

Interview with Paul P. Welder (PW)

Conducted by Betty & Chris Maier (BM & CM)

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Transcription by Beverly H. Wigley

BM: Today is October 3rd, the year 2000, and I am Betty Meier and Chris Meier is also here with me. And we are volunteer interviewers for the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection at the North Dakota State University Libraries in Fargo. And it's a pleasure to have Paul P. Welder with us. And we are at his home in Linton, North Dakota and we're just going to start talking again. So, let's start out with some good stories. I want you to tell us, the last time we visited with you we started talking about relationships, ah, and what you called friends, or aunts and uncles or seniors or young people um, so can you tell us what you used to call older people when you were a child?

PW: Yes, they were uncles and aunts and, 14 not to 15 and ah, we had to, even though relatives, but if they were older people especially the neighbors, we had to call them "Vetter". Joe and Basel Eva, Vetter Philip, you know, we had to say "Vetter" to those people. They were not related at all but that was the way it was.

CM: Those were signs of respect...

PW: That was respect. And when, when the school superintendent came to school, it was so quiet that we almost didn't breathe. Or when the priest came to the house we were only not even heard or seen. We were, we were, that was something that we were the next thing to scared...of the priest, I mean.

BM: Did your folks teach you how to do this?

PW: Yeah, our, our folks taught us how to do all those things. That was respect.

BM: That's right.

CM: Before, before we get on into the context there, ah, the other thing on our last tape, tape number one, ah we left off on some of the times that you were working in the grocery store in your younger day and ah, we'd like you repeat some of those things about the prices of certain commodities that you recall ah, that had like price of gasoline, flour, sugar, ah etc. so...

PW: In, in 1924 I worked in the store in Glencross, South Dakota for my brothers-in-law and I remember like yesterday gas was 12¢ a gallon, a gallon of 36 syrup was 27¢, cheese was 9 and 10¢ a pound and like corn flakes, the big box was 17 and the little one was about 11. There was only four kinds of, of, of cereals then: oatmeal, Cream of Wheat, and corn flakes and Post Toasties and I think there was maybe later then either puffed wheat or puffed rice came in. That was up until almost to 1928. Twenty-eight I worked in the store again and at, even in '28, flannel that the women bought when there was a baby born, they would buy 10 yards of flannel for 6 and 7¢--a yard. And some of the dry goods that the women used for their better Sunday clothes was maybe 25¢--a yard. Thread was maybe 3¢ a spool.

CM: Candy bars?

PW: Candy bars were 5¢ a bar and they weighed ¼ pound. Mr. Good Bar, Hershey Bar, Baby Ruth, and it was, I'm not too sure, but it could have been Milky Way. There was about four or five and they weighed four ounces and they were one nickel. And bananas were a nickel a pound.

CM: Did they have anything like soda pop or ah...

PW: Yes, there was pop and there were in, in the round, those little round bottles and they were a nickel a bottle. And ah, ice cream came and that was packed in ice and a great big barrels of ice cream in there and then a canvas around it and filled with ice and that came in and this is the way it would keep until it was sold. But usually ice cream was maybe just on Saturdays or Sundays and that was then all sold out. But a nickel for a great big, big cone of ice cream.

CM: And ah, you also had mentioned that ah, you were close to a Indian reservation.

PW: Yes.

CM: Can you tell us some of your experiences with ah, those people in those earlier days?

PW: Well ah, Glencross is the place where the Indians got their checks from the Indian reservation and they mostly lived up in Little Eagle. And they'd come down with wagons maybe sometimes with 13, 14, 12 wagons and maybe two, three people and more to a wagon, especially in the summertime. And they'd bring a bunch of dogs along and some extra ponies that ran along. And they would camp a little ways from the store and then they would get their checks and then they would start spending their money.

BM: What year was this?

PW: 1924, 73 first year. And, and and ah, they would spend the last nickel but there was always, there was one thing that they did long towards evening, they would buy vanilla. They would, the men would come and say, "Wanna buy vanilla. Mother wants to bake cake". And so they would buy a few bottles of vanilla and go back to the wagons. Pretty soon they'd come again. And they'd stink from vanilla and they, they really got drunk on it. And they spent their last nickel. I remember just like yesterday where a honeymoon couple came along and they bought a few things. He bought some ah, bracelet or something for this bride but they had one dime left and I sold them a comb. They had their last dime to spend, spend their last dime. They, they usually came down in the afternoon and then they would stay overnight and then the next morning they'd start doing back.

BM: It must have been the only shopping center then for them that was close by.

PW: At that time yes, but then in 19 hundred and 28 there was another store in Glencross and then there was...but they usually came to the Mattern store because my brother-in-law could talk the Indian language pretty good. And I understood some of it too like money and stuff like that but he could speak it pretty good. And ah, during the course of the week if there was some summer sausage that was dried up or meat that had, you know, little maggots on there, the brother-in-law would take a, a vinegar rag when, when they were coming and wipe it all off and then we sold it to the Indians at a bargain price. And they bought it all up. They were happy to buy it.

BM: What tribe was this?

PW: They were the Sioux.

