

## Interview with Paul P. Welder (PW)

Conducted by Betty & Chris Maier (BM & CM)

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Linton, North Dakota

Transcription by Beverly H. Wigley

**BM:** August 9<sup>th</sup>, the year 2000. I am Betty Meier, a volunteer interviewer from the Germans from Russia Heritage Collection at the North Dakota State University Libraries (that's a long word) in Fargo, North Dakota. And it's a pleasure to visit with Paul P. Welder in Linton where this interview is taking place. And Chris Meier is here too and he's running the tape recorder right now but in a little while you're going to hear from him. So we're going to get started with some of the very first basic questions. What is your name and the date of your birth?

**PW:** My name is Paul P. Welder and I was born April the 14<sup>th</sup>, 19 hundred and 12.

**BM:** And where were you born?

**PW:** I was born in McIntosh County which would be three miles north of Greenway, South Dakota but I was born in North Dakota, one mile in North Dakota over the state line.

**BM:** So did your folks live in Greenway then?

**PW:** They lived in North Dakota over the state line; three miles north of Greenway. We were in Berlin district.

**BM:** And what was your father's name?

**PW:** My father's name was Paul Welder.

**BM:** They didn't change it much, did they? What does the "P" stand for in your name?

**PW:** Phillip, Paul Phillip.

**BM:** And where was your father born?

**PW:** My father was born in Russia. Alsace, Russia as far as I know.

**BM:** So he was in that village. Did he die there?

**PW:** No, he died in Zeeland, North Dakota.

**BM:** And when did he die?

**PW:** He died in February the 26<sup>th</sup>, 19 hundred and 47.

**BM:** Oh, okay. Paul's looking in a big, thick family book that's called Joseph Welder Heritage from 1680-1976. And so he's finding the exact date.

**PW:** He died February the 26<sup>th</sup>, 1948.

- BM:** Okay. And he's buried where?
- PW:** He's buried in Zeeland cemetery, St. Andrew's Catholic Cemetery.
- BM:** So you know pretty much the next question I'm going to ask you. I'm going to ask you what your mother's name is?
- PW:** My mother's name was Catherina Welder.
- BM:** And when was she born?
- PW:** She was born in November the 10<sup>th</sup>, 1878.
- BM:** And where was she born?
- PW:** She was born in Russia.
- BM:** In Alsace?
- PW:** Alsace.
- BM:** And she died here in the States?
- PW:** She died in Zeeland, North Dakota.
- BM:** And she's also buried there then?
- PW:** She's buried in the Zeeland cemetery. Zeeland Catholic Cemetery, St. Andrews.
- CM:** When?
- PW:** When? She died March the 26<sup>th</sup>, 1966.
- BM:** Now when and where were your father and mother born or married?
- PW:** Married? They were married in the St. John's Catholic Church which is 5 miles north of Zeeland.
- BM:** Oh, that's closed now but it's still there.
- PW:** Yeah, it's closed but it's still there. The cemetery's there and that's where grandpa and grandma are buried, in St. John's.
- BM:** Now when you talk about grandma and grandpa that's your mother and...
- PW:** It's Welders.
- BM:** Oh, the Welders.
- PW:** Welders. The Weigels are buried in south North Dakota. 50 Edthun and Carolina Weigel; buried in south North Dakota.
- BM:** Okay. How many brothers and sisters did you have in your family?
- PW:** I had eight brothers and seven sisters.
- BM:** Well, you'd better look up the page where it has them all listed because I want them in order.

