

Interview with Sam Eszlinger (SE)

Conducted by Delmar Zimmerman (DZ)

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Ashley, North Dakota

Transcription by Margaret Templin

DZ: Today is May 12, 1997. I am Delmar Zimmerman a volunteer interviewer for the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, North Dakota States University Libraries in Fargo, ND. It is a pleasure to visit with Sam Eszlinger in Ashley, ND, on a cool spring day. Before I go on, Sam Eszlinger is an uncle of mine. Whenever we get together I always say I have two Uncle Sams', Uncle Sam Eszlinger and Uncle Sam in the government. What is your name, what is your date of birth and where were you born?

SE: Sam Eszlinger. May 21, 1907.

DZ: So that means that you will have a birthday next week and you will be how old?

SE: I will be 90 years old.

DZ: An even 90 years old, that's a pretty good age, and where were you born?

SE: South Russia, Friedorf.

DZ: What is the name of your father and in what village in South Russia did his family once live?

SE: My father's name was Salomon. He lived in Gross Liebental.

DZ: Gros Liebental which was

SE: Which was a village in the southwest, near Odessa, Russia

DZ: When and where did he die?

SE: He died January 5, 1943 near Danzig, North Dakota in his home.

DZ: Where is he buried?

SE: About a mile and a half north of his farm home.

DZ: Out in a rural cemetery near his home. What is the name of your mother and what village in Russia did you mother's family once live?

SE: Carolina Salser.

DZ: What village did she live in?

SE: In Buzenowa (?SP 38), South Russia.

DZ: When did she die?

SE: February, 1957.

- DZ:** Okay, where did she die?
- SE:** In the Ashley hospital.
- DZ:** In the hospital when she was still living on the farm near Danzig?
- SE:** Yes, the hospital was new. It was the first year that the hospital was going. It was the beginning of the hospital.
- DZ:** When your dad died, there was no such thing as a hospital nearby?
- SE:** He died at home in the house.
- DZ:** Where is your mother buried?
- SE:** On the same place as my dad is buried, which was his own land.
- DZ:** How many brothers and sisters did you have in your family?
- SE:** I had seven sisters and six brothers. There was fourteen in the family.
- DZ:** Can you give the names of your brothers and sisters and the order of birth either from the oldest to the youngest or the youngest to the oldest?
- SE:** Can I say just as they were born?
- DZ:** Sure.
- SE:** First was Pauline, then Jacob, and then Carrie, then myself, then Willie, John, Maggie, Fred, then one died, then Lydia, Rose, Emma, Eugenia. I left one out. I forgot Edwin, he was next to Lydia, after Lydia.
- DZ:** Okay, between Lydia and Rose was Edwin. Do you know the name of the one that died?
- SE:** Conrad. He was a year and some months old.
- DZ:** That was a good size family. I just have two brothers and I can barely remember! Do you have recollections of what your mother told you about the old country, anything she might have told you about living in South Russia?
- SE:** When they had company in those early years they talked about how they left over there and what they had over there. As the farmers went out from their little dorf to the field they had to stay out all day and come back in the evening. Some stayed out for the weekend. There were wolves out there who were dangerous. Some people got eaten up by the wolves. Some said their horses were eaten up, there was nothing left but the hand plow and the harness. I don't know but I heard this when she talked to the company. I just listened to what they said.
- DZ:** You remember that after all these years?
- SE:** And the cow they had to keep close to the house. They milked the cow and then kept it close and they watched it. Wolves were bad there.
- DZ:** A dorf was like what?

SE: The dorf was what they called the Friedorf. And they looked like a little village or colony they called it. That was where they left from.

My mother was homesick, she said, "We left everything we had. Just the bundles of clothes we took along. And the dog, we loved so well. They had to give up the dog. When she was settled in the place here for two or three years or whatever it was, she was still so homesick. She said, "If only I could see the dog once more."

DZ: That shows that they were homesick for everything.

SE: Yes, for everything and if they had the money to go back they would have gone back.

DZ: They didn't have enough money.

SE: They barely had enough money to come here. They had to have help to come here.

DZ: You remember that from your mother. Do you remember anything what you dad told you about the old country or was that pretty much the same?

SE: Well, it would have been the same I guess when they visited. I couldn't say anything that he said. He was glad he was out and here because there was war in Russia. He got drafted and so they hurried to get out of there. They were on the ship for 16 days. Towards the last my mother said she just thought they would never see daylight or earth (land) anymore. It was dark and all there was water.

DZ: Going back to the war. They were promised at one time they would not have to fight in the war.

SE: I don't know. My dad was in training. Everyone had to take some training. When the time came, they called them up. They said some fighting had started already. The relatives said, "We're out here already, we'll send the money." So my folks were able to come.

DZ: How many of the family members came over from Russia at that time?

SE: I was the baby, the youngest one. There was the folks and four kids.

DZ: The folks and four kids. So that was quite a group to take care of on the way over here (to America).

SE: They said I made a lot of trouble.

DZ: By doing what?

SE: Well, along the road for a while I got sick. I told them afterwards when they said I made them enough trouble I said, "I didn't want to go and you took me!"

DZ: So you wanted to give them a bad time?

SE: Yes. There was a lot of seasick on the ship too.

DZ: Do you remember when you were sick?

SE: No. I don't remember anything.

DZ: How old were you at that time?

SE: A year and some months.

- DZ:** Pauline the oldest how old was she?
- SE:** She was about four or five years or so.
- DZ:** So all four of you were pretty small.
- SE:** My brother Jason says he remembers when we got off the ship. They had kind of a wooden sidewalk from the ship over to the walkway. It was awful stormy. He said he had a little new cap on. He was so glad he had the cap when they left for the road. The storm blew that cap off and it went down into the water and he jumped and hollered. One of the helpers there had a long stick and he reached down and got that cap back up again for him. Jason was so glad he had his cap again.
- DZ:** Is that right. When you came over here you said earlier you showed me a poster of some kind from Ellis Island. Did you get that then or did you get it later on?
- SE:** My kids' grandchildren gave a donation when they remodeled this Ellis Island. They asked for gifts and they gave a donation and I got this certificate.
- DZ:** To show that you got off at Ellis Island?
- SE:** Yes. They said that my name should be on that memorial or whatever they got there. I don't know how many hundreds of dollars the kids spent on that.
- DZ:** Have you gone there to see if your name is on it?
- SE:** No.
- DZ:** You never got there to see if your name was on the memorial.
- SE:** Julie always said we were going over there someday to see that but we are always on the way. I don't believe we are going.
- DZ:** Well, I'm going to remember that if I ever go over there. I'm going to see it if I can find it.
- SE:** We talk about it once and a while but we're getting old.
- DZ:** That really something to have your name on that.
- SE:** That something, like your name on the memorial over here in Washington, with this World War memorial with all the names on it. You see people there every day.
- DZ:** That would be quite an honor to have your name on it.
- SE:** Just finding it....
- DZ:** That would be the next toughest thing! Do you remember family stories about ancestral German villages of South Russia? Maybe some of the other villages besides Radorf?
- SE:** I wouldn't know of any.
- DZ:** Do you remember any other names of villages?
- SE:** I really don't know that.

- DZ:** It was a long time ago. Do you remember times when your ancestors wished they were back in the homeland? I guess you have answered that already.
- SE:** The first year. I'll never forget they said... About the trip and how much they would like to get back but they were not able to.
- DZ:** And like you said if they were homesick for the dog they must have been really homesick.
- SE:** Well, my mother said more than once, (GERMAN DIALOGUE 180).
- DZ:** One more time. Do you remember if your family ever received letters from people in the old country?
- SE:** I really don't remember. My dad did a lot of writing but he did the writing to those relatives that were scattered around like in Winnipeg. He knew where some of his friends were. He knew they were out here. He did a lot of writing.
- DZ:** Now when your dad left with you four children, was that all that were over there or were there some of his brothers over there yet?
- SE:** No. We were the last ones that left. All the rest were over here in America. Some were in Herreid, South Dakota. Some were around Ashley, North Dakota and all those relatives helped to get my dad over here. He was the last one except one of his brothers who stayed in Russia. He went to the army and never came back. We never saw him again.
- DZ:** Who was he?
- SE:** He was Philip. He was called to war. He was a soldier and something went wrong and they sent him to Siberia and nothing is sure about him.
- DZ:** You just lost track of him. Your dad was the last of his family to come over here except Philip. He went into the army and was sent to Siberia. I've seen some tapes and films of people who were sent to Siberia. Boy oh boy that wasn't very nice. Those pictures I saw weren't very nice to look at. They didn't treat those people very well, those who were sent up to Siberia.
- SE:** They said they sent them there for punishment. There was no law as to how they were to punish them. It was a cold country. They had to work or whatever there; they had to go along with what went on.
- DZ:** Right. What language did you speak as a child?
- SE:** German. When I went to school I walked to school with Pauline and Jake. There were a lot of Jews living around here. Most of the kids in school were Jewish.
- DZ:** Was that in the Danzig area?
- SE:** That was right up here in the dead end, seven miles north. There was a school house in the Leddia district. Our district didn't have a school house. So we walked just out of the Danzig district into the Leddia district. That was the closest school.
- DZ:** And there were some Jewish kids there? Did you find out something of the Jewish, how they lived or the Jewish life?