BM: The Sioux. Okay, yeah.

PW: Hm hm, they were the Sioux. And ah, they, we would have to package when we knew they were coming like 15 pounds or 7 pounds of potatoes, 3 pounds of prunes, 3 pounds of apricots, 5 pounds of rice, that was all packaged. And when what was not sold like dried fruit, we had to put back into the boxes because that would dry out. And if the inspector came and found it, it was less than what was on the...so we had to put it back in the boxes and, and sell it as dry as it was already. You didn't sell the moisture, you sold the, the products. Rice, if, was about 3 pounds for 15¢ and if some of the big families, which you'd have many times, and they would buy a whole 100 pound sack of rice. That was in the neighborhood of \$5.00 a sack. Sugar was \$2.98 a hundred pounds, \$3.19. Flour was never more than \$1.98 a hundred pounds. That was to '24 yet. In '28 it was a little bit higher but not all that much. There was two, two kinds of syrup, the dark and the white and in half gallons and in gallons. That was it. And like ah, in, in groceries--tomatoes, a big can and a little can. I mean there was no five different varieties, just two. Same thing with beans. Everything like that. And the grocery shelf was all we had was big as the dog and cat shelves are now in the stores. The whole groceries; everything, everything, everything.

CM: And during the prohibition days and so forth ah, did ah, your parents and neighbors all have their own stills and ah, for their own consumption?

PW: The stills were maybe, maybe only one in a, in a small neighborhood but most of them I think made their own home brew, most of them. My dad did and, and most of the neighbors. We had one neighbor that sold that he brewed. He was in the business and he sold a lot to whoever came along. And ah, they called it moonshine but now they call it red eye. It's still introduced at some of the weddings. But any wedding there at the time they were in the houses and they all had this moonshine and they all drank red eye. Everybody. There was no other whisky and beer was homemade. We had a lot of homemade beer and everybody...

BM: How about wine?

PW: Wine? There was, that was for years, in the fall of the year they would buy a, a big bag of raisins or grapes and that was many times 30 gallons of wine in the cellar and, and sometimes two barrels, a smaller barrel yet. We, they never, very seldom they ran out of wine. And that was sometimes it was even used when they had Kraut, Grumbeere und Flasch.

BM: And what is that?

PW: That's potatoes and side pork and cabbage, sauerkraut.

BM: And then you'd have wine with it.

PW: Wine with it ja, they then, and bread and, and we'd have wine with it. Which we, we didn't, we didn't like wine when we were young though.

BM: Well, that sort of goes back to some of your ancestral heritage, too, because aren't you sort of of French descent?

PW: No. No we were, no, I don't think so. I don't think that we've got French in us. I think we are mostly ah from the Russian side and from the Germans.

- BM:** From the German side.
- PW:** I think we were born Germans.
- BM:** Hm, I'll have to check.
- PW:** And we were in the Alsace area.
- BM:** In Russia.
- PW:** In Russia.
- BM:** But out of Germany...
- PW:** In Germany, in Germany, they were in the Berlin area but...
- BM:** Oh, okay.
- PW:** ...just where I don't know.
- BM:** You weren't near it then. Yeah, some of the families come from the France area. I know that was German one day and French the next and they have a different way of ah, cooking and using wine.
- PW:** Oh, ja. Ja, oh in, in, in, when I was over to France in 1994, every time we went to a restaurant for eight people they had three bottles of wine setting on there. It was warm. It was not chilled but that was the wine on there. The wine you got free, the water you had to buy.
- BM:** Chris, you had another question.
- CM:** Oh ah, on the wine, did, did your parents, ah, have wine for lunch during noonday meal?
- PW:** Very seldom. Only to, it, it was just about, I would say as much as I can remember when it was this Kraut, Grumbeeren, Flasch. That was maybe wine with it. That was not too much of that.
- CM:** Not too much with it, okay.
- PW:** In 1923, when we built the house out there, and then dad had quite a bit of wine there and ah, he would bring this wine out maybe around 4:00 or so and give everybody some wine, a little glass of wine or something like that. And they had, you know, lunch too which was home baked stuff. In 1923, when we built the house, my mother and my sisters used up 5200 pounds of flour. That I remember real well because mother repeated that many times...176 tausend Pfund Mehl, in hundred pound sacks. My sister, Mary, was maybe, she baked the most. She was, ah, then maybe 21 years old or something like that and she would, there's many times that she would bake four cakes a day, you know, because the people that worked there. And we were 13 in the family so it was not one cake, it was two cakes.
- CM:** You bet.
- BM:** I believe it, yeah, hm hm.
- PW:** So they used up all that flour.
- BM:** So family life was, was something that you, you remember a lot of.
- PW:** Oh, yes.