- PW:** I'll give them to you, you'll get them in order.
- BM:** Okay, let's start with the oldest one then.
- PW:** Caroline is the oldest one. She was born (November) August the 29<sup>th</sup>, 1899. She got married November 1, 19 hundred and 20; died July the 27<sup>th</sup>, 1947. She got married to Conrad Mattern, which I haven't got the date.
- BM:** That's all right.
- PW:** I've got the date, November 1, 1920. She got married November 1, 1920. I remember the date.
- BM:** Let's just go through the list of brothers and sisters in chronological order and you know what? I think I'll just copy that page and put it in your file. So, we don't have to read all that.
- PW:** Barbara was the next one. Oh, you don't want you to give them all the way down?
- BM:** Yeah, just give me them in order. Barbara was next.
- PW:** Barbara was born April the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1900. She got married November the 26<sup>th</sup>, 1923. She was married to a John Welk, a cousin of Lawrence Welk.
- BM:** Oh, really?
- PW:** Catherina was born April the 11<sup>th</sup>, 1903. Got married November the 25<sup>th</sup>, 19 hundred and 22 and she died February the 28<sup>th</sup>, 19 hundred and five years back, 1995.
- BM:** She was quite old then.
- PW:** She died in Sun City, Arizona. And was cremated and is buried in Strasburg, North Dakota on top of her husband's grave, Fred Mattern.
- BM:** Hm, the ties always come back to North Dakota.
- PW:** Yeah.
- BM:** And the next one?
- PW:** That's Mary and she was born June the 20<sup>th</sup>, 1904, got married November the 4<sup>th</sup>, 1925 (she was still alive at that time). She got married to a Gabriel Welk, cousin of Lawrence Welk.
- BM:** Two ties to the Welk family men.
- PW:** And, ah, of course she was not dead yet at that time. Then the next one is Bernhard Welder and he's got grandpa's name. And he was born December the 10<sup>th</sup>, 1905, got married in 1935, and was still living at that time but his wife was Agnes Leibel and she was born 1910 and died November the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1968. Magdalena Schmaltz, she was married to Ollie Schmaltz born March the 31<sup>st</sup>, 1907, got married November the 14<sup>th</sup>, 1927. Anton Welder got married to a Barbara Mitzel and he was born January the 13<sup>th</sup>, 1909, and he got married November the 17<sup>th</sup>, 1931. Joe Welder married to Helen 101 was born October the 19<sup>th</sup>, 1910, and he died December the 4<sup>th</sup>, 1943. (no excuse me, not that, cancel that) He got married November the 4<sup>th</sup>, 1943. He was still alive at that time. Paul P. Welder was born April the 14<sup>th</sup>, 1912, and he was married to Phyllis Wald. She was born the April the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1915. They were married

November the 4<sup>th</sup>, 1943. John Welder got married to Stella Burmem, Burmem and he was born November the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1913, got married October the 20<sup>th</sup>, 1942. And Anna Welder got married to Andrew Schotz. She was born August the 28<sup>th</sup>, 1915, she got married October the 27<sup>th</sup>, December the 27<sup>th</sup>, 1945. That's all. That is for all I got mixed up here. Correct that. Anna was born August the 28<sup>th</sup>, 1915, and she got married October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1937. She was married to Andrew Schotz. He was born December the 13<sup>th</sup>, 19 hundred and 13, and he died May 1, 1971. Peter Welder got married to Lillian Schotz and he was born November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1916, got married December the 27<sup>th</sup>, 1945. Lillian Schotz was born September the 26<sup>th</sup>, 1918. Frank Welder born April the 5<sup>th</sup>, 1918, got married June the 7<sup>th</sup>, 1947, was married to a Pearl Olson. She was born April the 13<sup>th</sup>, 1925—Norwegian. Mike Welder...

**BM:** I won't say anything.

**PW:** Mike Welder, ah he was born May the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1919, and he got married June the 17<sup>th</sup>, 1946. Barbara Zahn was his wife's name. She was born March the 1<sup>st</sup>, 1919. Rose Gabriel, the 15<sup>th</sup> one in the family. She was born September the 30<sup>th</sup>, 1920, and she got married November the 4<sup>th</sup>, 1941. And John Gabriel was her husband and he was born September the 27<sup>th</sup>, 1914.

**BM:** My goodness, what a list! Fifteen children and they all lived.

**PW:** They all lived. Well, Caroline was the first one that died. Oh yes, they all lived.

**BM:** And they were born between the span of ah...

**PW:** Twenty-one years.

**BM:** Twenty-one years, goodness sakes.

**PW:** Twenty-one years, 15 and 21 years. And when my mother passed away she was 86 years old and she had 273 descendents and there was not one with a physical or mental impairment.

**CM:** Great, great.

**BM:** That's wonderful. They were well cared for.

**PW:** And my mother was 86 years old and three weeks before she passed away I visited with her and she still knew the birthday of everyone of all her descendents plus the names. Of everyone. And then she knew most of the neighbor's birthdays.

**CM:** Remarkable, remarkable.

**BM:** I can't believe that in today's world it would, could you imagine how many complaining people there would be? When did your family originally come over from Russia to the United States?

**PW:** In...

**BM:** Do you know?

**PW:** Yes, they came to the United States in, ah, in November the 4<sup>th</sup>, 1885, aboard the ship Fulda.

**BM:** The SS Fulda. Then they must have, did they land on at Ellis Island?

**PW:** Yes.

**BM:** That area anyway. I don't know if Ellis Island was named that then.

**PW:** It was.

**BM:** And then where did they settle?

**PW:** They settled, they took out a homestead in Berlin Township, McIntosh County. There they farmed until till grandpa's death. He was 76 years old when he passed away and my grandpa's 174 name was Schumacher and she passed away when she was 73 years old and they were both buried in the St. John's cemetery north of Zee, five miles north of Zeeland, North Dakota.

