.
- B: Yes, and she was a beautiful woman. But there was reasons. She was an only daughter. Is that on record?
- R: Yes. Would you like me to cut it off?
- B: Yeah.
- (Gap in tape)
- R: Okay. Did you stay in Lincoln very long?
- B: No. I think it was, we arrived there the 6th of January, and it was 1906, as I told you.
- R: 1906, yes.
- B: And we was with Uncle a week, and Father said, "I'm going over to the real estate man, and I'm gonna try and rent a house." Uncle didn't say a word. He called his wife and he says, "What do you think? He wants to rent a house?" She said, "Over my dead body will he rent a house:"
- R: Oh (laughing). Now, let me just ask you something. That's an English expression, isn't it? "Over my dead body." Is that a German one, too?
- B: Oh, yes.
- R: Can you recall the German phrase?
- B: [Inaudible-German], I think.
- R: Okay, all right. But it is a German expression, too.
- B: It's German. I heard it as a child.
- R: Okay, uh-huh. See, I learn all kinds of things.
- B: There are many things in German.
- R: Yes.
- B: Our children took Latin in school, in high school, and there was so many of the words like German. They had good grades, and some of the others just couldn't connect.
- R: Makes you proud.

- B: Yes, oh, yes. This one here, arithmetic was her best. She did just, sometimes when she heard those old men trying to figure out something, she'd tell them and they were little, little, well, they enjoyed it.
- R: Yes. Yes.
- B: Well, we left Lincoln, and Father worked. Uncle was yardmaster, I guess you'd call it, for the Burlington Railroad.
- R: Oh, I see.
- B: Yes. One Sunday he drove him and his wife, he had a team of horses, and a carriage, they went for a ride, and they were probably three miles from the depot and there was quite a canyon on the bridge across. He seen a train go by, and the last car almost jumped and the bridge went down. He drove to the next house very close, and no one home. He broke a window and climbed in and phoned. And they told him to take a red handkerchief and go down the track. And he went, and he stopped the other train.
- R: Oh. Very fortunate he was going by there, then.
- B: Yes. And he left a note in German on the place, and he told the, some of the officer at the depot, what happened. He said, "Don't worry," and they replaced the window. They were more than happy to replace it.
- R: Indeed. Uh-huh. Yeah. Did you find a house in Lincoln, then?
- B: He wouldn't let us. We were there until the later part of February, and I told you he had a team of horses. And short before we got there he, Aunt's brother and his wife came to Lincoln to visit from the state of Washington. And he had that team of horses there. He stood beside and he didn't hold them didn't tie them up, and they just stood there. A well-dressed man, an older man, older than Uncle was, he come up and he said, "I'd like to buy your team of horses." He said, "They're not for sale." "I'll give you a good price for them. I travel so much, I'm away from home so much, and my wife likes to take our two dogs out for a ride." And one of the neighbors would hitch up for her and unhitch, one of the boys. He said, "No, I won't sell them." He said, "I like the team of horses, but I'll tell you what you do. Next Sunday afternoon you come, and I'll take you out there." And you know, the ranchers was near the railroad, where the rail went by, kind of a curve around his pasture, and they were raised, they were used to the engines huffing and puffing by, so they didn't mind it at all. Uncle's was a bay team of horses, that's what we had in Russia, and so he looked at the, not blacks, and finally sent for a team of sorrels. And you know, they're beautiful.
- R: Yes.

- B: Mama was very happy. Well, he turned out to be, he was connected with, they were building a sugar beet factory in Garden City, Kansas. That was in 1906. I don't know whether it's still operating the sugar beet factory or not.
- R: I don't know.
- B: Anyway, he couldn't find enough workers. He persuaded my uncle, he said, "Can't you talk some of your people, we pay well. We put up tents, and they're nice, and we'll do everything we can to make them comfortable." There were electric lights and all that. So, finally Father decided, gave in, and we went to Kansas.
- R: To Garden City.
- B: Garden City, and on the edge of town they had two rows of tents. I don't know the man's name. Anyway, they paid, we had a tent, we moved in, there was light, and...
- R: Electric lights. In the tents.
- B: Oh, yes.
- R: Um-hmm. Was there a floor in the tent?
- B: Oh, yes. Floor, and walls about so high, and then the tent stretched over it.
- R: Oh, I see. All right. So walls about four feet high or so.
- B: Yes. Nice doors and windows, and so on. First morning we were there, around ten o'clock, there was a knock on the door and we were still unpacking, and there was one of the waiters. And he had a bowl of fruit. [Inaudible], emptied out. Next morning, they did it again. Next morning, around ten o'clock, one of the waiters came, that came from the boss. Nice to us.
- R: Uh-huh, uh-huh. That's very nice.
- B: We thought so. We didn't like apricots. That's one fruit we didn't have in Russia. We had apples and pear and cherries and everything else, and berries of all kinds.
- R: Um-hmm, but no apricots.
- B: And then there were three women, members of the missionary society, they came up, and--was that on my curtains? Oh. Okay.
- R: Okay?
- B: Fine, fine. And, I don't know what they'd expect to find. It was on Wednesday. Mother was working buttonholes, I was knitting a wine-colored scarf, and sister next to me was doing some embroidery work. We let them in, "You can sit down," we could speak some English by that time, and Wednesday Mother had white bread, rye bread, coffee cake, and she said, "Fix some tea, and give the ladies some tea and

coffee cake," and we did. And you know, they never came back again. Yeah. We were civilized, so...

R: So...

B: She didn't come back anymore.

R: Didn't need to have any more missionary activity.

B: No.

R: Strange.

B: But we had Sunday school in the different tents and so on. And they, some of the older people, they preached and so on.

R: There were quite a few German families that had gone on, then, to Garden City?

B: Oh, I don't know how many. And they liked it. There was about forty Japs there.

R: At that time?

B: At that time. But they were quite a ways, off by themselves. And Father worked with a bunch. And it was all right, as long as it wasn't too high, but after he came quite high, by the time he'd come up there, they couldn't hardly upset their wheelbarrows with whatever. Sometimes they had cement, I guess, and other times bricks. And he'd reach over and upset their...Okay. I hope so, I need to. She did something yesterday, I was just gonna get a share. And where he worked, the corner he was working, they made more progress than the rest. Because he helped them. And then the foreman, too, "Didn't you just stay here and upset everyone? And you know that worked?" By the time they were tired, you know, to wheel that up, that was heavy. And he'd upset them and they'd go right down. And he told the boss what happened, so they raised Father's wages, he made \$3.00 a day, and that was a lot of money.