- BM:** There are some values that always come along from parents to children. What are some of the one values that they emphasized and that you emphasized with your children?
- PW:** Well, it, it was a daily practice of prayers, I mean, before, before meal, meals you prayed, I mean and your night prayer. And there was different prayers and, of course, for entertainment, our entertainment mother sang with us a lot and then the girls would crochet and then do some tatting and what have you. And we boys when we got bigger we played checkerboard and had different games and stuff. In the wintertime we had a pond behind the house. We were out on the ice a lot and snow banks and, and we had home made sleds and we would go sleighing and it was different.
- BM:** Hm hm. Just think though if there'd only been one of you in the family. This way you had all 15 of you to...
- PW:** Ah, we were only 13 home at one time.
- BM:** interact...13...
- PW:** The oldest was already married when the youngest one was born. My youngest sister was a aunt when she was about three months old. That's when my first nephew was born. And then one of my sisters, the ah, third one from the top down, grandpa and grandma raised her because she was already two years old and couldn't walk. And then they took her and, of course, she turned out to be all right but she had priority. She ate more candy in the week than grandpa. And she was with him until she got married. Grandma died and then Katie was still with grandpa until she got married and then she left grandpa. And then I had to sleep with grandpa. In, in his house but the houses were only 300 feet apart, grandpa's house. And then I had priority. I got the candy and the apples and the soda crackers.
- BM:** So did your, do husbands and wives, did they have equal authority?
- PW:** No.
- BM:** No? What...
- PW:** No.
- BM:** What made it different?
- PW:** I think, I, I think that the wives were, at that time, the mothers were the next thing to slaves. They worked, and they, they would work late and when the husband came in from the field or from the barn or what have you, they were just about done for the evening. And mothers had to, had to knit and had to, they had to bake and get up early in the morning and make the doughs and, and they worked much, much longer.
- BM:** How about decisions on the farm?
- PW:** Pardon?
- BM:** How about some decisions that were made on the farm?
- PW:** Even so, the, the dads had kind of, at, at least in our house I think it was. And what furniture there was, well, it was necessities so if we had to buy an extra bed that came along but there was no such a...And too, where, well clothes, well, when we got eight/ten years old, they'd take us to Eureka to the bazaar

then they would buy our winter coats and what have you and that was it. And I remember we had one little, nice sheepskin that was almost handed down from the oldest brother to almost to the youngest. For church and what have you. And we, we had our own every day coats/clothes but the Sunday coat was kind of something special.

BM: That was saved for good...

PW: Ja, ja and it was nice. It was a nice one.

BM: Did, as you got older, did, ah, you enter into the decision-making then with your father?

PW: Well, not too much. Dad made the decisions until you were almost, until we, until we really got older. By the time I was well, 21, I was a hired man a lot of times. The neighbors didn't have no boys so I would work there because there was more bigger boys there. And school and then one of them, the oldest brother went to college then one of the brothers went as far as the 6th grade, I think, but then he had to stay home. Then the brother older than I am went to high school and college and I had to stay home. When I, I wrote my 7th grade exams and walked home from school, that was the end. No more.

BM: You didn't go back.

PW: I didn't dare because we had so many horses and stuff and we had to stay home. We had as high as 28 horses sometimes. And a stud horse on top of it.

BM: Do, were you able to express angers and sadness and fears...

PW: Well...

BM: ...when you were growing up?

PW: I suppose anger was maybe there. The boys would get into each other's hair but, but no, not as far as family. No, no. I mean...

BM: How about love and affection?

PW: Well, I mean, it wasn't like now. Yeah, we, we kind of, we were close, we were close. We were a close-knit family but just the same, I mean, it wasn't like now. You couldn't express your love like you do now. What would mother do if 13 would've come along, I mean...

BM: Well, how were the children disciplined then?

PW: Ah, our dad could only just say "no", it was "no", and when it was "yes", it was "yes", and we all understood that real well. And this is how we were disciplined.

BM: And you didn't question it?

PW: No way!

BM: How about mom?

PW: Well, mom was a little bit more lenial but ah, it was still "no" and "yes".

BM: No spankings?

- PW:** Ah, if we deserved it, yeah, maybe we'd get it but it was not that bad. And the worst thing was when dad would say, "You're gonna get it tomorrow." This took so long and then there was not much to it but that was the hardest.
- BM:** Ah, dear. Did you, did your ah, family ever seek outside advice about anything?
- PW:** Ah, really, I, I wouldn't say yes to that because I don't think we needed it. I think dad knew what was going on and grandpa was there with us so they were experienced so it came from them, I mean. And dad was a very good carpenter so he did a lot of carpenter work for neighbors. He built a lot of barns and stuff and I mean, a lot of granaries and helped build houses and, and ah, we ah, we all kind of, we all followed I mean. I could do plastering and carpentering and when I got married, my brother was (we lived a mile apart) we did do all our own mechanical work, our electrical, our plumbing, our carpenter work, everything. We didn't need nobody.
- BM:** So when you socialized, did you go out? And I'm talking about your parents mostly now. Ah, did they go visit the neighbors and...
- PW:** Oh, yes, more so than what they do now. Many evenings and they would play cards and they would, oh yes and they had...everybody they had a names day that was celebrated big. There was red eye. And they had somebody that played the accordion and they danced and they had a good time.
- BM:** Now you went to ah, were there any non, non-German neighbors then that you went to?
- PW:** No, no.
- BM:** Were they all German?
- PW:** But we were almost at the end east of Zeeland to the Catholic community. We had to the north, we had Baptists and then to the northeast we had, we had more Baptists and then we had Reformed and Congregational and we had Lutherans and we had, we had Seventh Adventists all around us.
- BM:** So your family socialized with everyone.
- PW:** Yes! There was no such a thing as ah, we, we didn't know there was a difference between Catholics and Protestants. No way. And my dad ah, he did carpenter work for all of them and we were neighbors and we were together. We played ball on Sundays in the summer and the wintertime we went together and we had popcorn and apples.
- BM:** Did you go dancing a lot?
- PW:** Oh, yes, we danced. Not, not that much but there was barn dances and granary dances and, and in the houses, yeah, we sometimes danced but it wasn't too much.
- BM:** During the names day celebrations, was there dancing then?
- PW:** Oh yes, for, for some places, yes. After we were married ja, we had, we had some pretty good dances sometimes. We'd kind of go, about three/four go together. We'd 320 hand a, we would rent the hall in Zeeland and we had some real doozies. Red eye and by 10:30 most of them already knew that, that it was real red eye.
- BM:** Oh, it only lasted one night, huh?