**BM:** Do you remember any stories that they told you about Russia?

**PW:** Well, ah, grandpa sometimes did. He talked about horse thieves mostly because horse thieves over there were like bank robbers in the United States. That was one of the biggest crimes they commit and horse, horses was their pow, source of power and they were very, very much in demand for stealing. And a lot of them were stolen. Some of the farmers over there had some big chains, they called them chain dogs tied to the barns so they couldn't steal the horses. But they would saw out the back end 186 and steal the horses anyhow. That was a big trade over there.

**BM:** If they were caught, I wonder what the punishment was?

**PW:** Oh, they were...they were beheaded.

**BM:** They were beheaded, huh?

**PW:** Yeah, they were beheaded. They were not put, there was no jail and no 190. They just butchered them.

**BM:** Was there any other stories that your family told about, ah...

**PW:** Well, I can remember him telling me how they thrashed over there. They would take the grain and they would cut it on scythes and bring it in in a pile and then they would trample the horses on there. And trample it out and then they would take the straw off. And on a windy day they would go up on even on a little building and kind of threw into the wind. And separate it and let it drop on blankets and separate it and then they put it into sacks. If they had six sacks of wheat they were pretty lucky.

**BM:** Hm, doesn't sound like much today, does it?

**PW:** It sounds like nothing.

**BM:** But I think they're a little more frugal than we are today. Going back one more generation, do you have any records of when your family left Germany and went to Russia?

**PW:** Yes, yes, yes, yes, I have...I'm going to have to, ah...two Welder, Welder pioneer family families in Russia recently came from the village of Petersdorf in the district of Raetsenbaeden. 211 So they moved. In 1811 they left...

**BM:** That's in...

**PW:** They left Germany and went to Russia. No, that's still, that's already in in Russia, right?

**BM:** Hm, hm; hm hm.

- PW:** Maybe then I haven't got it when they moved from Germany to Russia. I don't think it's in here then. I think she's just came back to the Russ, to Russia, to...
- BM:** Oh, no they did. They went from that...
- PW:** Petersburg, yeah.
- BM:** Yeah, Petersburg, Germany. That is Germany then.
- PW:** Hm, hm. That's Germany, see?
- BM:** Hm, hm; hm, hm. So the, what we've recorded down there then, that is how they went.
- PW:** In 1600.
- BM:** Yup, 1600. And R-a-s-t-a-t-t
- PW:** Germany.
- BM:** That's German.
- PW:** Hm, hm.
- BM:** And okay, okay. That was in 1600 so you, you...
- PW:** That was 1600.
- BM:** ...go back quite a ways.
- PW:** Hm, hm. 1680.
- BM:** And you said that your parents didn't talk too much about the villages...
- PW:** No.
- BM:** ...that they came from.
- PW:** No, especially they didn't. Either he was bitter or he just...well, he was nine years old when...
- BM:** Yeah.
- PW:** ...but he didn't talk about it much. Hardly nothing at all. And grandpa of course, grandpa and grandma they were in a little house only about two blocks from the house where I was born and raised in. And ah, they was ah, there was not that much conversation with grandpa and grandma. But when grandma passed, grandpa and grandma raised my sister Catherina from the time she was two years old until she got married. And when, when Catherina, when she got married and then I lived with grandpa. We slept in grandpa's house but we ate in the big house with the family. So he, he talked about a few little things but not much, not much. And Catherina already got married in in 1922 so I slept with grandpa in '23 and in part of '22. And then in '23 we built a new home so we moved, we moved, grandpa moved to our new home that dad built. And, ah, I slept with him there for two years yet. And finally I got too big so I went upstairs with the rest of them.

Three, 1923 and I helped to haul all the material, my brother, myself. Joe was a year and a half older. We hauled all the material with wagons. We made four trips a day to Greenway, South Dakota. And we

hauled cement, hundred pound sacks and took them home and piled them into a granary until the day that the basement was filled. They had two mixers and about 14 people and my brother, Joe, and myself hauled all the cement to the site plus the water from the pond. We had six-50 gallon barrels and we would fill them up and we, the pond was just a hundred feet from the house. And we'd bring them up there and then we'd fill those barrels all the time so the mixers could get going. It was a big house and a big basement. This was the house in town.