R: Ooh-hoo. In those days, yes.

B: In November, he gave notice he was quitting, he was going back to Lincoln, so the children could go to school.

R: Oh, yes. Um-hmm.

B: And that's what happened. We went back to Lincoln, he wrote to his brother to buy us a house. And he did. There was a couple of old people in J Street, I don't know just the number. And he wanted \$1200 for a three-bedroom house. He had a thousand-dollar mortgage on it, and three hundred was taken to California to his children. That's what Father bought. And we got there, taxi and we walked up the steps, the screen door was unlocked, and the other door was slightly open. We went in and snapped on the lights, and it was warm, Mother walked down to the kitchen

and there was the table set, and a note there. There was a roast in the oven and "Have dinner with us tomorrow." That was Mother's sister-in-law, or my uncle's wife, and she had a stepbrother in Lincoln, and his wife, and someone else was with them. They had cleaned the house, and it was ready to go to bed, they left their furniture, it went with it. And, "Come to church and have dinner with us Sunday." That was what happened. And it was wonderful.

R: Hmm. Right.

B: Oh, I just can't tell you how nice people were.

R: That's so good to hear.

B: We walked up to Park School, and the principal of the school was Irish, he was Irish. Red-headed, and she could speak some German. After we know our abc's, why ,you know, that went fast. You know, quite a bit, history and so on. And we went to school. Didn't take us long to move from one room to the other. And we loved it.

R: This was in Lincoln.

B: It was in Lincoln, Nebraska.

R: So you really, then, learned English in Lincoln when you came there.

B: We learned English there. The second year, it was about the same. We went to Montana.

R: Um-hmm. Was your father seeking work in Montana?

B: Well, he thought there was still homesteads to be had around Billings.

R: I see.

B: But first we were on our way to Wyoming. Around Lincoln, there was a man by the name of Lingle, and he had, he started an irrigation system, when the government took over. And they wanted teamsters. My father was good with horses. And they paid a good price for a good teamster. We were on our way to Wyoming, and there was a Major Brennan sitting on the seat right across from us, he heard Father speak German to the children, and he finally came over. And sat with him, and he said, "Man, you don't," he spoke German. He said, "You don't want to take your family there," he said, "the scum of the nation will be there." He said, "They'll put up the big tents, and there will be drinking and dancing and everything else that's rotten." He said, "I'll tell you what you can do. I'm from Billings, Montana, and I have a big place. And next to me is a friend of ours." He was a banker. I don't remember his name anymore. "And he wants a German man to work there. There's a new cabin," there was shelves and everything else there. So finally Father consented. And he

found that, he talked to the conductor, and they sent a wire, and every station he got a wire. When we arrived at Billings, Montana, there was a hayrack for the luggage and there was a springed wagon for us children, and horse and buggy for Father and Mother.

R: Hmm.

B: Yes. And when we got there, there was a box with a bucket on it and a dipper for water, and there was flour and sugar and everything you can imagine. He told Father just to follow him. And there was food, all we wanted. And they plowed a patch for a garden for Mother, just sod, and a near irrigation ditch. They'd fix that if she wanted it, they'd flood it. We'd hoe it, we had all kinds of vegetables. It was a very nice place. We loved it, but there was no schoolhouse nearby, the Mayor's daughters, they were in school. I don't know where. But when they came home, they spent half of the time with us. They were very, very nice, and the boys were most of the time up there. And that was Montana. We went home, and that was, you know, there were bank troubles in that time. I said he was a banker. He had seven hundred dollars for Father, to tide him over for the winter, and he sent him the rest later on.

R: Now, who was the banker? Not the Major? The man who was in Billings. Okay, all right.

B: In Billings, yes.

R: That's right, uh-huh.

B: I don't know, I don't remember the name of the banker, and the Major, that's all we called him.

R: Okay, yeah.

B: The Major had an older father, and he went fishing and my younger brothers went with him. You've never seen companionship like that before. Mother would give them something to eat, they'd share it with Grandpa, it was beautiful.

R: Great.

B: It sounds vulgar, well, but in the meantime, we worked hard.

R: Uh-huh. And this was regular farming, then?

B: When Father was in Montana, yes. And the cowboys, they were careless. We gave them a team of horses, one had a sore shoulder. He said, "I can't use that horse." And he said, "Let me see the harness." And you know, the things they strap over their heads...

R: The yoke?

B: Like this.

R: Uh-huh.

B: It was worn so bad, it had little wires there, and they rubbed them. So he examined every harness, and when a horse had a sore, why, he took care of it. And my family the same. And the buildings were dilapidated. He fixed the windows on some of the barns and the granaries and all that sort of thing. That wasn't his business at all, but he did it. He doubled his wages. And they had what they had a flume, they wanted to irrigate, and it was made of boards, and summers, you know, they'd get wet and then they'd dry, and a good part of the water would run out. And they had corrugated tin there, and he told them how to do it. Helped them. And they did. The banker was, he shook his head. Yeah. That's the way it went all summer.

R: I see.

B: They were wonderful to Father and us.

R: Um-hmm.

B: Well, the next place, we went to Colorado, and it was the same thing.

R: Where did you come in Colorado?

B: Hillrose, Colorado.

R: Hillrose.

B: Um-hmm. Father wanted to see the country.

R: Okay. And do you remember about when that was? 1907, or...?

B: Let's see. In 1906 we were at Lincoln, and then we went to Kansas. In 1907 we were in Montana, and 1908 in Colorado.

R: Um-hmm, okay.

B: And then by that time, of course, Father had decided to stay in America.

R: Uh-huh.

B: Yes. He liked the way it was, and he had a home there, he could get a job at anyplace, he was big and strong. And a good worker, and then Mother had a brother and sister and her husband living at Culbertson, Nebraska. And they insisted for him to come. And work for ranchers there, if he was just a loankeeper. Until he found a farm.

R: Your father.

B: A farm to rent. They had, Harper's Store had all the machinery you needed. So he worked for Nick Snell for probably three, four months, or more than that. Let's see. That was in August, when it happened. About half a mile from town was a young man, I won't mention names, but he got in bad with the authorities. They gave him 48



hours to pull out of the state. He had an uncle he was relative to, he bought everything alive. Horses, cattle, even a dog and a cat he took along. And he wanted, let's see, sixteen hundred, I believe, for the rest of the crop. The wheat was harvested. The beets, twenty acres were full of weeds, the corn was weedy, and every piece of machinery needed repairs. It was wired or nailed up, and oh, it was something. Father said, "I'll give you twelve hundred. Take it or leave it." And he got paid the twelve hundred, he took it and cleared out. The Sheriff stationed one of his deputies there at night to watch this. And the orchards, they had beautiful orchards.