- PW:** It lasted one night but in the earlier days, ah, some of them in some places, they had weddings for two days. Yes.
- BM:** Did you have aunts and uncles living close by?
- PW:** Well, the aunt, the closest one was 14 miles. That was the close, that was, that was Joe Weigel and then Tony Weigel lived about 60 miles away and Frank Weigel (that died earlier) that was, that was my dad's sisters now that got married those Weigels but mother's side, my uncles were up in Harvey, North Dakota and Selz.
- BM:** So you didn't get to see them?
- PW:** No. Oh, they'd come occasionally but no, no; very seldom.
- BM:** So did your other, your relatives that were close, did they come to visit you and...
- PW:** Oh ja, yes they, ja...
- BM:** ...did you return the visits?
- PW:** ...they came a lot and we went out there to them a lot. We ah, see and, and my Uncle Frank died when I was only four years old. And so, ah, we, and dad went out there a lot to visit his sister. She never got remarried and raised ten children.
- BM:** What a brave soul.
- PW:** Yeah.
- BM:** Now you mentioned in the beginning religious teachings were very important in your family. Did you have a church close by or was it held in the homes?
- PW:** The church was seven miles from home so we'd just go to church on Sundays...
- BM:** Oh, you went there then.
- PW:** ...and maybe during Lent on some Friday evening but very seldom. But, no, we ah, in the evening especially during Lent, the whole family kneeled down and prayed the rosary. Mother would lead the rosary and then even the litany, you know. And that was, that was the, the practice.
- BM:** Yeah, I see.
- PW:** And that was it. And that was not missed.
- BM:** But she, she did that.
- PW:** Mother, mother...
- BM:** Dad, dad made sure you got there, huh?
- PW:** Yes, and mother was our religion teacher. She taught us the catechism, you know. And it was German. You had to memorize everything. And it, it was hard but that was it. There was, there was no "no".

- BM:** Now, Paul, you speak German and I know you read German and growing up in a strictly a German-speaking community, did you find any ah, hostility or suspicions towards the German-speaking people here?
- PW:** No.
- BM:** No?
- PW:** No. We ah, we, I mean, there was nobody that spoke any different language there and, and that was the only thing that was and, and we were all in, in harmony with everything.
- BM:** How about during World War II?
- PW:** No, no it wasn't because in World War II for the first, when it started, I still worked for the highway department. I lived in Ashley but all the highway department people were German-talking people. And I stayed with a old German family, I boarded there and when ah, Hitler, if it ah, won someplace or made advances, that old man was kind of happy. 382 Je! Tag uns gewidder geseht.
- BM:** Which means?
- PW:** Which means that he was kind of glad that Hitler won, I think.
- BM:** Okay.
- PW:** But ah, that was the only thing and other than that I, I ah don't think there was any discrepancy about anything.
- BM:** Hm hm. Can you, do you identify people by their German accent then, or it is just pretty much...
- PW:** It was pretty much the same accent; pretty much the same. Now those people that came from Hungaria, they spoke a little bit different. And we had, in fact ah, my ah, brother got married to a girl that her dad was a Hungarian. And von Ungarn. And they spoke a little bit different but it was not all that much, I mean. They, they, kind of because he was about the only one in that area there. And ah, so we really...
- BM:** So he sort of slipped into your, your style of German.
- PW:** He kind of slipped into us then.
- BM:** Do you children or any of your grandchildren speak German?
- PW:** My children speak German as good as I do.
- BM:** They do?
- PW:** They do because we taught them the German. And when my son calls me from the Carolinas, we talk German. That's what he wants. And ah, like ah, the son in Bismarck, when he comes we talk German. Just they want, they want to do that.
- BM:** Keep in practice, I suppose.
- PW:** Keep in practice. And, and my grandchildren, I think every one took German in school in, in their--during high school. In fact, my ah, grandson, Patrick Esteson, which his dad is a Norwegian, he took German

five years; four in high school and one in college. We get along real good. He speaks high German but we can communicate real good. And the rest of them, now I've got one granddaughter now in Grand Forks that wants to take up, she is taking up German and she may want to teach German subjects when she gets out in her teaching. She's got a year left.