**CM:** Describe the house.

**BM:** This is a two-story house and it's got a sort of a projection out on one side that's the front porch.

**PW:** Sun porch.

**BM:** I don't know, is that, what direction...it looks like it should be facing south.

**PW:** South, south.

**BM:** Okay. And how many bedrooms in there?

**PW:** There was, ah, five bedrooms, one downstairs and four upstairs. Then there was the bathroom upstairs and what we called the porch room.

**BM:** Now did, is this house still standing?

**PW:** Oh, yes, somebody's living in it.

**BM:** Oh, and it's...

**PW:** And it had...

**BM:** ...being well kept.

**PW:** Yep, in...

**BM:** My goodness, it's beautiful.

**PW:** We got married in 1943 and in 1946 I put the running water in there. And we had two full bathrooms and one half bath.

**BM:** So you and your wife then lived here.

**PW:** Yes, we lived there from 19 hundred and 43 until 19 hundred and 82.

**BM:** And the house was built what year?

**PW:** In 1923.

**BM:** In 1923. My goodness. That was a lot of work but it's still standing; that means it was well built.

**CM:** Beautiful, beautiful home.

**PW:** Beautiful farm; I'll get it out. The farm where I was raised was, the picture was taken from the air. My daughter-in-law is a photographer. And there was two pole 287 barns that are not on here. But, ah, it was a big yard and we kept it clean with lawn mowers and stuff. We had a lawn mower like the highway

department has behind a tractor, one rider, one bagger and one for the, ah, shelter belt 290. And then we had a self-propelled lawn sweeper.

**BM:** Now, there's water behind the house that you said you had drawn water from there.

**PW:** Yeah, there was a lake right behind the house, a pond.

**BM:** Does that...

**PW:** A nice big pond.

**BM:** Does that have a name?

**PW:** No, it was just a pond that was put in. A creek dammed 296 off and, ah, we put a big shelter belt in in the north side.

**BM:** When you first moved there were there many trees?

**PW:** Not very many. Only, only right behind the house. That those trees behind the house, they were put in, they were seedlings from the railroad track and they were put in there in 1924. They were just cottonwood trees. And then in '26 dad put in some fruit trees but they were not...we had some plums and crab apples but they didn't do too well.

**BM:** What language did you grow up with?

**PW:** Deutsch, German.

**BM:** German.

**PW:** We spoke German. When I went to school I could, well, English was just nothing at all, I hardly couldn't speak English when I went to school. Of course, my brothers and sisters a lot of them were older. Eight of them were older so I picked some of it up but very little.

**BM:** Because you always spoke German back at home.

**PW:** Everybody spoke German. The dogs even barked German.

**BM:** Ah, dear. There was one other question I wanted to ask about your...Did you ever receive letters from Russia, from family back there?

**PW:** No, no.

**BM:** Never did.

**PW:** No.

**BM:** Did you send letters over there?

**PW:** I, I, I can recall to where I think they tried one time and nothing happened. No we didn't. I know that that we didn't.

**BM:** So did you read newspapers?



- PW:** Well, we had the *Stadtsanzeige* was German and of course, ah, the ah, what was it *Farmer* from Aberdeen, South Dakota. *Dakota Farmer* something. We had that and then of course we had newspapers, local papers.
- BM:** There was a newspaper, *The German Press*, that kept quite a bit of news. Did you get that?
- PW:** *Stadtsanzeige*, yeah, hm hm.
- BM:** When did you start speaking English, then?
- PW:** When I went to school I was seven years old.
- BM:** You had to speak English then.
- PW:** Yup, well, we could speak German when we went out of the school ground which we did sometimes during the lunch hour.
- BM:** Do you remember your first school teacher?
- PW:** No, I don't but I remember some of them.
- BM:** Some of them?
- PW:** I definitely remember one by the name of Hunter and he taught us something that I never forgot from up until today. To put the days in the calendar in order down the line like Sundays, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. I mean like, for instance, Sunday would be the first day. Sundays would be 1, 8, 15, 22, 29. Mondays would be 2, 9, 16, 23, 30. Tuesdays would be 3, 10, 17, 24. Wednesdays, Wednesdays would be 4, 11, 18, 25. Thursdays 5, 12, 19, 26. Fridays 7, 14, 21, 28.
- BM:** And you still use that method today?
- PW:** Yes, I still do.
- BM:** How about that. Sounds like good organization. What others teachers did you have?
- PW:** Well, we had one by the name of Freda, Freda Breitling. And she was only a small teacher but she was a tough one. We had a, and then we had one by the name of ah, Hunter was the old one.
- BM:** That's all right, that's all right.
- PW:** Yeah, but, but we had one other teacher and he was a real meanie. If we didn't, we didn't know our spelling he would put a little ring on the blackboard and a dot there and we'd have to stand there and put our nose against it. And sometimes we had to kneel on corn. I was fortunate enough I never had to kneel on corn. I was a good boy.
- BM:** Yup. Ah, speaking of language, do you have a prayer that you can repeat for us in German? That you...
- PW:** I got many of them.
- BM:** Just one. We're going to run out of tape today.
- PW:** The Lord's Prayer?
- BM:** Yeah, that would be a good one.