- SE:** They were just small farmers that lived on the farm just like our dad started. In a few years the Jews all disappeared. There was the Silverlakes. Rapaport (SP), Wiseman(SP), Reuben, Slessinger (SP 220).
- DZ:** There was one I was thinking of. I was waiting to see if you were going to mention him. He was a cattle buyer, that I remember, Dorffman.
- SE:** Greenburg. They were all Jews.
- DZ:** There was a Jew who owned that land that Ervin Bates was on at one time. Was that Luex or Lux (SP 229?) He lived out in California, I'm not quite sure of the name.
- SE:** Lewie Reuban. The house is still in town that he built at that time.
- DZ:** Is that right?
- SE:** That was Lewie Reuban. He had a lot of land. I even rented some from him one time. I rented some from his daughters who lived in Minneapolis, MN. They still have some land around here.
- DZ:** What was the name of those ladies that you rented from?
- SE:** Sally was one daughter, a Dorffman. She was married to an Auburn (SP 239).
- DZ:** You must have listed eight or ten Jewish families. There must have been a lot of them?
- SE:** They were mostly all Jews even in town in the businesses. There were the Greenmeyers, in the grocery stores, there was Sam Rye (SP 244). I can't think of them fast enough.
- DZ:** You said most of them left. Did they go out west or east or south?
- SE:** What we found out or as much as I remember. They always said they went to Minneapolis, MN. Some did but if they all did I don't know. They were farming small with just a few horses, and some were businessmen in town.
- DZ:** They must have been pretty successful then because they had this land that other people rented out.
- SE:** Well, they mostly ran it their way. Like if the other Germans came in from the outside like our folks, they were a little bit different. They kind of lost out and they left.
- DZ:** Yes, I noticed when I drove in. I drove by the Jewish cemetery. They still keep that up, I see.
- SE:** Oh yes. We saw it on a tape the other day. I was on the tape about a year ago.
- DZ:** Who keeps it up?
- SE:** The state or somebody, I don't know. They always hire somebody who keeps it clean.
- DZ:** Because there aren't any Jews around here now are there?
- SE:** There is one grave marker there which was Ahambach (? 263). He was in the store which is the clothing store now. It is empty now, here in town.
- DZ:** Right now are there any Jews living in Ashley?

- SE:** No. The last one left a few years ago. Coon (SP 270), he was a dentist. He fixed my teeth and I have still got them. He was a good dentist.
- DZ:** I remember the name. Do you remember, you said you talked German? Do you remember the dialect or what they call it? Just ordinary German then?
- SE:** Yes. We called it Deutsch.
- DZ:** Deutsch and Hoff Deutsch. What were some of your childhood chores that you enjoyed doing when you were a youngster?
- SE:** To do around the farm?
- DZ:** Yes.
- SE:** When we were on that farm from the beginning we didn't have a fence for the few cattle we had and we had to watch the cattle. Watch them so they would stay home or get them home in the evenings for the night. They had a little pen. We would put them in there and in the morning we let them out. We had to watch them for a year or so and then we had a bigger fence.
- DZ:** Did you like to do that?
- SE:** Well, we didn't know any better. We just enjoyed being outdoors, catching gophers with a string. We didn't have any traps so we used a string. We sat there and watched and when the gopher came out we pulled the string to catch them.
- DZ:** Is that right?
- SE:** Then when we caught them we played with them. We thought we would lead them around but they led us around.
- DZ:** They led you around by the string?
- SE:** Yeah.
- DZ:** What other chores, if any, did you have besides that?
- SE:** There was the farm work and the harvest. My first job was to drive the header box. Any kid could drive the two horses for anybody that had a header and box. A kid could drive almost as soon as he was nine or ten or so. You could guide the horses, drive them around with the header. That was my first job. I did that for Adam Birch, he was a neighbor of ours at that time.
- DZ:** Was that fun?
- SE:** Well, it was a man's job and I thought I was doing good.
- DZ:** Did you ever get any dust or straw down your back?
- SE:** Oh, yes. I went down the stack, slid down or fell down.
- DZ:** What was it like on a nice clear day when there wasn't any wind?

- SE:** Some days it was hot and dusty. The horses had flies that went after them. You had to watch them, you didn't want to stand or stop.
- DZ:** Sometimes when you didn't want to do the chores that your dad wanted you to do, or if you didn't do it or you didn't do it right how were you disciplined? What did he do?
- SE:** Oh, no, He just told us. He taught us by words so we understood it.
- DZ:** When he said do it, you would do it?
- SE:** When he told us to do this or do that, well, we had to do it. If it wasn't done right then he explained it to us. We had no problem, he wasn't rough with us.
- DZ:** So in those days when someone told somebody to do something they would do it?
- SE:** We didn't get around in those days like the young kids do these days. We were home and that was where we belonged. When it was chore time in the evening or in the morning, whatever it was, milking the cows or going to get them. Everyone had his milk stool or his milk pail or his cow to milk. This was mine and this was the others. We were all working together.
- DZ:** Worked and played together.
- SE:** Yes.
- DZ:** What was it like in your school?
- SE:** We walked to school most always. I started before I was old enough, I didn't want to stay home so I went along. The other three went and I should have stayed home but I didn't want to. I went to school from the time I was six years old.
- DZ:** How far did you have to walk?
- SE:** Just about a mile.
- DZ:** That far?
- SE:** Early in the morning and back again in the late afternoon. When the weather was real cold or snowy, Dad took us in a little sled and when Pauline and Jake got bigger we drove the horses and kept them there sometimes. But most of the time we walked.
- DZ:** How much education did you have?
- SE:** Just past the eighth grade. There was no time to go to graduate. I should have written the exam. I was hired out for spring work. School wasn't out yet, the farm was going and I was suppose to start farming. We didn't take time to go to the examination. We didn't need that we had to go to work. School was out and my schooling was done, no diploma or anything. Maybe I wouldn't have passed, I don't know. That why I can't say I got a diploma. None of us went to high school.
- DZ:** And everybody was pretty successful.
- SE:** You could call it that, maybe.
- DZ:** Were there kids of other nationalities in your school or were they mostly Germans?

- SE:** The first two years there were mostly Jews. The Johnsons were Norwegians, and Allen Jestrell and his family were Irish. They just called them Irish. Jestrell was his name but they just called him Irish.
- DZ:** Are any of their kids still around here?
- SE:** They disappeared before school was out.
- DZ:** When you were in school what were some of the subjects you had? Pretty much the same as they have today or what?
- SE:** It was beginning reading, writing, arithmetic, and spelling. On Friday night we had a spell down. Whoever was the last one standing was the best one.
- DZ:** What about playground experience. What kind of games or equipment did you have?
- SE:** The games were Pom-pom Pull Away, that was a running game. The ball game was throwing the ball over the roof, we called it Andy I Over. Hawks and Goose, was another game we played in the fresh snow with a wagon wheel and run around it. Sometimes we had the teacher out playing with us. We played so well and we had so much fun. One time the superintendent came when we were all playing and it should have been school time.
- DZ:** What happened then?
- SE:** I think the teacher got a lesson from the superintendent. He came unexpected on horseback, and there he was.
- DZ:** What about the teachers, what were they like?
- SE:** They usually came from out of state. We had one from Indiana, his name was Sam Rott.
- DZ:** You still remember his name.
- SE:** Yes. He came back up here for three winters, I think. The last fall he came he came with a Model T. He had it cut off and he put a little box put in the back. He drove it sometime in the winter but it was too hard to start. So, he walked to school from where ever he boarded. When it was warm he fixed it up again and started for home. There was another teacher from Indiana and his name was Ervin Clark Glen. He was a good teacher, we liked him anyhow.
- DZ:** Did a teacher ever stay at your place?
- SE:** No. When I was not home anymore and my dad had a bigger house, Rebecca Kessler stayed with our folks. Then me, Jake, and Pauline were gone already.
- DZ:** Kessler sounds like a name from around here. Was she from around here?
- SE:** Kessler was the implement dealer here in town. Their girls were school teachers.
- DZ:** Is there anything else about the school or education we should say?
- SE:** I don't think we had much of an education.
- DZ:** Well you learned to read and write.

- SE:** That one room school was all I got. Later when I didn't go to school anymore they built a new one.
- DZ:** In the same place?
- SE:** No, on the white place. They had four schools in the district but I was done already.
- DZ:** How far from your place was it?
- SE:** It was in the other direction just north west.
- DZ:** There is nothing there anymore now days.
- SE:** No. They were sold and the buildings moved off.
- DZ:** Let's switch a little now to religion. In what way was religion and the Church an important part of your upbringing?
- SE:** Oh, that was way different then from the way it is now. Like there was no church when I was real small. Then the neighbors started a church in the school house. First in the homes then finally they had the right to go to the school house. It was in the school for a number of years. Finally as there was more members they bought a building and made a church.
- DZ:** How did they decide whose home it would be in?
- SE:** That was easy. Some had a small house and they couldn't do it. Some had a bigger place and we had church in their home. Later when the school was available, they got in the school, so it stayed.
- DZ:** Did they have a minister then that came?
- SE:** I remember he came walking for the first ones. They were here maybe once a month or so.
- DZ:** From town, did they walk in from town?
- SE:** They walked in from town or caught a ride which way they wanted to go. I remember they would come to our house sometimes on Saturday nights and he would stay until Sunday. They would have services and stay to have noon lunch then we had to hitch up the sled and take them to town, take them home.
- DZ:** Then when he was gone and you would get someone else.
- SE:** Then what would happen the next three weeks or so would be, a new one would find his way there, walking or whatever, or he would catch a ride.
- DZ:** Would you say religion and church was a very important part of your life at that time?
- SE:** Not at all. I didn't know there were so many kinds until later.
- DZ:** But religion was pretty important? Your folks were pretty strict?
- SE:** All those farmers, the new-comers were strong for church. When somebody moved in, they looked around to see where there was a church and then settled where there was a church started already.
- DZ:** They believed strongly in the Ten Commandments at that time?
- SE:** They were for church, that's for sure.

- DZ:** What language was your church service in?
- SE:** Straight German.
- DZ:** Prayers were in German, everything was in German?
- SE:** Everything, reading, singing and all.
- DZ:** Do you still have your German Bible?
- SE:** We don't have a German Bible, I don't think. By the time we grew up and were confirmed we got our Catechism and it was in English already.
- DZ:** Do you know how old you were or what time you changed from German into English at church?
- SE:** I was maybe sixteen or seventeen years old when the English started.
- DZ:** Well, like your mother and dad coming from German background, what did they think of switching to the English language as far as church was concern?
- SE:** They slowly got used to it, but the German they missed that very much.
- DZ:** They tried to keep that as long as they could.
- SE:** My dad was really in church for a long time, all his life until he got sick. He was what you call it, the deacon?
- DZ:** A deacon. He was one of the deacons?
- SE:** When he turned 56 he got sick. He died when he was 64.
- DZ:** So as far as religion, I suppose, at the table you had grace all the time?
- SE:** We had to say a little prayer all together.
- DZ:** What about devotions. Did they take time for devotion?
- SE:** You mean that the folks did? Later that got lost too.
- DZ:** So when they came over here from Germany and Russia they became Americanized after a while?
- SE:** Kind of slowly, everything was new and they grew away from the old stuff.
- DZ:** They tried to hang on to it as long as they could. Like you said your dad wanted to keep the German as long as he could?
- SE:** Yes he did. As long as he was able to.
- DZ:** What did Baptism and Confirmation mean to you?
- SE:** I thought that was something that had to be so we went along with it.
- DZ:** You learned more about the Bible and you figured that was part of it.