BM: I think that's great. I'm going to skip over now to politics.

PW: Okay.

BM: Did we cover everything in the German...no...

CM: No, matchmaking.

BM: Oh, yes, we've got to do matchmaking. [423] Kummererei, is that?

PW: Kupple.

BM: Kubble?

PW: Kupple.

BM: Okay. Tell us about, what, what, what does that mean?

PW: Well, kupple means that somebody would come bring some, some young man to some place where he knew some girl; somebody's daughter and he would bring this young man and then they would introduce them to each other which they never had seen before. Then they would say the good part about them and if the girl would, would like them and then they would, they would get married. I remember where my oldest sister, when they brought the kupple (now she was the only one that had a kupple). And they brought him and but later was my father-in-law but he knew my dad real well because they were not too far apart and, and so he brought this Conrad Mattern and introduced him to Caroline and of course, I suppose when they brought that kupple, I think those girls kind of dressed into some Sunday clothes or a little better. And then they, I don't know what else went on but sometimes that Kupplemann would come and he would even bring a little jug of whisky along so when they, when they, when that marriage was done and then they would have a few drinks.

BM: Did the girl have anything to say about this?

PW: Not, well, she looked him over and if she liked him, she'd say "yes" and if she didn't she said "no". And most of those people that were kuppled together with those matchmakers their marriages lasted until death do, till death do us part. And that was it. And there was hundreds of them like that. Now my older sisters from then on they ah, see but my older sister was that guy was kuppled then in the wedding that his brother came along then he got married to one of my sisters. And then here was, oh ja, John Welk, ja he got married to my second oldest sister. And ah, somebody brought him to see my sister Barbara. And then, of course, John got married to sister Barbara and then his brother, Gabe, got married to my sister Mary. I had two Welk brothers that were cousins of Lawrence Welk that got married to my sisters. And two Mattern brothers that got married to my sisters.

BM: And three Weigel brothers.

PW: Three Weigels got married to my dad's sisters.

BM: Oh, to your dad's sisters.

PW: Yeah.

BM: Oh, okay. Well, they, they didn't have cars to go any place, I suppose, so that they were, they stayed right within the community then.

PW: Yes! And, and I remember definitely where my dad bought 40 gallons of gasoline in the fall of the year. We had one car and by spring we still had some of that gasoline in that barrel. That's what they used up to go to church and back and to the neighbors, little bit. And in the wintertime, from the, I can remember definitely as soon as there as a little snow, the car was put in the shed, put on jacks and then the sled came out and that was it. Seven miles to church Christmas Eve.

CM: Midnight Mass.

PW: Midnight Mass. Ja. But as far as, as we younger guys, we had our girlfriends. We didn't get no more kuppel.

BM: You didn't. Do you recall what was the time element from the time that the two fathers got together until the couple got married?

PW: Not, not long.

BM: Not very long.

PW: That, that, it took maybe two weeks; everything was over with. About a few days later they'd come and they'd go to Ashley and get the license. There was no blood test, no nothing. And then that was, well, the next Sunday was the wedding. But they had to be announced in church three times. Dreimol [496] Ausgruffe. But we were pretty smart. We went in in All Souls' Day and All Saints' Day and a Sunday see so it wasn't...

BM: The three times within a short time, huh?

PW: A short time, ja.

BM: Oh you guys worked the angles then too, didn't you?

PW: Oh, yes. We took shortcuts.

BM: Ah, dear.

PW: And for their honeymoons they would pick them up and take them along home to the house. And then most of the year like, most of them stayed with their parents, I mean, with the, with the, with the husband's parents for a year or so before they kind of got their own little farm or something.

BM: Hm hm, hm hm. Life was different then. Ah, your parents, were they interested in politics?

PW: My dad was very much interesting in politics.

BM: Oh, that's good!

PW: He was a, he was a very good politician.

BM: Uh, huh.

PW: And that's where I learned it from. When Moses was governor, I was working for the state highway department--as a democrat.

BM: Well, did your ah, did they actively get involved then? Did your dad get actively involved in...

PW: Well, he ah, he was like a...

BM: ...did he run for public...

PW: Ja, in the election days he would be the judge, you know, and different things like that. Yeah, he would campaign a little bit for some of the people that he...I remember this, this, remember that definitely the way it was. At one time there was eight guys running for sheriff in our county and about the same amount for county commissioner for our third section of the county. And my dad and my neighbor which were good, good neighbor and they said, "Well, we can vote for him; he won't get it anyhow!" And so many of them thought the same thing and he became our commissioner.

BM: Oh!

PW: So the politics got fried in their own grease! And another thing I remember about politics, that was, there were about six miles from our place by the name of Dollinger. And this sheriff came out about, it was about the fifth that came to this place but Gottlieb was not at home. So he said, and we talked a little bit. He said, "Well," he said, "well be sure and tell Gottlieb that he should vote for me" and he said, [545] "Oh ja, da vote für die der reuchen finf versprocher". And he'd promised five of them already. That was politics those days!