R: Let me ask you now about this ranch in Culbertson, Nebraska, or this farm in Nebraska?

B: Culbertson, Nebraska, yes.

R: It was in Nebraska.

B: It was rented.

R: It was rented.

B: Yes.

R: All right. And what did you raise there?

B: He had, what was left was the corn, the beets, and the alfalfa.

R: Sugar beets?

B: Sugar beets, and the cousins came up and everybody helped pull weeds. Yes.

R: And were you there a number of years?

B: We were on the place four years. Well, three and a half years, you might say. And then, I don't think I'll say that.

R: Okay.

B: The rest of it. The first crop, well, we just had the beets and all, and then the next year, Father, after he threshed the wheat, he hauled it to the elevator... (end of side of tape). I happened to answer the phone, he said, "Tell your father I want to see him the next time he comes to town." So Father, he did, he said, "Chris," he said, "your boss isn't satisfied with the check you received." Father said, "If there's a mistake, you made it, you figured it."

R: Um-hmm.

B: "Well," he said, "it isn't, that." He said, "That's not," and he almost received for three years from the other guy.

R: Um-hmm, um-hmm, yeah. Makes a difference, doesn't it?

- B: It did. Well, he had a surveyor come out and survey the land. Now, there was a place, almost an acre of beets that he bought and irrigated, and it run in that little place. Father had it surveyed, and the boys drove pegs in along, and Father pulled his ditches, and he had no problem.
- R: Mm-hmm.
- B: And then Christmas, well, after all the crop was in, Mother received a check of forty dollars from Omaha from the boss. He said, "That's for..." his share of the food.
- R: Hmm.
- B: Yes. Mother was reluctant to cash it, but Father told the banker to just take it. And then Christmas he sent Mother a box of candy, and there was four boxes this way and four that. That made sixteen pounds of candy.
- R: Oh, my.
- B: And each box was different. And it happened for the next three years. Forty dollars, and he used to tease Mother. Then he received the letter, it was for sale, and he wanted Father to buy, gave him all the time he wanted. But somebody, a friend of Father's and his Sunday School teacher, beat him to it.
- R: Oh, my. That's not too happy.
- B: No. He received, he went up on the train the same day my father made his letter, and he was on the steps of the business place, I don't know what business the man was in, but he was well-to-do. He said he had to catch the next train back, and so, he devoted his time to that, and he looked at the mail, there was Father's letter. He called the [inaudible] banker, and he said, "I've been in business for so many years, but this is the dirtiest deal I ever heard in my life. I'm heartsick." And it was. Next Sunday he didn't come to church. Nor the next. So, when Father seen him on the street, he went up to him, and he says, "It's done and gone with. It can't be changed. And you come back to church where you belong." But he never taught again. Well, his son, they had a store in town, and his son was a big-shot here. Only son. He had to buy, the seed for the farm, the machinery, and he had a big barn built so he could drive a load of feed into the barn and drive around the feeder and unload and drive out. The carpenter told him that that roof was too big, it needed more braces. And he told him, "You build it the way I tell you." Then he did. But when there was a number of neighbors and other people around, why, the carpenter told them, "He wants me to build it the way he tells me, and I tell him that's gonna cave in." And it did. So they had to put up more braces. He could drive in, but he had to back out. And they

bought cattle, and he turned them to feed them. Steers. He hauled a load of alfalfa on Saturday night and forgot to close the gate, and his fat steers went out in the alfalfa field. When the neighbor went to change his irrigation water, he seen them laying there bloated with the legs stretched out, straight up. He lost, I don't, no one ever found out how many steers they lost.

R: Hmmm. Um-hmm.

B: That was the first year. He wouldn't, he pulled the ditches the way he wanted them. He said, "No Dutchmen can show me how to farm." And he rolled the ditches the way he wanted, and he lost many of his beets, and so on. That was the second year. The third year, they almost foreclosed on him. But his father had a dry-goods and grocery store. He mortgaged it and it went on. And his father lost his store, and the son lost his farm. My grandfather had a way of saying that you pay for all the wrong you do. It comes back to you. And it did.

R: It does. So often.

B: My father bought a farm then east of the town, and close, about a mile, only this was north. Father's was east. There was twelve acres back of the barn never irrigated, but again he got the surveyor and they surveyed it and they made a big ditch and from the main irrigation ditch, Uncle, Mother's brother, he was handy, they had what they called German tin, he made the pipes, and they had the ditch ready, and they filled it with cement and put the pipes in, and covered with cement, and let it open for a number of weeks. And then he irrigated his back of the barn. And there was probably the same twelve, thirteen acres, the prairie hole town. You know, what they are? They're pretty. He went to the druggist and told them what he wanted, he gave it to him, and he, they put the poison out. And we didn't like it. We girls thought they was so cute.

R: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

B: And one of them, missed one of them. A few days later, there was one left. Father stood by the hour at the corner post, fence post, with a double-barreled shotgun and do you think he could get it? They pulled the hayrack near the fence with bumps of feed on it, and he laid there on his stomach watching. Every time he was ready to shoot, off he'd went. Then finally one day he gave him both barrels, and that's it.

R: That did it.

B: Um-hmm. Father had a very big gray team of horses. They were beautiful. But the mare was with colt and the man got [inaudible] and he drove an oil truck, with the oil

from the McCook to Benkelman. And when he was at the store the uncles, of course, it was, you know, kerosene stoves came in that time and many other things. He'd stop there and they'd take oil and gas, kerosene and oil, and Father had to stroke those horses and admire them. And so one day, he said, "Chris, I want you to buy that team of horses." Father said, "What do you want for them?" "Five hundred dollars." "Oh, that's too much." He said, "Well, let me tell you. You get the harness as well as the fly nets [?]. And the flynets were, he mentioned the price, and he says, "Ask your brother-in-law. He ordered them for me, a special order from Omaha." So Father bought that team of horses. Then in the fall, when the beets were ripe and they hauled the beets, the boys, and the oldest brother was I think thirteen or fourteen--no, he wasn't fourteen. He'd haul a load of beets with those big horses to the beet dump. Came home and then went to school.

R: Um-hmm. Now, were you out? Did you work in the beet fields? Or was it your father?

B: At times, at times we'd help out, to get them out in time.

R: Um-hmm. But you were able to go to school? Did the beet work interfere with your schooling?

B: No, no. Morning and evening.

R: Uh-huh.