**PW:** [364] Vater unser dass du bist in Himmel

Geheiligt werde dein Name

Denns komme dein Reich

Dein Wille Geschehe wie im Himmel aus auch auf Erden.

Gib mich heit unser taegliches Brot

Vergeben uns unsere Schuld 366 dass auch vergeben unseren Schuldigern

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Himmel an.

**BM:** Thank you.

**PW:** That I know, I know.

**BM:** You know. When you said you're daily prayers do you still do it in German?

**PW:** I sometimes add them in when I, when I lay in bed and pray. I still say some German prayers.

**BM:** So, do you use German yet in conversation with some of your friends around here in Linton?

**PW:** Yes. And when my children come, especially the oldest one and the one that lives in Bismarck, we talk German. They want to talk German.

**BM:** Oh, great.

**PW:** And they all talk, we can all talk, we talk German when we get together sometimes. We talk German just to do it. And my grandchildren all can understand German and some of them can speak it.

**BM:** Okay. You know, I think we haven't talked about your family. You told us that you married a, a Wold.

**PW:** Wald.

**BM:** Wald. W-a-l-d. And how many children did you and your wife have?

**PW:** We had four children. We had one daughter and three sons.

**BM:** And can you give me their names? The oldest is the daughter?

**PW:** The, the no. Jim 388 is the oldest and then three years later Bernadette was born, three years later, Raymond, and then three years later, Daniel. 390 Three in four years.

**BM:** And where do they live?

**PW:** Jim lives right, he used to live in Florida for a long time but now he lives in South Carolina but he works in North Carolina. He works in Charlotte, North Carolina. He is a contractor for a big, big concern. Great big, big, ...right now they contracted ten commuter, ah, ah, ten commuter 400 buildings to the tune of \$5,500,000 a piece. They're building two right now, one in Los Angeles and one is someplace in the Carolinas but they're going to build ten of them.

- BM:** What's his profession?
- PW:** He is by profession, he is ah, ah the chief over the contractors. I don't know what you'd...
- BM:** Is he a, did he go to college?
- PW:** He went to college in Bismarck, North Dakota. Not long. But he ah, he started many different jobs already but when he worked in Florida he worked in the banks. And he was their ah, well, he was also in finance there. And he foreclosed things and he, he contracted things and what have you.
- BM:** And the second one?
- PW:** The second one is Bernadette. And she is married to a Norwegian.
- BM:** That's okay. Germans and Norwegians get along just fine.
- PW:** Yeah and I like him. He's a wonderful man.
- BM:** Ah, and where do they live?
- PW:** They live in Hastings, Minnesota. Bernadette manages a bank and is the vice president of the bank. And her husband, Lionel Esteson, is the chief over all the federal and co-op banks in St. Paul.
- BM:** They're all responsible people.
- PW:** They are very, very, very successful. They, they, they do very, very good and they have two children, a son and a daughter. The son is married and has a, I've got a great-grandson and the daughter is going to get married in September the 9<sup>th</sup> so I'm going to a wedding.
- BM:** I'll bet you're going there!
- PW:** Oh, oh, I was 429 going to Chicago June the 9<sup>th</sup>...my grandson.
- BM:** And ah, son ah, child number three.
- PW:** Child, that's Raymond. They had two sons and they're both married. And his wife's name is Anna. He has, him and another guy have a big cabinet business and his wife, Anna, manages labs. She's a lab technician and she manages four labs for somebody. So she travels back and forth. And her oldest son, Joey, manages one lab under her. And then the next son, 439 physical therapist and his wife is a high school teacher. She teaches English.
- BM:** How about that.
- CM:** Where do they live?
- PW:** They live in Crystal Lake, Illinois, 28 miles from downtown Chicago. A suburb. Beautiful home and beautiful cabin and what have you.
- BM:** And your last one?
- PW:** The last one is Danny. He lives in Bismarck, North Dakota.
- BM:** Oh, he's a close one then.

**PW:** Yeah, he sells insurance. He's with American Republic. And Danny's wife is an artist. She does a lot of artwork for, does a lot of work in south 451 Bismarck.