BM: And it's still politics today, isn't it? Ah, did they, did he ever go to rallies then?

PW: Oh yes, they would have some, you know, somebody would come in and then they would buy a keg of beer, you know, and some place and then they would...yeah, they had rallies already. Not, not in the early when I was real smaller yet but later before I was able to vote, that was already coming in.

BM: Now this was primarily your father. Your mother wasn't really interested in politics.

PW: Well, she went along. They went to the schoolhouse and voted and of course, I think the way the father said, the mother voted.

BM: I don't think that's the way it is today.

PW: No, no. Politics are different now.

BM: Did ah, what was their attitude towards prohibition and, and ah, women's voting? Did you...

PW: Well, woman voting, that was already before I started voting. But when prohibition came out that was ah, that was an easy one in our area. Everybody wanted it. And I was on the election board and then those old people would come in and they would, we would say, "Well, ja well, [575] des saufen". We'd say, "Na, aber grosse aber bete, Kätner grottner neue laufen, Kätner trinke ab. Biße Schnappskeppe, han ja vote, yes!" See we, dad had the judge and we judges went in and we were both for it, so we voted it in big.

BM: So how frequently have you voted?

PW: How?

BM: Frequently. How often have you voted in elections?

PW: I don't think I ever missed one election where I didn't.

BM: Didn't miss a one, huh?

PW: I think I was election clerk and judge for many, many years in our precinct--many, many years.

BM: Now ah, is that true in local and state and national?

PW: I, I, I, I think it all, especially you know out there where we were. I mean we were, we ah, we were kind of interesting in it because there was always one commissioner that we didn't like. It was kind of, especially in the fall, in the general.

BM: Did your parents ever, ah, show real disagreement or agreement with the president?

PW: I think they were all against Wilson.

BM: Oh! And did they agree with any one president?

PW: No, they, they were against him.

BM: They were against him but did they have real agreement with any other president?

PW: Well, I, I don't know. Really, I mean, those days ah, the president we knew his name and that was the, the extent of it. And presidents, you never heard that presidents at all those speeches and stuff. That was, that was not even talked about. He was the president. You never heard anything.

BM: How about the governor?

PW: Well, governor, I mean, when it really got interesting when [614] Langer ran for governor. And all those old people, all those old people in our areas they, they all voted for Langer. Because Langer came out and openly said, "And if we get into a war, I'm going to guarantee you that our boys will not go across the ocean." And ours were the first one to go. I heard Langer say that myself. And I was working for the highway department; I lived in Ashley. And the next day in every street corner you'd see those men say, "[627] Wo denn a miß a mir vote. Unsere Buwe braucht nit Overseas geht." And they really, he really, but he went in big. I was in the election board and all of those old people that came in there if you said, Well, who do you want to vote for school superintendent, [633] Kleagy or Bushman?" "Na, na, for the Langer." Until it got to that, well, for the governor, for the Langer and then from then on they'd, they'd say, "[637] Ha vote wie wid, vote wie wid because they'd have the judge, you know, the judge, we were busy on election days. Old people would come and we, we had to go in there with them.

BM: You had, because they didn't...

PW: Yeah, they, they didn't know...

BM: They didn't read the...

- PW:** No, no, they couldn't. And, but, but Langer went in big. He was already dead--he still got some votes. That's politics.
- BM:** Yeah, that's politics, isn't it?
- PW:** I'll tell you another one that my father-in-law, he was a pretty good politician. And ah, here was this, he was never a married man and, and he was running for state's attorney. And then he ah, approached my father-in-law in Ashley, you know, in town and my father-in-law said, "Well, maybe if he would maybe bring some whisky out there or buy some and I'd take it out there, maybe then". So old Schubig buys him a gallon of whisky and takes it out and he didn't get a vote in that precinct! So when he saw him on the street and then old, my father-in-law would go to this side of the street and that's how all this prevented but finally they ran into each other and he said, "Say, 667 Beauchamp!" and then my father-in-law said, "Ja, that's politics!" That's politics.
- BM:** Well, that's interesting! My one, my next question is that, does the German-Russian people take a moral stand, a moral stand probably on telling the truth or ah, I don't know. They did take a moral stand, though, on ah, family, religion...
- PW:** Yes, very much so.
- BM:** And politics was something else.
- PW:** Well, the women were not too much involved in politics but they voted the way the man wanted it. And you didn't hear women talk about politics, you know, you know, before the election, I mean, that was not that great.
- BM:** Hm hm, hm hm. Okay, ah, now you were a farmer...
- PW:** Yes.
- BM:** ...and your father was a farmer.
- PW:** Yes, and grandpa.
- BM:** And grandpa was a farmer.
- PW:** Yes.
- BM:** And so you sort of passed on this knowledge.
- PW:** Right.
- BM:** Was there any other part of you got information such as the neighbors, or ah, farmer magazines or the county extension service or where, implement dealers? Did you get any, any...
- PW:** No, no when I, as I grew up I started working in the fields with five horses and a gang plow and you'd plow all day and come home. And, and somebody was drilling and, and then when you were done with that then you'd pick the rocks off the fields and then that was it. There was no spraying, there was nothing until [712] bindering time came and [713] time. And then it was [714] and put it big stacks and finally it was threshed in big threshing machines. And until finally, well in 19 hundred and 38, dad bought the first tractor, a 1530. And ah, then we, we used that and we, we got away from horses and