B: Then Mother took sick, my brother's wife, they had four children. His wife died and left a pair of infants nine days old. And then it was up to Anna. From then on I taught a Sunday school class and we did many things. I had to give up all of that and I took care of Mother and the twins. Those babies were beautiful. They were the most beloved children there was. My mother's sister, and then her daughters. They had a car. My father did, too. Bought them together. And they'd come out on Wednesday and bring some of the older grandmas in town, found out she came out every Wednesday, "Can I go with you? Can I go with you?" She'd bring them along out. And it got so, when I had baby clothes on the line, and were ready to bring in, "It's my turn. You took them in last week. Do you know what the ironing board was?" Then around three o'clock they'd make tea. That was on Wednesday. And I had fresh bread of all kinds. We'd have something to eat. It was real funny, but they did all the mending, they sewed on the buttons and finished buttonholes, and all that sort of a thing. They were just absolutely wonderful, those old grandmas. And...

R: Were they speaking German at that time? Most of them? The grandmas?

- B: Oh, yes, it was all German. Some of the people, some of the Germans wouldn't permit their children even to speak English when they were at home. But Father, I was surprised at him, how well he spoke. The uncles would never speak German to him.
- R: I see. Uh-huh.
- B: Yes. That was good, that was good.
- R: So, then, he had to learn English.
- B: When the incubators came out, they brought one out, and set it up. Uncle said, Uncle [inaudible], Mother's brother-in-law, he says, "Now you leave them and in the morning you see how warm they are. And you call." And in the morning, they was just as cold as they was before. I took called and he said, "Well, he said, we'll bring out the new [inaudible]." And they did, and after that it worked. Wasn't so long, the neighbors had, wanted incubators. And then there was the washing machines, the kinds you used to pull by hand, we brought one out, and tried it, and it wasn't so long, the neighbors had some. That was good advertisement.
- R: Um-hmm, um-hmm. So you were raising chickens then?
- B: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Yes. And then what was next? The washing machine? Oh, yes, the kerosene stoves came out. We had an enclosed porch, and we put it out there. I did a lot of baking in that.
- R: Yes.
- B: I tell you, it was wonderful to have uncles like that. When Father rented that, he had that one team, and then he took the wagon down, and the tongue was wired, and they took it in the back and they put a new tongue in it, they painted it, and the uncle said, "Now you push it back in the shed. And hitch this one up." They gave him a new wagon. And every piece of machinery he took down to repair it, and things, and pushed them in the shed. And he took a new one home. When my [inaudible] awful weak, he had to haul his crop in, he had eighteen-hundred dollars debt. But that's cheap, because he got everything out. So much cheaper than the rest would. But then, Mother always had a good watermelon patch, pumpkins, watermelon, canteloupe, cucumbers, and everything else in the garden, and they got their share. And if you want to write a book, that would be a nice story.
- R: That's right. That's true. Uh-huh. No, we'd like to get all of that in, too.
- B: There was so...
- R: How long were you there in Nebraska?

- B: In Nebraska until 1920.
- R: 1920.
- B: Yes.
- R: Okay. So, do you remember anything about the wartime years?
- B: Oh, yes. First World War.
- R: Did that disturb your life on the farm?
- B: No, not ours. My younger brother, I had an older one, I told you was married that came to America with us, and then the next oldest one, he was rejected because he was on the farm and they needed the farmers. "Like if we sent you, let you go, it would take at least two boys to take your place because you know your horses and everything else and how to handle them." And he wasn't satisfied. He went up to Trenton to the county seat and still tried to get in. They told him the same thing. They sent him home. He was awful disappointed. The other one was too young.
- R: So your one brother wanted to serve in the army?
- B: Oh, yes. Because his friends were going. Yes.
- R: Okay. Now, were most of these friends Germans, or were they...?
- B: Some German and some American. Some were born in America and some were not. All of my entire, my brothers and sisters, were all born in Walter, Russia.
- R: I see. Okay.
- B: Yes.
- R: Did you talk about the German families and the Englisher families?
- B: Oh, yes. We had a lot of English friends. Yes. It made no difference.
- R: Made no difference.
- B: Not a bit. There was this Scotch brother and sister, they were, he was a bachelor and she was, well, he was engaged to a girl and there was, epidemic of diphtheria.
- R: Oh, yes.
- B: And she died. And he never cared for another woman. And she was in love with a boy and her father wouldn't let her marry him. So after the parents were gone they lived together, farmed together, and they were wonderful neighbors. We just thought the world and all of them. I heard Charlie laugh one time, I thought the fencepost would jump out. Father wanted to plant alfalfa--I told you about that twelve acres back of the barn, he wanted half in Mexican corn that was low and the hogs could get at it, and the others in alfalfa, the other six acres. So he had his ground ready to plant, and a neighbor had the drill for that. You had to have special drill for it, for alfalfa,

and there were a number of them ahead of him. He'd have green and the ground was just in excellent shape for that. So he broadcast, like he did in Russia. Took his harrow and went over it, and then he drilled oats in it with the grain drill, and this Charlie I was mentioning, he stopped in and he says, "You can have the drill now. I hear he's done with it." Father said, "I don't need it." "Aren't you gonna drill that alfalfa." He says, "Yeah," he says, "the oats is up, you can row it." He took him up there, and he got on his knees and checked how far, you know, the plants were apart, and got hold of the fencepost and he just roared and laughed and laughed, he thought it was the funniest thing he ever heard. Father had excellent [inaudible].

R: Yes. It certainly sounds that way. Really. Your mother got well, too, from the illness?

B: No, she never got. She had high blood pressure and migraine headaches, and that's a bad combination. And then when the Spanish influenza started out...

R: Right in about 1918?

B: Yes. The little boy died.

R: Oh, my.

B: And the girl and my father didn't take it. She'd come and drink our water, she'd come and sit on the bed, and say "Aunt Anne," she called me "Aunt Anne, don't you want to get up?" "I will, when I feel a little better." One night I was so sick I didn't know nothing. Sometimes I could hear the doctor and Father, but that's it. But I got over it.

R: Good for you.

B: Without any aftereffects. And when the little boy died, they had the funerals outdoors, along the wood they'd go to church with the funerals, on account of the epidemic. And it was cloudy, they had rubber boots on and rubber coats and hats and funeral, the little coffin was on the porch. I wasn't able to see it. The girl grew up, and she's a nurse. She lives in San Diego.

R: I see.

B: Last Sunday she called, she said, "Aunt Anne, I hear you're all snowed in. Do you have enough to eat?" I just, I just didn't know what to say.

R: Uh-huh, uh-huh. That's right.

B: We go to visit them once a year, my daughter and I.