- SE:** We had very little studying in Sunday school. There was not much at that time. My dad taught all of us kids the Ten Commandments and all that stuff at home.
- DZ:** You had that at home?
- SE:** We had that at home before they had Sunday School.
- DZ:** And Confirmation that come at about what age?
- SE:** Well, about 15 or 16.
- DZ:** When you were Confirmed were there any kind of celebration at that time?
- SE:** No. The biggest celebration was that there were only eight of us who got Confirmed. We were from three churches, one was a church east of Ashley, one was from town and ours was in the north. To get enough kids together to keep that Confirmation together we had to go together. It was held here in Ashley one Sunday afternoon. Then we would go home again. That's was all.
- DZ:** Now you said, at first, the church services moved from family to family or farm to farm until they got a new church?
- SE:** Ashley had a church but the farmers didn't have a church. We lived out on the farms. We had it in the homes for a number of years. When the school house became available we had church in there and finally we got a little more members and we bought and moved a church building on our land.
- DZ:** Were your parents and grandparents involved in the founding or the joining of another church? Was it the same church all the time?
- SE:** They were not close to us at that time. They lived away from there.
- DZ:** But they always belonged to the same church?
- SE:** Yes, as much as it was then. I think at that time there weren't as many churches as there are now.
- DZ:** It's possible. How did your family deal with death? When people died, how did they handle that? Did they grieve a lot? Was that just something that happened.
- SE:** I really don't remember. They did everything at home. They kept the bodies at home. There was no undertaker or anything. We kept them in a cool place till the day when they took them to the cemetery. They put them on a buggy or a sled or something, and someone had to drive the team or horses.
- DZ:** There wasn't even a undertaker?
- SE:** No. Our mother was in the front room for eight days in her coffin. They kept them at home in the house.
- DZ:** Weren't they embalmed at that time?
- SE:** I don't know. They never did anything.
- DZ:** Are you familiar with the wrought iron crosses as grave markers?
- SE:** I think they are on the Catholics. I have seen that quite a lot. We just had concrete markers.
- DZ:** Just ordinary markers. Did your family have a special design for the grave markers?

- SE:** As they died there was usually someone who sold those markers. They would come around and tried to sell you one. You bout home and they put it up.
- DZ:** Does your family have any heirlooms or objects of sentimental value which has been handed down? Like did your mother and dad have something that has been handed down to you, that you will hand down to your kids? Do you have anything that you can hand down to your kids?
- SE:** No. Nothing that went from one to the other.
- DZ:** If your mother and dad had valuable stuff who would take care of that, the valuable treasures? Maybe at that time there weren't any.
- SE:** There was nothing we had to do like that. There was just enough to make a living on.
- DZ:** Now a little bit about the holidays. How was Christmas celebrated in your family?
- SE:** Well, often it was two days.
- DZ:** On Christmas Day and the day after?
- SE:** Yes the second Christmas Day.
- DZ:** What would they do on both those days?
- SE:** We would go visiting or just not work in the field or this or that. Go to town on business. It was just like a Sunday, go visiting.
- DZ:** Do you remember some of the Christmases during the years of the depression? How were the Christmases during the depression different that other days or other years or were they pretty much the same?
- SE:** There was not so much to spend in those days.
- DZ:** It was probably depression all the time.
- SE:** I remember when they had all the candles. There was no electricity or anything. We had to put the candle in the candle holders and then on the tree. When the program was on they had a man or older boy watch the Christmas tree in case the fire should start, with all those candles on it. They had a stick with a wet rag on it, in case they had to put a fire out. There were no switches or anything, there were candles on the tree and we had to blow them out.
- DZ:** Did they put a lot of candles on the trees?
- SE:** Quite a few, 15 or 20, depending on the tree.
- DZ:** How about Easter time. How did they spend that? What did they do on Easter?
- SE:** About the same way I guess.
- DZ:** Did they believe in the Easter Bunny, Easter eggs and things like that?
- SE:** The kids usually put a basket someplace and the folks made-believed that the rabbit was going to come and put some eggs in there. You've got to get that nest ready and put it here or there. Some way it was

done and the kids got up in the morning and there some eggs in it. It was the same way with the stockings and the chimney. It was just to fool the kids.

DZ: Was that something that they brought over from the other country?

SE: I don't know.

DZ: Now, what was special about marriage ceremonies? How about weddings how were they or where were they? Were they married mostly in the homes or the churches?

SE: I think they were married mostly in the churches.

DZ: Do you remember anything about any of the weddings?

SE: I remember one. Pauline was getting older and she had a good friend in Danzig who got married. Pauline wanted to see the wedding. So us kids got the buggy and chased over there that afternoon to Danzig. The church was new at that time. So we took that wedding in, we sat there and watched them then went home again.

DZ: That was a new experience then?

SE: Yes.

DZ: How about the wedding receptions? Where were they?

SE: They were usually at the home or the house of the parents. Some took off right away. Away we go!

DZ: Did they have any music and dancing and things like that?

SE: Oh, some had a real good time. Lot of dancing.

DZ: What about your family?

SE: No. This was not like that in ours.

DZ: There was no dancing and that kind of things in your home.

SE: There was no dancing and celebrating going on in our weddings. The younger ones had more of a chance than we had, but we older ones just got married and went to work.

DZ: So when there was a wedding it didn't last two, three or four days. Waste a little time and it was all over.

SE: Yes. That for sure.

DZ: Who was invited to the weddings then?

SE: Usually the close relatives, uncles, aunts, and the preacher.

DZ: Neighbors, were the neighbors invited, too?

SE: Yes.

DZ: How long were the sermons, were they about as long as they are now or did they have longer sermons for the weddings?

- SE:** It was very much the same. I think it is the same story over and over.
- DZ:** You guys started it all?
- SE:** Yes, maybe.
- DZ:** Did the people get together sometimes to sing German songs?
- SE:** Yes, they did that a lot, our folks and the neighbors did. Weekdays in the evenings we just got together in the winter time and sang songs. We still sing them every once in a while. I still remember some of them.
- DZ:** Yes. I suppose and most of them in German.
- SE:** SONG IN GERMAN. 739
- DZ:** I should have you sing one.
- SE:** I can't sing. My dad was a good singer, so was Carley Wells, (SP 744). They started that out and kept it going. They kept singing.
- DZ:** One thing I was going to ask you about the weddings, did they have chilvarees at that time?
- SE:** Yes.
- DZ:** What did they do?
- SE:** I went along once in a while. It was just fun but sometimes it turned into fights.
- DZ:** What did they do? Did they put cans behind the cars? Did they have cars then? It depends about what times we are talking about.
- SE:** First there were buggies.

END OF SIDE ONE - BREAK IN DIALOGUE

- DZ:** Do you remember any of the German wedding songs that they sang?
- SE:** No, really I don't. I don't know any of the special songs.
- DZ:** Did they have wedding cakes?
- SE:** Oh, yes. Some they had the cakes specially made by someone, by a cake maker. Some were fancy.
- DZ:** So they got into that too. What about "hochzeit schnapps"?
- SE:** That I really don't know. Schnapps we didn't hardly get into, hardly ever.
- DZ:** Solomon was pretty strict?
- SE:** Yes. With our bunch it was no schnapps.
- DZ:** That was a no, no.
- SE:** Yes that was a no, no. There was I know some different schnapps.

- DZ:** What about homemade beer?
- SE:** That was in the 20's, I think. They made homemade beer in this territory which didn't go over so much, I don't know. We didn't have any.
- DZ:** How about wedding gowns? Did the brides have wedding gowns?
- SE:** I think, whatever they had was the wedding gown. They were dressed up different from their work...
- DZ:** Did the men wear tuxedos?
- SE:** Some did.
- DZ:** Did they have decorations for the wedding?
- SE:** Not where I went. Most of the weddings we went to, when we were invited, were just plain old weddings. Nothing extra.
- DZ:** They were married and then had a big meal?
- SE:** There was always a big meal.
- DZ:** I suppose it was a full meal, it wasn't just cookies and ice cream or candy.
- SE:** I don't know just a good meal. I don't know what was prepared.
- DZ:** Did they have flowers at the wedding like they do now?
- SE:** Yes.
- DZ:** Now we are going to get personal. How did you and Esther met?
- SE:** We got to know each other over the years, coming to church. Her family came to our church once in a while.
- DZ:** So you met through the church, through religion.
- SE:** She was always the organ player. So when she came to our church she always played the organ. My dad led some Sundays. There was a small church and we were in there every once in a while. It was not all at once. We got to know one another and we grew into....
- DZ:** Good friends?
- SE:** Yes. Good friends.
- DZ:** Sometimes we hear that so many marriages were arranged by the parents. That's not true in your case. They didn't tell you, you had to marry so and so.
- SE:** We had to arrange it the way we were able to. In the 30's it was, where are you going to go and where are you going to start. How are you going to live? We stayed home as long as possible.
- DZ:** You got any love stories you want to tell us.....
- SE:** No! They are wore out.