we used that tractor. And then of course, in '42 I bought a new [726] then I got away from the horses. But we had as high as 24 and 28 horses in our barns. And a stud horse to boot. Get up at 4:00 in the morning and brush them down and harnessed as high as 24 and 25 to go out in the fields. We sometimes worked five teams. And ah, then you'd work from, go out at 6:00 in the morning and by the time sun went down the horses were unharnessed and everything was ready and you gave them the last feed, and went to bed, and the next morning at 4:00 you got up again.

BM: Now did you have, you milked cows though.

PW: We milked cows too, ja.

BM: And ah, who did that milking...

PW: Well, ah...

BM: ...the girls?

PW: ...as long as the girls were home they did then we finally when we boys grew into it, well, we, we milked but ah, it was mostly the girls did the milking and well, by the time I got bigger then, then the girls were married and, and then I helped to milk and my brother, John, was a good milker.

BM: Did you raise chickens or anything like that?

SIDE TWO

CM: ...fall of the year.

PW: In the fall of the year there was, there was always a lot of cabbage out there that they cut and made sauerkraut and maybe sometimes a 30-gallon barrel full of cabbage that was cut into sauerkraut. And potatoes, maybe ah, half a wagonload full, 50, maybe 25-30 bushel of potatoes that went in to the cellar for the winter. And then there was a melon patch, a [7] Bastand. There was, there was pumpkins out there and watermelons and Kochmelone which I still raise today.

CM: Still raise the 8 citron today.

PW: I had some this year's 9 citron, yes, I've got five of them, pretty good ones.

BM: Now, I'm not familiar with that one, can you tell us what you used it for?

PW: They are, they grow like a watermelon but they're hard, you got to cook them. You make sauce with them. I take and I, I add pineapple to them and I add raisins to some of them and some of them just the insides where the kernels are, I take them out and take that soft deal and I add just lemon like the way mother used to make it. And this is very good sauce.

BM: My goodness, I never heard of it! Boy, I'm learning more...

PW: Do you want to see how it looks when it's canned?

BM: Uh, huh.

CM: I don't believe it!

BM: Now you said you had gardens and you had citron...

PW: We had citrus in there...

BM: Okay.

PW: ...and, and a lot of those old, black-style, black radishes. They were, they were winter radishes they called them.

BM: They were winter radishes, right?

PW: And they get, they got big. They got big. They were maybe 8", 10" long and 2 ½"-3" in diameter. And you would bring them in and they were kept up in the cellar for a long time in to the winter. So there was all that, all those vegetables and, and there was not that much stuff bought.

CM: How about rutabagas and ah...

PW: We didn't have that. We didn't, we had kohlrabies a lot of them all the time but those were not stored for the winter. They were picked in the garden and eaten as they came along.

BM: So what did you do with this [29] cistern? Tell me what you did...

PW: With the [30] citrons?

BM: Um hum.

PW: We would, mother would cook them up in to a maybe ah, a ah, two-gallon kettle or maybe even bigger. And then she would add lemon to it. And lemon and sugar and that was made in to a sauce and that was good.

BM: And that was canned then?

PW: No, that was, that was when the kettle was empty, there was more cooked...

BM: Oh!

PW: ...and those, those...

BM: So you kept the, the, you kept the 34 citron just like...

PW: ...the [35] citrons...

BM: ...you kept the squash.

PW: ...were kept, yes. They were kept for a long time. They would keep a long time.

BM: Um hum. You know there were a lot of techniques in, ah, this ethnic cooking that we have lost today.

PW: Yes, they, they could preserve...Now I remember when mother would can like meat. Now she would, she would ah, she would fry it in a fry pan and then she would put it in to a crock and keep adding some lard on there and that kept for a long time, you know, fried like that. And they bought that sausage in cans, I mean, maybe 20- pound cans that was in oil. That was laying in oil, it was like this baloney now but it was in oil. Oh, we bought that way later in to the, in to the '30s yet and later than that.

BM: So you didn't make your own sausage and...

PW: Oh, yes! We, when, when our family was big and when dad still butchered, we sometimes butchered ten pigs a year. And in the fall of the year we would butcher and then he would put the halves and the side pork in to the brine and then in, comes the end of winter, March, then we would smoke it. We had smoke-cured ham and side pork until the new came over the summer. And that was hanging in the granary and not a fly or nothing went on there because it was salted down and smoked. And that just stayed like that and that was real good stuff.

BM: I bet it was!

PW: Yeah, dad would butcher and we'd have a lot of sausage and head cheese and, and all that stuff.

BM: So your mom, then, made all those ethnic sausages and...

PW: Well, we'd, ja, dad and whatever...

BM: ...foods then.