R: Good.

B: San Diego, I have a sister-in-law in Long Beach. And we stop at Las Vegas and gamble.

- R: Oh, my.
- B: Five dollars worth of nickles and we play. But last time I brought over twenty dollars worth of nickels home.
- R: You're a lucky person.
- B: Yes, but I'll never do it again. They're so heavy!
- R: (Laughing) I bet. That's true.
- B: But I use them for bus fare. I can go...yeah, buy five dollars worth of dimes and then my nickels. I haven't many left anymore. They're pretty near all gone.
- R: Oh, surely. That came in handy.
- B: But, it was funny, and we had a lot of fun.
- R: Do you remember where they were out there in Nebraska, or perhaps even in Colorado later on? Many big blizzards, like we just had? Was the weather...?
- B: Yes, we had...
- R: Good, bad, or the same?
- B: One year, after I was married, my mother-in-law was in the hospital. And Grandma just had to go down. And we got out all right. We went up to the highway, and went down on the highway. That was okay. We got down. Coming back, we couldn't. So we took side road, and here and there, and we worked our way to almost home. And we went out in the ditch. It was so dark. I had overshoes and had a big blanket in the car. My husband had a bad knee. So, I says, "I'll make it." I got out and I walked a few steps and down I went in the ditch. Pretty near up to my waist. I crawled out, and then every once in a while I could see the road and the fencepost. Then I heard our dog bark. I said, "I'm okay now."
- R: Well, good.
- B: And I walked down and called her, her name was Maggie, my daughter here, seen, the pup to her. And our son and daughter-in-law came over, and Betty gave her a bath, she brought her shampoo along over and gave that puppy a bath. And put the crate she came in over the register and a towel over it and draped her over that crate. And that heat fluffed up that hair, and we couldn't decide on a name. I said, "Now look at that puppy. It looks just like Maggie, Chick's wife." That's what we called that pup.
- R: Uh-huh, right.
- B: Oh, it was nice on the farm.
- R: Uh-huh. How did you get to Colorado, or when did you come to Colorado?
- B: In 1920.



- R: In 1920. Were you married then?
- B: Oh, yes. Yeah.
- R: Could you tell me your husband's name and how you came to Colorado?
- B: My husband was Lena Burkard's brother.
- R: Okay. And his first name was what?
- B: Jacob. Jacob Burkard.
- R: And how did you spell your name then?
- B: Burkard? B-u-r-k-a-r-d.
- R: Okay.
- B: That's German, Burkard. And Braun is spelled just like this, uh-huh.
- R: Yes. And was he from Nebraska, too?
- B: No. No, his grandfather and his uncle and his father took up homesteads. The father's homestead was in the middle, and there was a quarter-section that wasn't very good, and they hoped that nobody would take it, so the younger sister could take it up. And then Father Burkard's was on the west end, that's Lena's father, and Uncle Jake's on the east side.
- R: I see.
- B: And they built, when they built the sod house for their father, they made a big room so they could have Sunday school or church in that room.
- R: I see. Now, where was this in Colorado?
- B: Kirk.
- R: At Kirk.
- B: Yes. Maybe you've seen the picture from the foundation of the church and Lena Burkard?
- R: Yes, uh-huh.
- B: Well, that was the church.
- R: That was the church.
- B: Uh-huh, and we lived just a mile north of that.
- R: Uh-huh. And did you live in a sod house then, too, yourself, or that was their parents?
- B: Their parents, yes. And Mother Burkard and him had a sod house.
- R: Do you know about what year they first homesteaded?
- B: Oh, yes. Indeed. My husband was three months old. It was in 1892.
- R: Okay. All right. Uh-huh.

B: And Father Burkard worked for a man that lived along the river, he was an old-timer. And he'd walk back and forth and finally got horses, and, well, they had horses, a team, and he worked for them, and Grandma would hitch up a team and she'd drive out and pick up, you know, that was their fuel.

R: Yes.

B: Then late fall they'd go down the river and bring up a lot of wood. They burned cornstalk and everything they could get. Their first corn, they'd cut with the berries for the horses, with a knife, the long core knife, they call it. Then later on with that machinery and all and when the children were old enough, why, my husband's father and his uncle, they built a sod schoolhouse. Sod. And the floor was just God's ground, and they went down the river and they cut down a tree and they had blocks about so high, put board over them, that was for desks.

R: Fine. Okay. Well, did you meet your husband in Nebraska, then?

B: No, I met him at Culbertson, at my own home. His brother-in-law is the second cousin to my mother. He was married to my husband's oldest sister. And they had a cousin in Eckley and a cousin in Benkelman, and then my mother and her brother and sister. So, the brother-in-law said, "Let's you and I go." His wife didn't want to go with them. She was pregnant. And so they stopped at Hagler and visit them on the farm, stayed overnight. Then they went to Benkelman, and visit there and stayed overnight, and then they came down to Culbertson to visit Mother. And that's how I met my husband. And I never thought much of him, just as a friend of... then, after he got home, he sent a nice letter to the parents, and we did enjoy him, and a little later on, we went to Loveland. Two brothers and my sister, the four of us. And we stopped there, they insisted we stopped at the relatives, you know. My husband's sister and the relative. And that's when I met the older people. And they were nice, I enjoyed, but I never thought of, I just didn't have time to get married. That was a fact. I could have married a number of the boys at Culbertson, and one of them waited two years, but the answer was no, I just couldn't leave my folks. And then there was that baby I had to, oh, I just loved her very, very much. That's the way it went, finally he come down to visit, and he asked Father, and Father said, "That's up to Anna." And Father later on said, "If you love him enough to marry him, go ahead. He'll try to get along without you." He said if his uncle, his mother's oldest brother and my father went to school together, and they were confirmed together. They were married the same year, and he said, "If he's half as good as his uncle, he'll do for a son-in-law."

But it was a year later, after that. We were both 27. His birthday's in March and mine's in November. It's that many months. He built a house right away. Well, after the schoolhouse, they started the church, and there was the foundation later on, the church was moved into Kirk. And you have a picture of the foundation with Lena. And then after the church, why, Father Burkard and some other men started the bank, and it's still going. And it's the biggest little bank in Colorado.

R: Okay. Ah-hah.

B: We used to go to the movie in town like the St. Francis in Burlington and so on, and when my husband would write a check, we'd look at it and laugh. But during the Depression when big banks went broke, that went right on.

R: That speaks very well for it.

B: Oh, yes. And he was a member of the Board of Directors for years, till he was 82.

R: This is your father-in-law.