- DZ:** No unusual experiences or were you ever separated or you wrote letters, were you always together?
- SE:** No, we were never far apart. From Danzig to the farm. No, nothing special happened to us. We were married 50 years and 5 months, and that went fast. I don't remember where it went to.
- DZ:** You had each other for a long time.
- SE:** Yes but some around here have been married 66 years and still going.
- DZ:** The next question you probable have answered that. What kinds of occasions were available to meet your spouse? Was mostly through the church?
- SE:** Yes and school programs, just neighborhood stuff.
- DZ:** I'm sure the men did the farm work; the milking, the raising of crops, and things like that. What did the women do?
- SE:** The men didn't do much milking of the cows, that was the women's work. The women had to take care of the house and the kids, and the garden. If you had a place with your own house and your kids to take care of, the wife had job enough. To cook all the meals for the men when they come home from work.
- DZ:** Especially your family when you were growing up, you had a large family. They had their hands full.
- SE:** We boys were hired out a lot when we were at home in our teens. When someone needed bigger help then Jake had to go, he was hired out for this and that. So, I would like to hire him for so many months, we would hear. I had my chance. I was hired out after school was out. I was hired out from when school was out until school started again. Some said, "If I can get Sam I'll get him for six months." I didn't go for six months; two months was enough.
- DZ:** I bet with the size of your family, your parents never had to hire anybody or did they?
- SE:** No, we always would give others help. Some of the neighbors said, "If I need help in the house or a girl to cooking for thrashing, I'll go to Solomon and he'll help us out." Someone was always gone. We could do this or that for so and so. Five summers I was gone from when school was out until school started.
- DZ:** I suppose it was the same for the girls.
- SE:** I suppose for some of them but the girls weren't gone that long.
- DZ:** Do you remember special German foods that your mother cooked or baked?
- SE:** I don't know, but she baked all the time and a lot of bread. There were so many things to bake, this week this and that week that. Now it is different, you go to the shopping center and get it.
- DZ:** What was some that you liked to most?
- SE:** At home it was everything, the kuchen, the bluchenda. Now when you want to get something to eat in a hurry, you get a pizza.
- DZ:** Finished and ready to go. Now do you still eat breads, and strudels, and kuchen, and dumplings?
- SE:** We eat them in the cafe now too

- DZ:** You get them there, too. Anybody in your family sing or play an accordion or any other instrument?
- SE:** No, nobody. Rose played the organ a little bit but she didn't make any headway. My wife was good. She played the organ, she played thirteen years on the pedal organ. Danzig was a small town and had no church. When they had church in the school and no matter what church it was they got her to play the organ because nobody else could play it. She played there in church until the last few years. John played the mouth organ. I play the mouth organ once in a while.
- DZ:** Did your parents encourage you to play an instrument?
- SE:** Well we didn't have room but my dad said we should have a organ but there was no place to put it, too small of a house. None of us got to high school or anything.
- DZ:** What about dancing? What did your dad and mother think about that?
- SE:** Dad, in short words, he didn't want us to go.
- DZ:** So you listened and didn't do it, right?
- SE:** We had to listen. We behaved pretty good. We thought so anyhow. We got scolded once in a while, but no problems.
- DZ:** When your parents had company were you allowed to stay and visit with the older people?
- SE:** No, we were usually in the other room. We had a ball in there and the dog. We played with the ball and the dog. We played ball and the dog barked. The door opened up once and a while and they said, "This is enough now." We quieted down.
- DZ:** If you had wanted to stay and visit with them would they have let you?
- SE:** Yes, they would have let us then chased us off when we wouldn't be quiet. That's where I got some of this that I remember about Russia, from listening to them. I sat there and listened.
- DZ:** I was going to ask you a while ago, when we were talking about the music. You say you were never a musician and yet one of your sons learned, was a good musician. How did he learn?
- SE:** How did he learn?
- DZ:** Yes.
- SE:** Well, my dad didn't live much to hear Kevin learning.
- DZ:** He wasn't interested in it and he didn't push you. Did you push Kevin or did he do it himself?
- SE:** He went to music school. He did it on his own. He played with others for dances here and there. He went to Rapid City, IA when he was teaching school. They played for dances.
- DZ:** So you encouraged him?
- SE:** I didn't stop him. You see he was in the band in his school, all through the years. I didn't like it because I had to buy an instrument but I bought it anyhow. I bought him a twenty five dollar trumpet from Eissman and it was so hard to play and we didn't know.

The teacher once said, "It's too hard for you. You could play the trumpet real good but this one is too hard to play. It need so much wind you should get a new one." A new one cost seventy five dollars and we didn't have the seventy five dollars. But anyway we went and bought him a new trumpet and he was always the first trumpet player.

He had his own band for a while. He was in the marching band in Peirpont and down here in Fredric. He played and I wasn't against it. I like music.

Julia played the trombone in the band. Whenever there was a band concert we had to go and we had to take them there. I didn't turn them down. We chased after them a lot.

DZ: So even though it cost you money for instruments you are glad you did it.

SE: Yes. That's the way it went. With us it was different. I was just different then.

DZ: That shows you a little bit how life changes. That was good that it was that way. Here's one I ask you a little while ago, now you get a second chance. If you could sing would you sing one of the songs that you sang as a child?

SE: I couldn't sing as a child and I can't sing now. I never could sing.

DZ: You couldn't or you don't want to?

SE: I couldn't sing.

GERMAN WORDS OF A SONG.(927 B)

DZ: I bet you could sing some German songs. I bet you know some.

SE: No, I wouldn't sing any. I know a lot of them, quite a few of them.

DZ: You're not going to sing any of them?

SE: No. I have a lot of tapes here. I like to listen to them.

DZ: You don't want to sing any at all, not even a short one?

SE: No, nothing. I'm telling you too much already.

DZ: We have talked about this a little already but it's here so I ask. What was the attitude of the older generation toward dance halls?

SE: They were going strong anyways. If the older ones were against it the younger ones had they way anyhow.

DZ: Did you attend any barn dances at all?

SE: Some. That was later on. We shouldn't have gone to any at all after we found out we shouldn't go. We chased a little when we were first married. It was just good fun.

DZ: When you were young adults was there a meeting place for young people like in a town hall or barn or a home?

- SE:** No. Well at a home once in a while. Like our place was pretty much a place for young people to gather. Like by Conrad Kulps. So, we had places where we could get together.
- DZ:** Do you remember any of the games you played as a young child? I think you probable have answered some of these already.
- SE:** Skip Come Alew.
- DZ:** Any fairy or stories you remember?
- SE:** Oh, there were many but I couldn't repeat them right so let them rest.
- DZ:** Were your parents and grandparents superstitious about certain aspects of life. Did they believe in the bogeyman or anything like that, any superstitions?
- SE:** No, I don't think so.
- DZ:** Walking under a ladder, black cats or anything like that. They didn't scare you with the "duct rupt" (?) or anything?
- SE:** Oh yes, they said the "duct rupt" would come but what that meant, let's let that be.
- DZ:** The "knock-knock" never really did come.
- SE:** It didn't catch you, either.
- DZ:** Now in the early times and I think there is some of it now, especially at the time when there weren't as many doctors as we have now. Were there any certain healing techniques that people use? Were there people who would go home to home or town to town healing people?
- SE:** Maybe there was but not that I know of.
- DZ:** How about sometimes people say they practiced folk medicine or "Brauche".
- SE:** We heard about that too. If you had a wart they said you had to do this or that. I just heard it. It could be done with rust or I don't really know.
- DZ:** Were there different diseases or illness that were different at that time that we don't have any more today? Anything that we had years ago that we don't have now?
- SE:** I don't know of any. I think we have more now.
- DZ:** I think you are right, we do have more now. What do you remember about midwives delivering babies when we didn't have hospitals?
- SE:** Well, there were no hospitals for everybody. They just had a midwife here or there.
- DZ:** Were most of your family members delivered by midwife or do you know?
- SE:** Never in the hospital always at home.
- DZ:** Anything you know about midwives. How were they paid?
- SE:** I don't know. That I don't know. Maybe they didn't get paid.

- DZ:** That could be too. Did you parents use any expressions in other languages? Did they speak anything in Russian or Platt Deutsch or Turkish or French or others?
- SE:** My dad used some Russian words sometimes which I didn't know what they'd meant. There were other people here from Russia at that time too. When they come together they would use those words and talked a little bit and so what they meant I don't know.
- DZ:** Can you remember the name of a German newspaper that you received in your home?
- SE:** My dad had the "Der Staatsanzeiger" and the "Euriker Reikinrunchou" (SP) 1001 B.
- DZ:** They were both German newspapers? Were they weekly or monthly?
- SE:** Gosh, I don't know. I guess they were weekly.
- DZ:** Did you keep any of them?
- SE:** No.
- DZ:** Can you still read German?
- SE:** In print I can read it, not as good as English though. The writing I can't read.
- DZ:** But you could at one time.
- SE:** My dad taught me how to write my name in German. I can write it in German but if you get a German letter that somebody can't read and you want me to read it, I can't read it.
- DZ:** I bet your dad could read it.
- SE:** My dad was a good writer. Just like one of those ABC books the kids have in Sunday School with some writing in it. He wrote it with a pen and ink. He always dipped it into the ink. He wrote it so neat. He always taught us how to write plain. Julia went to school and got so much school compared to me and I can't read her writing.
- DZ:** I think that's true. Look at a lawyer's writing.
- SE:** And a doctor's. They know so much and you don't know what they are putting on the paper to take to the drugstore.
- DZ:** It's like I told you earlier when you signed your name I said, "You have a nicer hand writing than I do."
- SE:** Well if I take my time but if I get nervous or if I write a little while I seem to write slower and smaller. If I just want to write I can write plain enough.
- DZ:** What kind of information did your family get from the newspaper? Did they read for certain information or did they read the whole thing. Were they interested in everything?
- SE:** They were in a new country so this or that and my dad was interested in all of that. Maggie was a news-writer. She did the local news. So was Esther my wife, she wrote for the Danzig news. They were competitors at that time. They wrote a lot of news.
- DZ:** Who did?

- SE:** Esther my first wife. She was a writer.
- DZ:** Oh. They were competitors.
- SE:** She wrote the country news and whatever. So it was Esther's news and Maggie's news that ran the paper. Sometimes there was a little bit of news and sometimes there was more so people looked at that too. Such as who was visiting who, and a pie social here and a basket social there.
- DZ:** How about the funnies or the comics?
- SE:** I never cared for that.
- DZ:** Did the newspapers have them at that time?
- SE:** I don't think that the "Das Staasanzeiger" had that.
- DZ:** We're going to get into some modern conveniences now. Do you remember when the folks had the first windmills?
- SE:** That's still to come. We lived on the farm all our lives and I remember our farm when it was built and now it is completely gone. There is water all around and we can't even get there now. We never had a windmill. We never had a pump for a lot of years. We had a rope, a pulley and a pail. The well was so shallow that it was only eight feet to the water. Down the hill there was a spring that was the year-round. So there was always fresh water for the livestock and water was no problem. The biggest problem was carrying it into the house and then the slop pail to carry it out. But no windmill. We had all kinds of livestock on the farm except sheep. We had no sheep. We had no goats either. We had chickens, turkeys, ducks, pigs.....
- DZ:** Did you have a lot of them?
- SE:** Not a lot, not too many but enough to sell some and keep some but we never had sheep.
- DZ:** Do you remember the time when you got the first telephone or the first time you had electricity?
- SE:** When I lived on the farm when I lived with my dad we never got that far. It was still no electricity when I left.
- DZ:** That was about what year?
- SE:** That was in, when we went to Danzig it was about 1948. We were some of the last ones who got it.
- DZ:** How about a telephone?
- SE:** We didn't have a telephone in Danzig until we were married a number of years. Julia was going to school already and she said we should get a telephone. "Oh that cost extra money and we haven't got enough of this and that yet and so..." I said.
- You should have a telephone, sometimes it would be good. I had the truck already. "So I'm going to tell them to put the phone in," she said. One day I came home and we had the phone in.
- Then she called, I knew where she was that night. "Dad I've had so many calls already. I told you you'd need it." That was quite late. Everybody had a phone.