**BM:** Very good.

**PW:** And they have two daughters but they're still both single. And one of them is in Montana right out there. In the wintertime she works in Big Sky but she still goes to college. And the other one works in Bismarck in the summer and goes out to Big Sky in the winter. She's an instructor out there.

**BM:** My they're busy people! They sound like talented people.

**PW:** They, they, they're talented. They're more talented than their grandpa.

**BM:** Well, we lived in different times than, than they do. They have a lot of opportunities. And we've got a lot more than educational systems now than when, when you and I were going to school. By the way, where did you go to school?

**PW:** I went to school in Berlin district...

**BM:** You did there?

**PW:** ...only three-quarters of a mile from where we lived. And I went to the school to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and I had to stay home and help with the chores at home. We had as high as 28 horses and one stud horse all the time and was a lot of work and only one brother at home so I had to stay home and that was it.

**BM:** What was your favorite chore and what didn't you like to do?

**PW:** I didn't like to pick rocks. And the favorite chore was well, I mean, oh, I, I kind of liked to do work with the machinery out with the horses you know like plowing and, and, and raking and mowing hay and stuff. That was kind of my favorite.

**BM:** If you didn't do your work, were you disciplined?

**PW:** Yes.

**BM:** You were?

**PW:** Very much so.

**BM:** How were you disciplined?

**PW:** Well, if dad said "go" it was go and if he said "stop" it was stop. There was no in between. And there was no, no back talk.

**BM:** Who was the disciplinarian in your house?

**PW:** Well dad more so than mom.

**BM:** Even with the girls?

**PW:** Yes, with the girls too.

**BM:** Oh, really?

**PW:** Yep.

**BM:** Would there, were there other nationalities in your school?

**PW:** No, no.

**BM:** They were all German?

**PW:** No, they were all German.

**BM:** They were all German, huh?

**PW:** But all different religions. We were the only Catholic ones that went there for awhile. We had, we had Baptists, EVU, Reformed, Lutheran, and Seventh Day Adventists to the south.

**BM:** My goodness.

**PW:** We were almost the last Catholics east of Zeeland. So we were raised with Protestant people and they were wonderful neighbors. When my dad and mom moved to town, it was by hard, by hard, not as hard to take as when my neighbor moved because we were together every day and he was a good Reformed.

**BM:** What were some of your neighbor's names?

**PW:** Neighbor's names, okay. One was a Russian, was Yeninsky, Yeninsky and then there was a Bender to the north and northeast was Schnagel and then straight east was Hartze, that was the last Catholic there. And then there was Augermans and Jahraus and Chun and Hartze and then to the west there was, well there was Solweit and 512 Schimeister and Stern.

**BM:** My goodness, you have a good memory to remember all those people.

**CM:** How many children were average in your country school?

**PW:** It would maybe say approximately eight to ten average to a family. And as a rule in our little country school which was maybe, ah, 18' by 32' we had as high as 28 children in there sometimes, 24, more all the time, from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

**CM:** One other thing. When you didn't obey at home, what form of punishment did you guys get from your father?

**PW:** It was not all that bad but we got spanked on the butt with an open hand.

**BM:** Did you have discipline problems in school? Do you remember any there?

**PW:** No, we were, no, there was no such a thing those days. When the teacher said "sit" it was sit and when they said "you do this" there was very little problems in school. Very, very little to be exact because we, we were...it, it seemed like our school we were all well-behaved children because we, I think we had stricter parents.