B: Father-in-law. Then Lena took over. And she's still a director. And Laura, my daughter, has I don't know how many shares.

R: In the bank. Yeah. Okay.

(END OF TAPE 2)

R: This is Anna Burkard on March 17, 1977, and this is the beginning of the third tape. So you lived at Kirk for 77 years?

B: Yes.

R: Uh-huh. And...

B: Oh, no, not that long.

R: Can't quite be.

B: Oh, no. We were married in 1920, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70...

R: 1970 you mean.

B: We were married in 1920 and we lived, 50, oh, yes, I've been here in Denver eleven years, too.

R: Oh, okay. All right. So, '77, about 65, 66...

B: Something like that.

R: Okay. Those were good years on the farm.

B: Wonderful years. Just absolutely...farm life isn't as bad if people just would arrange things, you know. Now, he built, when he built the house, he had the water, the running water in it. The first year we had a barrel near the mill and it run in the barrel and from the barrel into the stock tank. The next spring they built a milk house. And

then he put, they were the frames from a truck. The blacksmith evened it up and we put them up and put a tank in the milk house, way up high. And we had running water, and we hired a young man and he built, he dug a sewer, and we had running water in the house. Then we, now, I don't know just how long later it was when a man came and he was selling the farmers what they call, oh, it's a little windmill. And it generates electricity. They call it a wind charger. And they put it up near the house and we had a number of batteries in the basement, he had electrician from Burlington come up, and he told him he wanted wire in case the REA, there was rumors of the REA coming through the country. If it ever comes through here, so that I can just hook on. And that's what he did. And we had nice light as long as we had the wind charge and it was pretty nice. And it didn't cost a lot, it was the first one.

R: Is that right?

B: We got a good price on it. And they traded the cow in on a washing machine. Oh, he was quite a trader.

R: Yeah, I bet.

B: A guy came around selling pianos, and no, he just couldn't this time, but shortly after that a farmer came, a newcomer, and he wanted to buy some grain for seed, and he sold him some, and they got to talking, and he said, "You wouldn't be seeing the girls playing around ever." Six, seven, something like that, and husband said "Why?" Well, he said, "we moved from the house and it's full of mice, and it's a brand new piano, and we haven't even opened it up, and we're afraid the mice would get in and ruin it." Yes, and my husband asked, you know, what he wanted, and he said, "Well, I'll take a milk cow. We don't have one." And he traded pigs and a milk cow and I don't know what else, we had a brand-new piano, [inaudible].

R: Oh, yes. Uh-huh. Did you play the piano?

B: I did before. I took music lessons at home, but I couldn't find middle C anymore. But the girls took music lessons.

R: Now, you had two girls? Is that right?

B: Yes, and a son. The son is the youngest.

R: Okay. So three children.

B: He bought his grandfather's homestead. Just the proudest boy. He was in World War II, stationed in Japan. He came home with malaria and, what else? Kidney infection.

R: Oh, my.

B: Bad. He pretty near lost it. They were married just a couple of years.

- R: Did he marry another German girl, or did he...?
- B: No, she was American girl, but she's a pretty nice daughter-in-law.
- R: That's good, that's good. And he's still out, then, in eastern Colorado?
- B: No, no. He had to sell, he had to get off of the farm. And he didn't, he said, "Father, I just can't see anyone else living in that house." And so he sold it, got a good price for it, and they bought a house in Fort Morgan, that's where they live.
- R: Oh, yes. I see.
- B: And they like it really well. I don't know why, but they had some relatives lived there. Just, not really relatives, friends, and they thought that Fort Morgan was it. And it is a nice, quiet town. Bought a place and applied for work at some machinery place, I think they're national...
- R: National Harvester or something?
- B: No, I mean they're, just all over the United States, where there's farming. And the manager happened to be a man from Burlington. He run a store like that. And he's still there, and the daughter-in-law worked there for a while, and on Christmas when Penny was home for Christmas vacation, she worked there, also. Penny went to school at Greeley.
- R: Now, who is Penny?
- B: Penny is our son's only child.
- R: I see.
- B: Yes. She went one year to Greeley, and then in the summer they have what they call a community college at Fort [Collins? Morgan?], and she took four short courses during the summer. She's an excellent student. And then she found out she could take the same courses there, that she could in Greeley. So she stayed in the second year there, and then in the summer she took extra courses. Now she again in Greeley, her third year. Last spring I called after school was out, I said, "Penny, how'd you make out with your tests?" "Not very good" "Why, what's the matter?" "Oh, I got one B."
- R: Oh-ho-ho-ho. Not very good. (Laughing) That makes us smile, doesn't it? That's good, yeah.
- B: Not only that, she drives a car like a professional. She's always, "Daddy, how do you do this? How do you do that?" She changes a tire faster than a boy. She drives back and forth, that is, she drives there Monday morning and comes home Friday night. She's quite a girl.

R: Now, where does she live now?

B: Fort Morgan.

R: In Fort Morgan. And then goes to Greeley to school.

B: Yes, um-hmm.

R: I see. Well, let me ask you, as you think back over the years and on the farm, in Kirk in Colorado there, did you try to keep any German traditions alive, or did you become American right from the beginning almost?

B: A mixture. We felt the American way was better than the German, we did it the American way. Like butcher. We made our sausage different than the Americans. We never gave that up. We churned, made our own butter and cottage cheese, and we made our own noodles, and baked rye bread, white bread, and everything else. And I baked both raised doughnuts, and I'd like to see someone bake them better.

R: Uh-huh, right.

B: They were really good. We had, we belonged to a missionary society, and I was supposed to bake ten dozen rolls. And the first few dozen I had out, the husband took out to church, and then one of the neighbors stopped in and got some more. But I had more than that. It was unbelievable, but the flour was so much nicer than what you have now. My husband would take his wheat to Idalia, and there was a flour mill, and there he came home with the flour, and that was very, very nice.

R: Was this a Lutheran church, the missionary society that you belonged to?

B: No, the Evangelical Church. The First Evangelical of the United Brethren. And then in early years, many years ago, it was the Methodist, they were members of the Methodist Church. Then they didn't agree, so they split. One became the United Evangelical, and then the United Brethren, they split, and some came to unite, so it was the Evangelical United Brethren. And now they're Methodist again.

R: Oh, I see.

B: United Methodist. And I'm a member of the Kirk church. I still send them a check occasionally. But I had to go on the bus and transfer to go to a Methodist church. And here's a Baptist church just a block down. Used to belong to the Moody Bible School.

R: Oh, yes.

B: And he preaches nice sermons, so why, we only have one God? So I go down there.

R: Well, good, that's fine.