DZ: She needed it too.

SE: Yes, she needed it too. So from then on we had a phone.

DZ: How about your first car. Do you remember your first car?

SE: Yes.

DZ: What kind was it?

SE: A year before I was married I got my first car and that was a 1924 Model T coupe and it was in nice shape. It had yellow wooden wheels, the fenders were painted black and body was painted green. It had flower vases on each side and shades on the windows. It was all trimmed up.

I bought it from a guy, Dingdorf, he got married and he wanted to sell the car. He wanted \$60.00 for the car and so I paid him the \$60.00, and used it until I married. I got married that fall. In the winter time I sold that car to another guy for \$60.00, then he got married. It was Richard Nye. It was sold three times for \$60.00.

DZ: It must have been in good shape. It must have been a pretty fancy looking car?

SE: It was in good shape, for us kids it was a nice car.

DZ: Did you have any pictures?

SE: No. I never owned a camera. I should have taken pictures which would have been good for the children but I have no pictures. But that's the way it went.

DZ: How about your first radio? Do you remember your first radio?

SE: It's the same way. Ernie says now when he comes home, "I remember when you had your first radio. In the morning at 9 o'clock, he says, "Now hush up McCoy is coming on." McCoy was always on every morning at that time. That was a favorite program, and it is still on.

DZ: Are there any other favorite programs?

SE: There were some but not really. Amos and Andy and there were some more but I forgot them too, I guess.

DZ: What about television? Do you remember your first television set?

SE: I wasn't the first one either. I waited for that a long time also. I didn't have the time to sit. I'm not one for TV. I have some tapes I watch once and a while, and I get tired of them too. For me they could leave the TV where it was.

DZ: I think that's here to stay though. Do remember watching Lawrence Welk on the TV?

SE: Oh yes, very much so.

DZ: Did you like to watch him?

- SE:** Yes, later, you see Myron Florin was a cousin to Ernie's wife. So we watched that a little bit more. We knew more than Lawrence. Myron Florin, we knew him personally. I listen to it once and a while yet. It's wearing off.
- DZ:** Yes, he's been on a long time.
- SE:** Yes, I've seen his place and different places. He is in the wax museum over in Sacramento, CA and he's got his museum down here in Escondido.
- DZ:** You saw that? I saw that too. Have you been over to Strasburg to see all that?
- SE:** Yes I saw. I've seen him before. The first night he had that accordion.
- DZ:** What do you mean?
- SE:** When his dad bought him his first accordion, the \$400.00 accordion. I know where he played the first time. Over here by Kulps in the neighborhood. We were there that night. You should have seen that yard full of buggies, ponies, and some cars. That was early, it was 20 something.
- DZ:** So you saw him play with his first new accordion.
- SE:** That was a noise for about ten days or so, going through the country-side. Lawrence Welk got a new accordion and he is going to play over here in the barn.
- DZ:** Near Ashley, ND?
- SE:** Yes. At the farmers place but there is nothing there anymore.
- DZ:** Whereabouts was that from town?
- SE:** Oh, about six miles north and about one half mile to the east. We used to live northeast of that place. There are buildings on it, there isn't a house on it now.
- DZ:** Who used to own it?
- SE:** Kulps. Later Art Neice bought it.
- DZ:** Oh. If I tell this to Micheal Miller. He will get fired up. He will want to come out here and take your picture. He is a real Lawrence Welk fan.
- SE:** We were too.
- DZ:** That's interesting. Was there a big crowd there then?
- SE:** Oh yes. The barn wasn't big enough. There were just as many outside as there inside.
- DZ:** Was everybody well behave?
- SE:** No. They had fights. Upstairs they were going like mad and down stairs they were fighting and drinking. Those were rough nights sometimes.
- DZ:** But everybody had a good time?

- SE:** Well, they thought they had a good time. The music was nice. That accordion everybody thought was really something, if only for a certain guy.
- DZ:** He could really play that thing, couldn't he? OK, we'll starting wrapping this thing up, for this time. The next question is which family member do you remember the best? Of all the thirteen which do you remember the best?
- SE:** Oh well, with all the work over the years, from the beginning Pauline would be. With the work she had to take the lead and we went along with her, helping her. Drove the header, haul hay, she was the hub of the wheel.
- DZ:** When you grew up, who did you look up to? Your grandfather or who was your hero? Was it your grandfather or grandmother?
- SE:** Our grandfather was not close to us. They lived away and we had very little to talk about or to with our grandparents.
- DZ:** Who did you want to be like then?
- SE:** I just did what I like, I think. I was going to go farming first but in those years it was no good so I bought myself a truck and got it the way I wanted. That put me to work and I was busy. I had to do a lot of shoveling and loading and unloading. At that time I had no hoist on the truck, I should have had it but I had no money to buy it. I hauled a lot of grain and shoveled it.
- DZ:** Anything else you want to tell us about your trucking? You used to haul sand and gravel also didn't you?
- SE:** I hauled gravel, I hauled just about anything you could think of. I hauled machinery and combines from Kansas up to here and sold them. I loaded one up and hooked one behind. I bought binders in the 40's from the east when they went into combining and they had no combines here. There was always a chance to do something here. I got into it and I did it right.
- DZ:** Did you have more than one truck?
- SE:** For a while I had two. Then I gave Arnold one. He worked down here with me and I shared with him.
- DZ:** That's Otto Arnold?
- SE:** Yes. He did alright. We shared it and I told him if he wanted to. I would let him have the truck and he could stay. I got him started in Danzig. He had no living quarters he moved down here. He kept going into Ashley and we talked the deal over, how we were going to do it. He did it and he kept going and going. He did alright. And I got a little money.
- DZ:** What year did you retire?
- SE:** I think the year I sold out my farm and equipment in 1971. I think I was 63 years old at that time. I don't know my age for sure, but I quit. Then I started working for others. I ran combines, swatters, trucks, and whatever they needed for me to do to help.
- DZ:** It seems that when someone retires they don't want you to stay retired.
- SE:** Still it is so easy to work. You got no responsibility at that age.

- DZ:** Then you can do what you want, when you want.
- SE:** When I was done and when I had nothing to repair, before you know it there was another one. You aren't busy and they ask can you do this one and you say yes. So it went alright.
- DZ:** Anything else you want to say about school, education, church, family, family life or
- SE:** In church I'm way behind. I don't take part much anymore.
- DZ:** You used to though?
- SE:** You have to go along with I'll do this or that on Sunday.
- DZ:** It should be up to the younger people to do more of that, anyway.
- SE:** Oh, I had my office on the council and things like that. I was on the nominating committee.
- DZ:** Like we say, now it's someone else turn?
- SE:** When I was young and the church was at the school house I would hold the collection offering. We had a little stick with pocket on the end.
- DZ:** You did that?
- SE:** Yes. I did that.
- DZ:** We got one more question here. How is your family history and culture being passed on to the next generation? Do you have hand me downs or you remember things from your parents? Are you doing anything special?
- SE:** No. There is nothing being handed down and there is nothing anybody is doing or that I am doing.
- DZ:** Do you have scrapbooks or things like that, or souvenirs or collections?
- SE:** I have some collections. I've some of the newer stuff like the little tractors and the little trains, I've got that train running. I got that train as a door-prize in 1950 and it is still running. I play with it and it puffs and it toots.
- DZ:** Yes. You showed it to me a few years ago. You've still got it?
- SE:** Since then I got a tape. You hear those sounds when it crosses a crossing the bell ring. Otherwise, when I die the kids want that. The scrapbook I had laying here on the table a long time and every now and then someone came by and had a look at it. Pictures from the paper of how they pulled the combines with horses and so on. Things are different now.
- DZ:** Ok. I think we will wrap up this part one for today.

(Continued from tape 1 - B)

- DZ:** We are ready for our second set of questions in this interview with Sam Eszlinger. Today is part two, this is the evening of May 13, 1997, a Tuesday evening. Sam, you talked about dorfs and futhers in the last interview. You explained what a dorf was but what is a further.

- SE:** That is what they use, from what I understood, it means like a colony of little village or something. Futhers, they had different names. I think it was just like a little village or something. They used that word.
- DZ:** So someone lived in this futher and someone else lived in another futher. Something like a village.
- SE:** Yes, a location of some kind.
- DZ:** Now, we will go into a section here on courting, marriage, and relationships. What did your parents or teachers tell you about marriage?
- SE:** They didn't tell us anything. The most they said was you better wait for another year. This is a drought year and there is no chance to get married or even to risk it. Just try to postpone it, which we did.
- DZ:** And you did, you listened.
- SE:** Yes, we had to listen to them.
- DZ:** What did you learn of marriage by seeing your parents' relationship by watching them? What did you learn of marriage?
- SE:** We didn't know any better. We thought it had to go that way. It was the right way.
- DZ:** That's the right way.
- SE:** We didn't know anything else.
- DZ:** So, what kind of marriage life did they have?
- SE:** Oh yes, they raised a big family in a small home.
- DZ:** Did they encourage you to do the same thing?
- SE:** We could do whatever we were able to do.
- DZ:** How did your marriage differ than your parent's marriage?
- SE:** I don't know what went on in those years. I just don't know anything about that.
- DZ:** I think we touched a little on this yesterday, were the marriages of your parents or grandparents arranged or coupled?
- SE:** That I don't know. I heard that word off and on. Coupled this and that, but really there was nothing going on that I remembered, nobody got coupled. The talk was this word coupled, they used it years ago.
- DZ:** As far as you know your father, mother, or grandparents weren't coupled then?
- SE:** No, That's too far back.
- DZ:** Now a little bit about family life. What did your parents tell you about raising children?
- SE:** Really nothing. That's right. They told us to belong to a church and to go to church. They pushed church.