PW: ...and then mom made her own laundry soap, a lot of it. And rendered as high as 10, 12 gallons of lard in when we butchered in the fall. And that was to the whole year. We had a big butter churn so we would maybe turn eight gallons of cream into butter in one day and then she would, she would render that and run it through and then that kept for months.

BM: Hm hm, hm hm. Any other...

CM: How about baked foods? Bake...bakery.

BM: Yeah, bake ah, I'm sure she made all the noodles and, and ah...

PW: Everything, everything.

BM: ...everything like that.

PW: When our whole, whole family was there they'd sometimes bake, especially the summer that we built the house in '23. Mary would bake three times a week, three days a week and always 18 loaves, three big pans full. Three loaves sitting in a pan and then she had six pans.

BM: Boy, that was mass production.

CM: Did, did any member of the family stay home on Sundays to cook the Sunday meal while the rest of them went to church?

PW: Definitely yes. Sometimes the rooster was still running around the yard the morning. By the time they got home from church, the soup was on the table with the rooster. That was, that well, we had a real good root cellar so on Saturdays they would butcher, you know, the meat that we used on Sundays. But oh, there was always...we were so many children. We, and we had one car, maybe only eight went to church or, or seven and the rest stayed home. So some stayed home.

BM: You know there was something else that I, I forgot to ask you, when we were talking about agriculture. Ah, I wanted to ask what the land was like.

PW: Okay, I'll give you description of our land. We had, dad had ah, 1400 acres of land out there. And we had, after I bought, and then we divided it up because Pete farmed then too. We kind of but I still had, I

had 1200 acres of land at one time. But anyhow, our land, we had one quarter of land that we could not work north and south. We had to work it east and west because it was all on a down slope and the water would get in on the north side of the [87] and run out on the south side, we had to work it east and west. I could open, not to the whole 106 acres, but most of it with a two-foot post in the other end, I could open my field. And then this went through a whole mile like that. It was, we had pretty good, level land. There was a few knolls in the east but that was in the pastures.

BM: How about the quality of the soil?

PW: We had pretty good, black soil, pretty rich soil.

BM: Black soil?

PW: Yeah. We, we raised good crops. We had pretty good soil.

BM: How many problems other than the water, ah, with weeds or...

PW: Not, no, not those because we would fallow some, you know. And, and like I say, they'd burn those stubbles down and burned up the weeds. There was not much left. And they weren't scattered and they were in straw piles and the straw piles were burned if we didn't use them and that was it.

BM: So the next year's crop, then, wasn't infested with a lot of weeds.

PW: No, no, no.

BM: It was relatively clean.

PW: There was sometimes a little [100] mustard there but they didn't amount to nothing.

BM: Quack grass?

PW: No.

BM: No?

PW: Quack grass. The last quack grass when I farmed, the last quack grass that we had we went out with the farm hand. There was only a few spots, picked it up and took it home in to the hog pen and the hogs destroyed it. There was no quack grass on our land but now there is. Not too much but there's quack grass there. We didn't have no problem with quack grass.

BM: Do you have any questions that you want to ask, Chris? Ah, is there something that you want to talk about that we didn't ask?

PW: I, I don't know. The only thing that I can tell you is, you know, like when we used to have five teams out there in the field, three plowing and two drilling or one dragging and one drilling and that was about the extent of it. And then we'd header and ah, we had six horses on the header and then those header boxes and they filled up pretty fast. So we had to unload all that and pitch that and we had 640 acres right around the, around the cultivation, so we had put that in and take it off.

BM: Oh, yeah. Well, this has been a pleasure. Just a plain pleasure! Ah, I know that there's a lot of other stories that we could ask you but our time is sort of up.

- PW:** Well, don't worry about the time. That clock goes and it keeps going. Don't worry about that.
- BM:** Well, you, we really appreciate all of the stories that you've shared with us and ah, preserving the German from Russia heritage. We really, ah, have gone into a depth and I'd like some day to sit down and talk again with you. German cooking is ah...
- PW:** We could do that too.
- BM:** German cooking is another, ah, area that we're losing a lot of because we're, we're using a lot of short cuts. As Chris calls it, he says it's cheating.
- PW:** Well, ah, there's, there's yes. And the thing is this now, like when my children come, my grandchildren they want the old stuff. Dampfnudeln, [127] rahmbrieh, and rivvelsuppe and I make it for them.
- BM:** Good, good.
- PW:** And, and this is what they want. They, they, they got that, this is a big treat for them.
- BM:** Hm hm, that's good.
- PW:** And, and pickled watermelon, saueremelone, and, and you know, now like homemade jams. Now just when I went to this wedding here, I took eight pints along and give them homemade jams. I made strawberry-rhubarb jam, raspberry-rhubarb jam, some chokecherry jam and some, I've got some rhubarb-apricot jam and I picked some of those little apples up here, those little crab apples and made some crab apple jam and it's very, very good.
- BM:** Oh, that is excellent and you don't need any pectin in it.
- PW:** No, so I did all that.
- BM:** Yeah. Well, thank you very much Paul. We appreciate it.
- PW:** Oh, you're welcome.