B: We walk down and come. They're very nice people.

- R: The church, then, was one of the traditions that you kept alive in your family?
- B: Oh, yes, oh yes.
- R: Very much so. Were there many other German families in the Kirk area?
- B: Oh, many of them. Yes. Many of them. There was John Hill, lived at Joes, he lived near a Mennonite community.
- R: Yes, I know of that one. Uh-huh.
- B: They were nice people. They were very nice people, and we met quite a few of them. And finally, Uncle Hill and Aunt Mary, Aunt Mary was Father Burkard's youngest sister, and they joined the church.
- R: The Mennonite Church?
- B: Um-hmm. We often went over there for, when they had their programs and all. We knew many of those people. And we liked them. They were good people. There were three brothers married three sisters, and I'd never heard that before.
- R: Oh, my. No. That's rather unique.
- B: Yes. And the oldest one, Mary, her name was Mary, and she played the organ, and then later on the piano.
- R: Is this [inaudible], by any chance?
- B: Yes, exactly.
- R: Okay. I've heard the name in connection with Joes.
- B: They're really, we enjoyed them a lot.
- R: Well, now, on your farm. Was it beet farming at all there?
- B: At Kirk?
- R: Uh-huh.
- B: No. It was not under irrigation.
- R: Okay. This is dryland country.
- B: Dryland. Wheat and corn and...
- R: Yeah. Well, you see, I wanted to make that point, because so often when I talk to the German people in Colorado, they tell me about the sugar beet experience, but your experience was different, was it not?
- B: In Nebraska, my father raised sugar beets. And around Kirk, but there are so many farms, now, under irrigation, and I don't know how that's gonna work out.
- R: There's not enough water to go around, is there?
- B: I don't think so. And I own a farm, all the land that we owned when my husband was alive. I won't sell it.

- R: Yeah. Hang onto it. It's good to have.
- B: We had, I don't know. We had, during the Depression, my husband bought half a section, we paid eight dollars for it, and I was offered a hundred dollars. I said, "It's not for sale, and it won't be for sale as long as I live."
- R: Yeah. Prices, they're unbelievable, aren't they?
- B: I think he paid \$1600 for a quarter section of farmland, and that is a beautiful quarter. I could sell it for \$200 an acre, and I won't. I just will not. I made up my mind the children were gonna have those farms.
- R: Good. Yeah, that's a nice thing to pass on, um-hmm.
- B: You see, it's been in the family, now, since 1892, when they took up the homesteads.
- R: Um-hmm, that's right. That's good.
- B: And being born in Russia, I was the fifth generation on the same place, and you know, that kind of...
- R: Ah, yes, that sticks to you, doesn't it?
- B: Yeah, it stays with you.
- R: Were the middle-thirties, was the Depression harder than other times for you out there?
- B: I'm almost ashamed to say it, no.
- R: Well, don't be. But I just wonder about that.
- B: That quarter-section I said was so nice. A man was farming it, he was from Missouri, a bachelor. And he stopped in, he said he was going to Missouri, and they had a grain there, and "I think it's gonna work here in Colorado," it was called [coase?] If you've ever heard of it.
- R: No, I don't know this one.
- B: Do you know what cane is?
- R: Yes.
- B: Well, the seeds are bigger and they don't grow as tall as cane, and though they don't have the foliage. It's more of a grain than food for cattle.
- R: I see, yes, uh-huh.
- B: He said, "I just stopped in, I thought maybe you would like to try it," and my husband said yes. And he said, "Bring me a hundred pounds." That goes quite far, you know, [inaudible].
- R: Surely, yeah.



- B: And he did, with nine dollars a hundred. Husband broke up forty acres of sod and worked it up, oh, he sure worked it up and planted in that [coase?].
- R: Um-hmm. Do you know how you spell that?
- B: C-o-e--I don't know.
- R: Okay. All right. That's fine. I just wondered.
- B: And he planted that [coase ?], it came up, and one of the neighbors called it "Jerusalem corn."
- R: Hmmm. Jerusalem corn.
- B: Jerusalem corn.
- R: How come?
- B: I don't know. And the corn made about eight bushels at the best, and when it brought ten, that was extra good that year. It was, and that [coase ?] made eighteen bushels per acre. And husband saw fit what he needed, and the rest he sold for seed in the spring, \$2.00 a bushel, so that was our first year of the Depression. And he raised a lot of hogs, and next spring, our, next spring, yes, he went, he had too many shoats, he didn't think he should feed them out. Use up all his feed. He went to Stratton, they had a very good sale barn there, and he met old Mr. Gobel, and when they, he was a young boy, he'd go with his grandfather, cut across the country to Burlington and there they'd stop and water their horses and eat their lunch. Well, he asked him how he was getting along and what he was doing here, and he said, "I'm buying shoats for a serum company in Denver." And he said, "What age, what weight," "Oh, anything up to forty pounds. But there, if you have cholera or erysiphelas on the farm, they can't use it." He said, "So far, I haven't been able to find it." He asked him how many he wanted, and he told him how many hundred he wanted, he said, "I can, I have about a hundred." Instead of keep selling the shoats over for breeding, why, he kept the old ones and sold every one of them. Well, for butchering, he kept some. And hogs were eight, no, they were six dollars a hundred, fat, and he paid twelve dollars and a half for a little pig. And he told them he had some and he thought his father had about thirty, and he said, "Okay, we'll be out in the morning." They came out in the morning and there he got his money. That was the second year.
- R: I see.
- B: The third year, he got a letter from the serum company. It said, "If you have shoats, we'll buy all you have."
- R: Oh.

- B: So he wrote and told them to come down and get them. So that's the third summer. And, let's see, what was the fourth summer? It was, I don't remember just what happened. Oh. Wheat was some 58 cents a bushel or something. And my husband filled his granary with wheat. Next year it was \$1.10.
- R: Ah, it's gone up, then.
- B: That was the fourth year, yeah. He hauled it to Stratton, and so the Depression didn't hurt us any at all.
- R: Was it terribly windy, or was it dusty?
- B: Windy and dry.
- R: Did your fields blow badly?
- B: No. Not too bad.
- R: Oh. You're lucky, then.
- B: Yes, not too bad. But they're blowing this time.
- R: Yes, it's been bad this year. That's very true.
- B: Yes. I feel sorry for the renter, that's my husband's nephew. It was his father that introduced me to my husband.
- R: Ah-hah. Okay. Right. Ah-hah. Well, then, what, I mean, did you have much association with Denver over those years at all, or you just came...?
- B: No. I had a sister living here, and we'd come up sometimes. We spent Christmas here one time, we had a wonderful time. They had a number of apartments, and we just...
- R: You didn't know anything about Globeville, then.
- B: About what?
- R: Globeville, as such?
- B: No.
- R: They tell me that that is an area where many of the Germans were in Denver, but you really had no contact with that.
- B: No, no connection at all. We visited my sister here, and that's all. She died last summer, her husband first, and then my sister, and left me alone. From the family of seven children. Yeah, it makes you feel kind of lonesome.
- R: Yes, I imagine. But, you strike me as a very lively person. That's a marvelous way to be.
- B: We were here about a year, and Doris seen an article, and she said, "Mother, you ought to go and join those that they call themselves Sunshine Club," and they met at a certain church, so I can take Number 6 and it stops right by the church. So I took