- DZ:** They taught by example. Whatever they did they figured you should do the same.
- SE:** They taught us to do about what they did. Then we had to follow, we did follow them.
- DZ:** What were some of the most important traits or virtues that you learned from them that helped you become a good parent. Some things they did that you noticed that made you a good parent?
- SE:** Oh well, he always told us to be honest and to keep busy. If you are put to work, work and satisfy. Even if you don't like it, do the work the way you are told to.
- DZ:** Be a hard worker and an honest person. A straight shooter and you'll go a long ways. Those are pretty good characteristics. Did husbands and wives have equal authority or rights in making major decisions? Were they both the same as far as authority was concerned?
- SE:** Well I think they all talked about their rights, weather to do something this way or that way or that way until they made an agreement on something, until they were both satisfied.
- DZ:** Your dad didn't act like he was the boss and no one had anything else to say.
- SE:** He put us to work, I know that!
- DZ:** When you have a family that large, you have to get some work out of them!
- SE:** He was alright. They managed it, I think, very good, for being all alone on the prairie.
- DZ:** I think so too. A family of that size and everybody turned out pretty good, that's for sure. Everybody was successful. Were you able to express feelings of anger, sadness, fear, or criticism as a child? If there was something that you didn't like, could you express it?
- SE:** It was mostly kept quiet, we kept it. No argument, no asking, no anything. Just get over it!
- DZ:** Mind your own business. Do as you are told.
- SE:** There is always a brighter day ahead.
- DZ:** How was love and affection shown in your family?
- SE:** I think the full way. The way it should be.
- DZ:** They showed that they cared for you and all that?
- SE:** Everybody cared for everybody.
- DZ:** Who showed more direct affection and how? Your mother or father or both the same?
- SE:** I would say they both did their part.
- DZ:** They shared in that responsibility. In a family of that size, was there confrontations between the boys and the girls?
- SE:** In what way?
- DZ:** Like in your family, you had 14 people, was there a lot of confrontations between all of you? Or did you all get along pretty good?

- SE:** We had no problems. One for all and all for one.
- DZ:** That's pretty good, a good motto. And your parents probably made sure that's the way it was.
- SE:** They didn't like arguments.
- DZ:** Did they ever argue in front of you?
- SE:** Not really, but they explained things and told us this or that. This you can do and this you can both do. This is shaming if you do this. They always wanted us to be respectful.
- DZ:** If any of your kids got into trouble, how did they discipline you? If you did something they didn't want you to do?
- SE:** It was just all by talking and explaining. There was no fighting around or anything, just explaining to get it settled as good as it could be.
- DZ:** If they set the rules you knew what to do and what not to.
- SE:** We really didn't have any trouble, no trouble at all.
- DZ:** Were there any changes between your generation and your grandparents? As far as family life was concerned.
- SE:** From their life I know nothing. I wouldn't know.
- DZ:** Would you say you treated your children the way as you were treated for the most part?
- SE:** I was on that tract and I figured I was gonna do it. Maybe it wasn't. But we did it pretty good so far.
- DZ:** Yes, at least you tried. So you brought them up by the examples your parents set for you. That's how you grew up and you were hoping your kids would do it too.
- SE:** I told them all when they were in college, I told Julie, like my dad told me, "If you are told to do something, do the work whether you like it or not; whether it is too heavy or not; but do all that you can and try to get it done." If you don't like it, you can come home and tell us. Don't complain.
- DZ:** Don't complain about it. I think that's a good philosophy. If there were any disagreements between family members, how were they settled?
- SE:** I really couldn't say there was any that we had a special settlement of. We didn't run into that trouble.
- DZ:** Like you said earlier, you just talked about it and talked it over.

END OF TAPE 1 - TAPE 2 BEGINS

- DZ:** We just finished talking about settling disagreements amongst family members and the way that the family got along. There weren't too many disagreements and when there were disagreements they would discuss them and come up with a solution of some kind. The next question is were older family members ever consulted about matters such as settling disputes, finances, or farming practices. If there were any difference between family members, or any financial problems or any differences about how to farm this or that land. Were some of the older people consulted?

- SE:** I don't think we ever got into something like that. It just went smooth all the way. Everybody was on their way the way they wanted.
- DZ:** Now when young men and women got a little older and started dating girls or boys, how were you treated when you or your sisters dated someone of another religion? Someone that was not your own religion? How were they treated? What did you say about that?
- SE:** There was no discussion about religion or anything. Just pick the one you like or see the one you like or whatever. It was everybody for everybody.
- DZ:** So if you picked someone that was of a different religion then your family didn't say anything?
- SE:** That's right.
- DZ:** I suppose your parents figured that the way they brought you up, you should make a wise decision.
- SE:** We figured our judgment was close enough to the way we wanted. We figured we were right, good enough. There was no argument or discussion about it.
- DZ:** So none of the young men or women were ever cut off from the rest of the family because of religion.
- SE:** Nobody.
- DZ:** That's good. Who cared for family members in their old age, when they started getting older?
- SE:** All I can remember, the Salzer, my mother's side, their kids took care of the folks. On the Eszlinger side, the (Eszlinger) kids took care of their folks. Always the family members took in the family as long as they were living. There was no rest home or anything like that in those days.
- DZ:** It was probably the older children who go involved in that?
- SE:** Not even the older children. It depended on who had the big enough house or how they agreed to be or how they would like to be. That's the way it worked.
- DZ:** They never had any problem that way. Did your grandparents or parents have friends outside of the family with whom they shared private thought, emotions or feelings? Did they have friends who they would get together with?
- SE:** They were far apart the first years they were here. My parents got a neighbor who moved close to them, he come from Russia too. So they were together a lot just as close friends. They were visiting each other quite often.
- DZ:** They were together real often and they got along real well.
- SE:** They were close friends until they died. They are buried in the same cemetery.
- DZ:** Did they ever take you kids along? When they went over to visit the neighbors, did you get along?
- SE:** We had to stay home. We bigger one had things to do and there were too many of us to go along.
- DZ:** What did they do, just sit and visit?

- SE:** Well they had other couples to come. Sometimes they sang or made the appointment to go the next evening or sometimes to visit others.
- DZ:** Would this be on any night of the week or mostly on Sunday night or when?
- SE:** During the week in the winter time, too. They did a lot of that, getting together. Going away in the evening that was the way to do it. Now a days they don't do it. There is always something else to do.
- DZ:** How did they go, like in the winter time?
- SE:** Horses and sled. By the time later on when they had cars, I was almost gone by then.
- DZ:** Now when they went to the neighbors with the horse and sleds, did they just tie them up outside or would they put them in the barn?
- SE:** They put the horses in the barn to keep them warm. They took the lantern and went out and hitched them up again, loaded the sled and went home again.
- DZ:** That took a lot of time and lot of trouble at that time.
- SE:** Well, it took a lot of time away if you didn't know how to pass the time. So that took quite a bit of time, hitching up and driving a few miles then home and unhitching and taking the harness off. So it made the night shorter.
- DZ:** Yes that's a lot different than going out in the car, starting out and taking off. Those were the good old days.
- SE:** It's different now.
- DZ:** How did your grandparents or parents view the "franschafft", their relatives. How did they get along with their family like with their brothers and sisters?
- SE:** There were no problems there. Of course they didn't live close to us when my grandparents were staying with the others. They were usually staying with the others and they were farther away. Our parents were never living close to us. They were always a few miles away off by the others.
- DZ:** If the relatives were close and then they moved away, did your family try to stay in touch with them at all?
- SE:** My dad wrote many letters to those who were too far away to go see. They always wrote letters back and forth. They were sometimes waiting for a letter because he would answer his letter and then he would be waiting for a letter again. They always knew when it was about time to receive a letter.
- DZ:** Who made the money decisions in your family your dad or your mother or both of them?
- SE:** There wasn't much decision to make when there wasn't any money. The decision was whether it was going to last until the cream can was full or the egg case was filled to take into town to buy the groceries. There was no money problem and it was the biggest problem but it was worked out.
- DZ:** If there was any time when they had a problem would they go to the bank or did they borrow it from relatives? Did they never borrowed any as far as you know?

- SE:** I remember as long as we grew up at home the money was always managed from selling the cream. It was a regular deal, so much a week for a can or two. Take the cream and eggs to town and buy your sugar and flour or whatever. That was managed that way. The rest of the stuff we raised everything. We had meat and butter and milk. The dough they started from scratch and made bread.
- DZ:** So as far as you know there were no serious financial problems at all?
- SE:** I can't say that we did or didn't have any problems.
- DZ:** But you always had enough milk and bread and meat?
- SE:** We always had enough to eat and that is what my dad always said, "As long as we are warm and have enough to eat we can be thankful." And so, that's the way we were.
- DZ:** That's a good philosophy. Now a few questions about family and the world. What was the most important religious teachings in your family? As far a religion was concern what did you mother and dad teach you?
- SE:** Our dad taught us to write the German ABC's then the "Ten Commandments" and all the most important things. He would teach us that at home. We didn't get anything from school, Sunday school or anything.
- DZ:** Did you find comfort in all this?
- SE:** Well, we just went along. We thought it has to be like that. We weren't born into anything else.
- DZ:** Were you frightened by these teachings or were you scared?
- SE:** No.
- DZ:** There was nothing to be afraid of?
- SE:** We sat around the table, the four of us, and he taught us. He made us write the name and then the letters. If you didn't make them right he would make us do it again. We would have trouble with the "sc" and the "tc". That "s" sound meant quite a bit.
- DZ:** He wanted to make sure you got that right. So religion was a pretty important part of your family life?
- SE:** My dad was strict with that. That was first.
- DZ:** Was there ever anything as far as religion is concerned that you didn't agree with your dad or that you didn't like.
- SE:** No. We didn't get far enough for that. By the time they had a church and everything to go the way it should go then we were all bigger and on our own mostly. It was never a problem.
- DZ:** You never questioned. You obeyed.
- SE:** Well that's what we were set up for. We just followed him. We did this in all ways.
- DZ:** How did your family get along with people that weren't German Russians? We talked about this a little bit, about Jews, Indians, or other Germans. How did they get along with your mom and dad who were German Russians? For instance, how did your parents get along with the Jews?