**BM:** Now you went to church then close by? Was there a church...

**PW:** Well, we had to...

**BM:** ...to attend?

- PW:** ...go to Zeeland which was seven miles by team but before Zeeland was, before, before I was born, before Zeeland started they had to go to St. John's which was 13 miles by team. And they went.
- BM:** And they went.
- PW:** They went. And Zeeland we went to to Christmas Mass many times, Midnight Mass, seven miles went in to the church but ah, the Zeeland church was first built in 1904. My brother Ben was the first child that was baptized in there in 1905.
- BM:** Hm, that's exciting. Were the services in German then?
- PW:** The services were in German until 19 hundred and 11, German, and sermons were German and, and the reading was in Latin until 19 hundred and about 25, '26 and then they, and then really the Mass was still in Latin but the sermons were, some of them were...now Father Greiner was our, he was a German. And he had a short German sermon and a short English sermon and he started there in 1923. And he first started that English sermon maybe in 1926 or '25.
- BM:** And was it English then from then on?
- PW:** Later about '28 then it, it was English more so but sometimes still a little German up until the thirties.
- BM:** So your family went to church every Sunday.
- PW:** Yes.
- BM:** Did you have confirmation out there then?
- PW:** Oh, yes, hm hm.
- BM:** And holidays? How did you celebrate Christmas?
- PW:** Christmas, well, Christmas was really something we were looking forward to. We were always scared of the Belsnickel and the Christkindl but ah, it was something to look forward to because there was oranges maybe for Christmas and a lot of cookies and peanuts and nuts and, and almonds and candy and Christmas was a big thing to look forward to. But we always had a 585 for that Belsnickel and he was mean. He come sometimes even with a chain and ah, he was mean. And the Christkindl was always, kind of a sheet over her and you didn't see much of her face but she was a little better but she was mean too.
- BM:** Did you have that, those with your children too?
- PW:** No.
- BM:** No, 595 you had stopped.
- PW:** No just one time, just one time Santa Claus came and that was it. We didn't allow it anymore. They, we had two children, and Bernadette and Raymond and the Belsnickel came and they were so scared that we were out in the barn milking in the morn...next morning and they came out to the barn with their pajamas on. So we took them in and we said no more. And it was scary.
- BM:** Were your parents involved in founding the church there or was that...?

- PW:** Yes, my dad yes, yes, he, ah, he was involved in that and 608
- BM:** St. John's?
- PW:** St. Andrew's in Zeeland.
- BM:** St. Andrew's.
- PW:** St. John's no, St. Andrew's in Zeeland.
- BM:** Did you have daily prayers then at home with the family?
- PW:** We had daily prayers before every meal and before bedtime. And down on our knees and during Lent, the Rosary every evening. There was no such a thing as we're going to miss Tuesday evening. That was it.
- BM:** And you said earlier I think that you did a lot of singing.
- PW:** Yes, we did a lot of singing.
- BM:** With all the children I would imagine you had a choir.
- PW:** We, well, we did a lot singing and one, my brother, Joe, could play the organ and, and my sister, Rose, still played till the last three years. Of course she played for the German singers in Bismarck. Not a note. All by ear and beautiful.
- BM:** So what kind of songs did you sing then?
- PW:** A, a book that Rose made up for me. Well, she used and then they made new ones. And there's so many German songs in here and English and I can sing a lot of German songs. All kinds of them.
- BM:** Do you sing German here at the senior citizens...
- PW:** Yes.
- BM:** They still do.
- PW:** But we, I sing songs way before that and a lot of them are in here and, and ah, so I can sing this one all the way down, I mean without even I close the book.
- BM:** Do you sing with any other group here in town?
- PW:** No, no, just with the German singers here at senior citizens.
- BM:** Who taught you to sing then or who directed you or who got you guys going together in your family?
- PW:** Well, out in the family, mother. Mother, mother could sing lot, a lot of German songs and her family and her aunts and what have you and, and ah cousins, they sang a lot of German songs. They'd get together and sing German songs.
- CM:** What other holidays did you observe other than church holidays and so forth?

- PW:** There was none excepting Easter and Christmas and then ah, Pentecost, you know, Pfingste [665] and Christihimmelfahrt, Ascension. That was about it. Well, no. Three, those three kings from the Orient, Dreikoenig 669 yeah, that was a big day too.
- CM:** And how about Fasenoht? [671] (Fastnacht)
- PW:** That was too sometimes. That was sometimes, sometimes there was some headaches the next day because they drank that home brew, you know and they, there were some headaches. There was some hangovers and a hangover is a head that wasn't used the night before.
- BM:** So, names days?
- PW:** Names days, yes. We had...
- BM:** Did you celebrate those?
- PW:** ...even after we were married names days were still pretty popular.
- BM:** Did you guys dance?
- PW:** We danced, we danced.
- BM:** Where did you dance?
- PW:** We danced in granaries and in barns and in those dance halls and in houses and you name it, we danced.
- BM:** And did the neighbors come then?
- PW:** Oh, yeah, we'd get together you know and, and, but on those barn dances you know, I stood beside, well, when you played in the granaries around our neighborhood there and, and Gutenberg you know and, and well, and some of our local guys.
- BM:** Well, and you had Joe that was playing...
- PW:** Well, well Joe...
- BM:** ...or did he...
- PW:** really didn't, my brother, Joe, really didn't play ah dances. He just played songs, you know, like the German songs and what have you. He could play them.
- BM:** Where did you meet your wife?
- PW:** I knew my wife by the time she was seven years old.
- BM:** O-oh.
- PW:** She was only seven miles from our place. But actually when you say, "Where did you meet her?" it was at the dance.
- BM:** It was at a dance too.
- PW:** At a dance. And I was only 32 years old before I got married.