Number 6 and got off of the bus and walked across the church, and there stood a woman. She said, "Are you a member of this club?" I said, "No." I said, "I'd like to join if I like it." She said, "I am, too." We got to talking, they used to live near Idalia, wherever that is. And we joined together, and we're still friends.

R: Very good, very good.

B: And then many of them belonged to the church, what they call the Berkeley Church, it's a church a block west of Regis College, if you know where that is. And there we sewed cancer pads on Tuesday. So on Tuesdays we'd go up and sew cancer pads. I had arthritis from here, sometimes I have to stop and, oh, it just hurts like needles. So, we go there on Tuesdays, and we go to the Silver Leaf Club twice a month. We used to have speakers, and sometimes some of, well, one grandma had a granddaughter who took dancing lessons, ballet. And she brought her granddaughter in to dance for us. Oh, it was just beautiful.

R: Yeah, I bet. I bet.

B: And we've had different ministers who traveled quite a bit, some of the retired minister, they'd show us slides. Especially one minister, his wife was sickly, and she insisted he had to take that trip they had planned on. And, now I don't know whether he took her to the hospital to stay or a nursing home. Anyway, she had good care. And he showed some of the most beautiful pictures you ever saw. And another minister and his wife went to Japan on a freighter, and he had pictures of the temples and on their clothes and parks, and they were gorgeous.

R: Right, right. Have you joined this American Historical Society of Germans from Russia?

B: Yes. I was at the convention last summer.

R: Okay, that's right, oh yes, you mentioned that earlier when you mentioned Mr. Reisbeck's name, too, uh-huh.

B: I have to call and find out to make sure whether he was a neighbor.

R: Right, right. I'm about out of tape here, I think, but do you remember when your husband applied for naturalization, or was he born here, maybe?

B: No, he was born in Russia.

R: About three months old when they homesteaded.

B: Yes, when they left Russia, and he was born in Russia. Both the boys.

R: What town? Did you tell me that?

B: Walter, Russia.

- R: In Walter as well. Okay. Do you recall applying for citizenship?
- B: His father did, and those that are under eighteen...
- R: Automatically.
- B: Yeah.
- R: Okay, fine. All right.
- B: And if you marry an American citizen, then...
- R: Then you become a citizen, too. So that's what happened to you, I assume.
- B: That's what happened to me. We were married in '20, and in '22 they changed it. So husband wrote in, and I still have the letter.
- R: Do you?
- B: Yes. So nobody can send me back to Russia. (Laughing)
- R: Nobody's gonna do that. (Laughing) Oh, goodness, no. Ah-hah. Okay. Well, any last-minute advice you'd like to...?
- B: I don't know what else. I just can't think of anything. Are you going to San Francisco?
- R: I'm not, but one of my colleagues, Mr. Heitman, is going to San Francisco next year.
- B: Laura and I planned on going, if at all possible.
- R: Oh. That will be a good convention. It's a lovely city. You may have been there before.
- B: We've been there before. Last year we went to Texas and from there to San Diego.
- LB: I don't know, I figured it up. You know, after we get to the city, it costs about \$172 for the three days, or four or five or whatever it is.
- B: We don't care.
- LB: No, but the (end of side of tape). You say you're running out of tape?
- R: This is the second one. This is the second of your tapes. And I have just a little bit left here on mine.
- LB: If I'd had good sense, I'd have brought you one.
- R: Oh, thank you, no, no, no. I do have extra ones here, but I was just at the end of this tape, really.
- B: First we went to the Park School.
- R: And that's where they called you.
- B: And we sat with the beginners. And the teachers was very nice. Standing in line, and march in and sometimes they'd step on our feet and called us Russians. And my sister

had quite a temper, and a black boy called her that, and she hauled off there and she just hit him, I'll tell you, she hit him. He never bothered us again.

R: I'm sure.

B: And some of the others, but I didn't, I just pushed away and let them go. Just thought, "You don't know any better."

R: Sure.

B: It never bothered me. I wouldn't let it bother me.

R: Well, that's a good attitude.

B: Yes, it is.

R: And it never happened, then, out in the Kirk area?

B: Oh, no, I never heard anybody, because really, the Germans built that part of the country. The Mennonites on their place, you know, and then the Germans, and like I said, my husband's parents and his uncle and father were the first ones there. And then the Bretthauers, that's Mother's youngest sister, the one that lived to be one hundred and twenty, they were...

R: A hundred and twenty?

LB: A hundred and two.

B: A hundred and two. What's the matter with me?

R: Okay.

B: Sorry.

R: Oh, I've kept you talking too long this afternoon.

B: Oh, this is... (Gap in Tape)

R: How did they cut their grain?

B: With scythes.

R: With scythes.

B: With a scyth.

R: Big, long one?

B: Handle, and the scyth was probably that long, a little bit on the curved side. And they had, I guess they called them whetstone, about so long, and shaped a little different. The children, there were three of them, and the children, they had company, boys, with them, and they didn't go around, so they cut them in two and broke them in two. Grandfather put them on the chair and set beside them and asked them if they were happy, "No, Grandpa, are you gonna do it again? Oh, Grandpa," but it was too late, they had to buy new ones. Oh.

R: Oh, my. Part of the stories that we remember. Yeah.

B: That was a wonderful childhood we had. Father fixed something to eat, then he took them to the granary and he had a sack tied in the middle and open on both ends, one for white flour and one for rye flour. Then he'd go this way, and they'd tie them, they had tears running down their cheeks. Yeah.

R: After being with your grandfather.

B: Being so kind. That was Grandfather. He was the one that taught us, if you do wrong, no matter what it is, you'll pay for it. Yeah.

R: What was his name again?

B: John Jacob Braun. Johann Jacob.

R: Johann Jacob. Okay.

B: He was a wonderful grandpa.

END OF TAPE