- SE:** The Jews could talk a little German. They got along, the little bit they were together.
- DZ:** Because your religions were different there was no problems?
- SE:** I don't know even if they got into that or not. There was a Jew with a little dog there. He and my dad talked a lot about the Bible. This was a Christian Jew. Whenever they got a little bit of a chance they would be talking about the Bible. They got along very good.
- DZ:** Yes. You told me that story about that dog But you just as soon not say it here.
- SE:** No I don't think so.
- DZ:** That was a good story! There weren't any Indians living around here at that time was there?
- SE:** No Indians. It was in 1937 when I made my first trip to California with the truck. I took some furniture out for some those who left here in the drought years. There was this Jew in the store. She told me if I had room I could buy two cases of oranges and bring back to the store. I told her alright I would, and you know what happened while we were out there, the second day, the guy who went with me he called home. He said two people died in Ashley since we left. I can mention the name?
- DZ:** Yes.
- SE:** It was Fred Hansen and the store keeper, Ben Mendelwitz. The one who wanted the oranges. So he told me I had better not take the oranges along, so we left them.
- DZ:** So you left them?
- SE:** Yes. We didn't bring them back.
- DZ:** Was he an older man or what?
- SE:** He was old enough to retire. He was about to quit at any time. But he said I was to bring him those oranges. I would have brought them. As soon as we were out there, there was a call that these two people had died.
- DZ:** How about your family. You have no problem with Jews or Indians or anything like that? Were you afraid to say you were German at that time?
- SE:** No. I was never afraid. At that time when I started to school it was mostly Jews and Irish there.
- DZ:** Talking about speaking German. Have you felt comfortable expressing your German Russian background? Does it bother you talking about the fact that you are a German?
- SE:** No. We have never stopped for anything. We have just kept talking. We listened to the little Jews talk Jewish. I said when we come home from school I told my parents they laughed at me. I said those little Jews are so small, yet they know how to talk Jewish.
- DZ:** Have you been proud of your German Russian heritage?
- SE:** Yes I am, we got along good.
- DZ:** What about World War I or II? Were you afraid to speak up at that time?

- SE:** At World War I, I was pretty young yet. There was talk about this and that but we had no problem. We didn't get around during World War I but during World War II we had no problems.
- DZ:** Did speaking German effect your relationship with others in school or in town or church?
- SE:** No. We shouldn't talk German but we did, off and on we did anyhow. We slowly talking English and we got into.
- DZ:** Was there anybody in your company or any of your friends who could only talk English, they couldn't talk German or was everybody in the same boat?
- SE:** There was nobody who could talk German. They talked English and Jewish. We were the Germans.
- DZ:** So there never was any problem between you kids.
- SE:** Of course, when we talked in school, us kids together. The German words or the Jewish words, of course they stopped us and we had to get in the corner. They wanted us to talk English which was the right way I think.
- DZ:** Did they do the same thing to them? Tell them to talk German or to talk English?
- SE:** We didn't do nothing. We listened to the teacher. When she wasn't around we used our language anyhow but it was against the rules. It didn't make us any trouble but it was teaching us.
- DZ:** How do you feel about a German brogue, speaking with a German brogue, speaking and sounding like a German? When you are speaking and the "G" sounds kind of like a "J". We have no problem with that?
- SE:** We have no problem with that.
- DZ:** What do you think about the survival of the German language in our German Russian community? We have a German Russian community here and some still talk German and some don't? What do you think about that? Is it a good thing or not?
- SE:** I think if we get along and like it I don't see anything wrong with that. They don't hurt anybody. If they enjoy and like it, I think it's ok. It's their business.
- DZ:** I'm sure you feel like I do. I'm glad I can talk German.
- SE:** Yes, and if I would know another language, some of them take Spanish now or whatever. Wouldn't another language be worth so much more?
- DZ:** That's right. Do your children or your grandchildren speak German?
- SE:** No. The grandchildren are completely English but they take lessons at school, some of them.
- DZ:** Your children both speak German don't they?
- SE:** They can speak German.
- DZ:** Did you teach them to speak German or did they just catch on?
- SE:** They just caught on and talked it?

- DZ:** They learned it from you. Now a few questions on education. I think we talked a little bit about that yesterday on the other tape. How available were your educational opportunities? You said none of your family went to the eighth grade. What school went past the eighth grade?
- SE:** The school went up to the eighth grade.
- DZ:** What if somebody had wanted to go to high school?
- SE:** I wanted to go to high school but there was no money to go. We had to stay home and work and so I didn't go. I was going to go to tractor school.
- DZ:** How about some of your other brothers and sisters?
- SE:** I don't think they ever tried. All the younger ones but they were the ones who lived in Danzig. I had a book ordered from Omaha, Nebraska, a book which you used with all the pictures. All the boys in the building there about my age and size went. I wished I could have gone with them.
- DZ:** Were you very interested in tractors?
- SE:** Those years they started with those little tractors in farming. I thought that would be nice if I could do a little bit of engineering, but Dad said there is no money to go. He always hired us to work to earn money to keep going. If I had gone that way he'd had to scratch it out of this end to put it into the other end.
- DZ:** It kind of reminds me of my dad. You know my dad said he wanted to go to high school. His dad said (GERMAN DIALOGUE 264). That's the answer he had when he wanted to go to high school. So there weren't too many who went to high school at that time were there?
- SE:** Well none of us. From our family none of us went.
- DZ:** From other families did you know of anybody who did?
- SE:** There were some who went high enough to be able to teach school.
- DZ:** Where did they go to high school? Where was there a high school?
- SE:** Ashley had a high school that time.
- DZ:** Did your educational experience influence your own children's education? The schooling you had did that affect your own children?
- SE:** It affected me so much that I thought if they wanted more schooling, I would go along with it. I wanted to farm and I told Kevin before I sold the farm out, "I will leave everything and you can take over when I leave."
- He said, "I'm afraid I can't handle it." So, he wanted music. He had his way and Julia had her way. She was nine years old. She had Rheumatic fever and she was in Bismarck in the hospital. She stayed up there by herself. When we went up there she was happy, she liked it. She said then that she had made up her mind. She was going to get big and go to school and whatever. "I'm going to be a nurse," she said. That stayed with her and it went with her to the end.
- DZ:** So just because you had an eighth grade education didn't mean you were going to stop your kids from going past the eighth grade? That probably helped you push them.

- SE:** No way. I know what I went through. When I was still going to school they had a little band in Danzig. They called it the Bluebird band and all those my age were after me to join them so they could get a bigger band. I told my folks that I should have an instrument and get me lessons because I want to play in the band.
- At that time it cost something like \$35.00 for a trumpet or a baritone or whatever you want to call it. When I told my parents what it cost, they said we can't afford to buy that now. That was the end of that.
- DZ:** So you didn't do it.
- SE:** I sure would have liked to have joined that band. There were a bunch of boys my age.
- DZ:** You couldn't scrounge up the \$35.00 though.
- SE:** My parents thought maybe if they gave it to one of us then the others would want this and that. We didn't break the ice. I just had to turn down a good job.
- DZ:** Anyway, you encouraged your kids to go to school and they encouraged their kids.
- SE:** To do whatever their wish was. We would go to tournaments or music festivals or whatever there was when one of them was entered while they were both in band and Julia was a cheerleader. When the team played in a tournament and they had to go we were gone. They had no bus at that time. Everybody found their way there and Julia was after us to go.
- DZ:** So you went to a lot of their activities that they participated in?
- SE:** The basketball games, I saw enough in those years. When they were done, I was done.
- DZ:** You were done too. Now if you had more education how do you think your life would have been different?
- SE:** It would have been different but maybe not as good as it has been this way, I can't complain.
- DZ:** So if you would have gone to school it might have been different but not necessarily better. You know I think that is right. Anything else about education you want to talk about?
- SE:** I should have had more education but that is too late now. I settle for what it is now.
- DZ:** We learn every day now don't we?
- SE:** Yes! It went alright, I guess.
- DZ:** Yes. You bet. Our last subject is on politics. Were your parents interested in politics?
- SE:** No. None of us kids were interested either.
- DZ:** They never attended any political rallies or anything like that?
- SE:** We go voting and everything. We follow that. We go along with it but we don't work on it during the campaigning.
- DZ:** At that time they were probably, there was during the probation years and women suffrage. Did they have any opinions on any of that stuff?

- SE:** I don't think so. Around us it was kept quiet.
- DZ:** If they did feel strongly about something they kept it to themselves.
- SE:** There was nothing they could do or try to do. They thought they would just wait and see how it would turn out.
- DZ:** But you did go and vote when you were voting age?
- SE:** I was on the election committee a number of times.
- DZ:** Was there a president which your parents felt strongly about?
- SE:** No not really.
- DZ:** What about you?
- SE:** I never really had one. I couldn't do any changing by talking to them anyway.
- DZ:** Do you remember what they were politically, Democratic or Republican, or NPL?
- SE:** No, I don't know what my parents were. We didn't pay much interest to that.
- DZ:** I think you answered this already. You were never involved in certain political parties or issues?
- SE:** No.
- DZ:** But you are interested in everyday things that happen and go on?
- SE:** Not everything, but things interfere with us or comes up for us like farm programs and this and that. I watch it pretty closely how it turns out.
- DZ:** You try to keep up with that. You do have some interest though.
- SE:** Oh yes. I still have some interest in farming.
- DZ:** Somebody has to stay on top of things right? Is there anything else we should talk about in politics?
- SE:** No, if it go through politics then that is where I come to the end.
- DZ:** Isn't there a saying that says, "Politics is what makes the world go around?"
- SE:** It still go around without it, or me. Where it stops, nobody knows.
- DZ:** That's good that you are interested enough to go voting and express your opinion. I jotted down a couple of things that we should have probably have talked about some other place but there weren't questions here on the paper. Your parents were quite religious and they went to church on a regular basis and they went to the homes. Did your mother or dad hold church offices. Were they deacon, deaconess, ushers, or trustees or anything?
- SE:** My dad was a deacon for many years until he got sick and then he just signed off and said I can't do it anymore. Mr. Wallace took it over. He was the beginner of this church. He worked hard to get the church going.

- DZ:** Another thing I was going to ask was, what are some of the things that you do now that you are retired. You were a trucker, farmer and now you are retired. What are some of the things you are interested in now?
- SE:** Well I wouldn't know. Just keep on living as long as I am able to. Hope for good health.
- DZ:** That's the main part. I know one of your hobbies is the train. Do you want to tell us about it?
- SE:** It may be too small of a deal. I don't know. I got it out here in the shed. Sometimes in the summer when I sit out there and have it going. There is a church right across the street; the preacher from the church across the road come a little early until the services start. He comes over and watches the train.
- The other day he was at the cafe. I knew him but I didn't know where he belonged to. He knew me. I said, "I can't think of your name but I know I know you." "Yes I was there twice in your little shed and we had your little train going. You still got it?" I said, "Yes, and I got it in better shape than I had it at that time. I got a tape now to play with it and it toots and whistles."
- DZ:** Do you have any other hobbies?
- SE:** I have those little tractors I collect.
- DZ:** Do you read a lot?
- SE:** I did read a lot but I had to give it up because of my eyes. They are just tired. What I do is a lot of puzzles. I do a lot of them. I do them once and when they are done I put them away. This is what I do now. I bought this little book and I find the words.
- DZ:** Words circles. Those are fun games. Words that are diagonal, horizontal, and vertical and then you pick out the words. That is good to do something like that because it keeps you young and alert.
- SE:** Your mother does that but she doesn't keep her lines straight so I got her a ruler to help her get used to making her lines straight. I don't quit until I've got the page done.
- DZ:** Do you watch very much TV?
- SE:** Not very much unless there is something that I want to watch like something special. Otherwise all those junk stories I don't watch.
- DZ:** Are you or were you ever a fisherman?
- SE:** No.
- DZ:** A golfer?
- SE:** No, but I like to watch it on TV.
- DZ:** So you have enough things to keep you occupied and make the time go by.
- SE:** Yes, sometimes I should have more rest. I'm going here and there and this and that.
- DZ:** Another thing I wanted to ask you about. You have a senior citizen center here, are you pretty active in that.

- SE:** Well, we just go there. Have our meals. I don't hold an office or anything.
- DZ:** Are the meals on a daily basis or what?
- SE:** Three a week. On Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays.
- DZ:** Do they have some activities at night sometimes?
- SE:** Yes. Sometimes on Friday nights they go rather late. They have bingo, sing, play pool, or visit.
- DZ:** So, there are some activities here for elderly people.
- SE:** Yes, we'll be up there tonight.
- DZ:** Or it would be golfing if the weather would be nice you would be there also.
- SE:** Golf, I never tried it. Sometimes I watch them and they miss it and I think I could do better than that. But if you are there I'm sure it's different.
- DZ:** I think so, yes. Is there anything else you would like to add about your family life, or your relationships or how your family felt about this country or this community? How your kids feel about the community?
- SE:** The kids were raised here but they left and went to California. They thought we should go out there too. I told them I would never move out there to live. I was here all those years and I want to stay here.
- DZ:** How about the Minneapolis area?
- SE:** I don't like there either. I don't like that town.
- DZ:** That's a big town.
- SE:** When it's winter it's cold there. At least in California it's warm. When they go to see the kids, Junior wants to take us along for about a week. We could go next week. It's alright to go but we don't want to stay.
- DZ:** You used to go to California and spend some time in the winter time?
- SE:** Just once.
- DZ:** Did you ever go south to Texas?
- SE:** We drove around there. We were in Texas just driving around. We talked about it the other day in the coffee shop about the driving with their trailers and fifth wheelers.
- When we drove the most miles it was in the 60's, me and Ester. We took the car just me and Ester and we made a lot of miles and a lot of towns and a lot of states. In the 60s we made two long trips which were over three thousands miles in thirty days. We did that twice.
- Seven of the kids moved to California and in 1974 we went over there the first time in a plane. From then on we would fly. The car we are done with, we don't travel like that too much anymore.
- DZ:** Boy, I bet, with all your trucking and vacations that you have taken that you have put a lot of miles on a vehicle.

SE: Oh, gosh. I traded trucks every other year there for a while and they always had 90,000 to 110,000 miles on them. I just traded it off and I had new tires and all.

With the four years I was alone, I was driving around a lot to Aberdeen to see the kids, Edwin was there. Ivan was living there yet, no he was dead by then.

Anyhow I spent a lot of time chasing back to California. One year I was to California and back, three times in eight months. Julia was my ticket buyer. She lived close to a friend who sells the tickets. She always calls her and tell her when a bargain is coming up, and says do your folks want to go someplace? You had better buy it now. So we always did that.

DZ: I had better give her my e-mail address or my phone number so she can do that for me! In the trucking business what was your best truck a Chevrolet or a Ford?

SE: Chevrolet. Always a Chevrolet. I tried a Dodge two year, it was alright. I hauled a lot of gravel too, and a lot of machinery, and horses, and cattle.

DZ: You hauled a little of everything.

SE: I hauled a lot of cattle to Fargo. At that time the Armour plant was new and built up and now it is completely shut down, so fast.

DZ: I used to work at that Armour plant at West Fargo in the summer time when I went to school in Valley City, ND. When I go through there now it disappoints me, you know, that it is in such bad shape.

SE: The exchange building was built when I was hauling. When they opened up they had a little shack there to do your book work. The stock building, the exchange building was three stories high and six commission firms in there, so when you do your work in there. I saw that building go up from scratch and a few years ago Julia and I drove over there. We went down to see that building and it was completely locked up. I went to the door and she took a picture of me, the picture is someplace. A nice building locked up. They rushed through so many years and then it was over.

DZ: What is your favorite make of car?

SE: It is still Chevrolet. This is the first Buick I'm driving now and I don't like it.

DZ: The next one might be Chevrolet. What's your favorite food?

SE: Oh, I guess pizza.

DZ: Pizza. Well, that a wrong food. I thought maybe you would say dumplings or

SE: That old already.

DZ: I'll bet you have eaten a lot of dumplings and kneofla.

SE: I can see our mothers working the dough almost every day.

We made ice for a number of winters for the father-in-law in Danzig for his meat market. There was no electricity, so they had to have ice summer cooling. There were two winters we could hardly get any ice because the lakes were so low. When you cut the ice it couldn't swim so it went down and you couldn't use it.

We fooled around at all the different dams they had and pasture reservoirs. They were dry so we had to go over to cold water lake and find a spot were it was deep enough. In some places it was eight feet deep. So we would cut it, me and Otto Hays and the crew. We hauled about 60 tons to Danzig.

Every day we had to cut a new section open. You have to take it all out or it freezes overnight and you can't use it. So we finished up one day went home in the evening and unloaded in the morning. I had Fred to help unload.

I drove on the ice and there was fresh snow on the place we cut out the day before. He moved to a different location and I drove over that spot. As soon as I stopped I was right on that spot that we cut out the day before. The ice started cracking and the truck was breaking through. Fred jumped out on that ice. He was lucky he didn't break through. It was hard enough to hold the truck moving and if I hadn't stopped I would have gotten over it. I stopped and looked around where the rest of them were. Just doing it that fast the truck went over and laid completely down.

DZ: Did you get out?

SE: I got out. I jumped out on the right side and Fred jumped out the left side. They were across the lake waiting for us to come. They saw us standing there. This was at Cold Water Lake. The truck was down, we had to get it out.

We had to go to Ashley to get block and tackle and timbers. The whole crew until evening to get the truck out of the ice. We fastened it to the other truck and dragged it home. It dried about four days here in Ashley. We had about three load of ice left and we hauled that.

Then I loaded the some furniture and we went to California, on a wet truck. I thought we are going to have trouble with water and everything in that truck.

I filled it with gas when we went through town and because the tank was full it didn't take anything. No gas problems! That was our first trip to California. That was in 1937. We stayed out over New Year and came back in 1938.

We were gone nine days. The truck worked for WPA at that time and we had only so many days and we had to have the truck on the job. So we had to hurry home and we did.

DZ: Did you work for WPA too?

SE: I couldn't work, the truck worked. I couldn't even drive it. From the beginning I drove it just so..... It was my truck so I thought I would drive it. Then they came up with a truck driver gets 5 cents an hour more. One of these men should drive the truck so they can get the 5 cents more an hour otherwise the 5 cents were lost. They couldn't give it to me.

So I kept my truck on there. That was when the new school house was built. My truck and Bob Hanson's, they used it for a scraper. They drove down and pulled off the scrapers, got most of it out. With the truck I was busy.

DZ: You said you did that for eighteen years.

SE: Then when I was done they didn't let me go. I said I haven't got my license and I don't know how in the world I can do it. So I went to Jamestown and traded it just to see how I could trade for a pickup.

So I got a new pickup. I had no truck and that ended that. The sales barn had two semis and no drivers. One of them he sold and one he had different drivers on. They never come home or there was always something. So he went after me and I drove that truck for about ten trips to St. Paul, MN. It was late fall, and after that I said this is enough.

In the summers with truck driving, combining, and swathing, I kept going anyway.

DZ: I see you have got an American flag in the corner there. When do you put that up?

SE: We do it every summer. Me and Schroeders. We got one there and we got one here. We heard, at the meetings, that it would be nice if people would show more flags. There are some who have got them here and there. I just open the door and put it on the side there, outside.

DZ: Is there anything else you would like to mention.

SE: I think I have mentioned too much already!

DZ: Well, that was a good interview.

SE: I don't know how they'll listen to it. What will they think of us old guys?! I can't think of anything else. I think I'm done, unless you've got another question. You got me into a lot of stories here with all this puzzle stuff. This is how I kill my time now.

DZ: Well at least you have a nice past time. Keeps you going on those long winter days.

SE: When I go to the doctor and he says at you're age you should have more rest. I feel it too. At any time I could just go lay down and rest.

DZ: There are a lot of people who can't rest and can't sleep so if you are able to sleep then that's good. Are there any more words or words of the wise.

SE: No, I think I said all of it. I could just say thank you for the trouble.

DZ: It was no trouble at all. It was a lot of fun and honor. Ok, I want to thank you my uncle, Sam Eszlinger, and this concludes our interview. Thanks again.

SE: You are welcome.