- BM:** I bet she proposed.
- PW:** Well, I think we both did at the same time. We, World War II everybody was drafted. And my brothers were drafted. I worked for the highway department from 1939-42 but three of my brothers were drafted and then I went home and started farming with dad.
- BM:** Okay. I want to go back to the dancing. What kind of dancing was it?
- PW:** Oh, well, waltzes and polkas and what have you.
- BM:** German dances.
- PW:** Yeah, sure, deutsch. Then the fox trot came out but that was later and that was about it. Two step.
- BM:** When you got married did you get, where did you get married?
- PW:** We got married in St. John's Church which was five miles north of Zeeland.
- BM:** Okay. And tell me about the day. Did you have ah, just one day, did you...?
- PW:** Yes, and I'll tell you, I'll tell you why. My brother-in-law died shortly before that. He was buried October the 26<sup>th</sup> and we got married November the 3<sup>rd</sup> and we could not have no wedding or nothing. You didn't dance when a relative died, sometimes for almost a year. So there was nothing. We just got married and went home, and right in the house...
- BM:** And no dance.
- PW:** ...by, by Walds. That was it. There was not...
- BM:** Did you have any contact with all the community people? Did you get together at socials and what was the center of the community that you grew up in?
- PW:** On, the best socials we had was, when we had those names days. Sometimes three, four of them would get together. And then we would have a big party in the hall in Zeeland and we had a lot of people that attended. And and we, we had red eye and of course we gave them lunch and always a pretty good orchestra. Somebody that played the accordions and what have you, like the Chun brothers played the accordion and different instruments and ah, different, different accordion lists and what have you.
- BM:** What, did they have any games going? Games?
- PW:** No, not after, no, not after we got...in school and what have you.
- BM:** Did you have some in school?
- PW:** Oh, yes we had.
- BM:** What did you play in school?
- PW:** Well, pom-pom pull away and fox and geese and, and, then ah, well, we had different games and then we jumped the rope and, and different things. Oh, we had everything. And we had a lake right close to the school so there was water there we'd go skating sometimes but not too long because noon hours we had to go down and come back. We did different things at school. We had games. And at home we

played checkerboard, and dominos and cards and we had puzzles that we set together. Made some out of wire and they were quite, ah, unique.

**CM:** Did you have a neighborhood baseball team?

**PW:** Oh, yes. We were, we had, out of five neighbors we had enough boys to make a full baseball team. Five neighbors that we'd get together, we'd have base... Oh, yeah, we had a lot of baseball teams out there in the pastures. And sometimes you slid into something what you thought was third base and it wasn't.

**CM:** I wonder what you'd find as third base in a pasture?

**BM:** How did you get from school, ah, home to school?

**PW:** We walked most of the time...

**BM:** Did you walk?

**PW:** ...we were only, only little better than half a mile. We walked most of the time. On a stormy day they would take us with the sled but other than that we walked. Rainy day we'd take us 31 with a team with the wagon.

**BM:** Do you remember being sick when you were younger?

**PW:** Yes. I remember that real well when we had the measles and even when we had the flu. I wasn't so bad off but my sister and one of my brothers were not expected to live. But they made it through in the flu.

**BM:** How did they, did somebody come and...

**PW:** Well, ah, we were...

**BM:** ...to the doctor?

**PW:** Dad was kind of, didn't go down and one of my sisters and then the neighbor came and helped sometimes but the rest of us were all sick.

**BM:** There was a lot of folk medicine, ah...

**PW:** Yes.

**BM:** ...being used. What did they call it, 39?

**PW:** Well, 40 Altekreiter was one that they bought but then you know, well, it would be like, like homemade...well, chicken soup was one of the things that you got and ah...and, of course for, for medicine well, there was liniment, two different kinds of liniment. One you could use for rubbing your sore and the other one was that you would take internally and mix it with water and take it, red liniment and white liniment.

**BM:** Do you think there's more sickness today than there was then?

**PW:** Pardon?

**BM:** Do you think there is more sickness today than there was then?

- PW:** No, no. There, there was, it was, when it was and it was bad because there was no doctors, nothing. When we had the measles it was in the summertime and it was hot. And I remember we had to go into a room and all the shades pulled and what have you and it was hot. It was 100° outside and it was really, it was bad. I was not all that sick but two of my brothers really were sick with the measles. And we, there was a lot of times when you had the flu but in 19 hundred and 18 it was bad. I was six years old then and it was bad. A lot of people died then.
- BM:** And it went through the whole family then?
- PW:** It went through, well, my, my dad and my sister, one of them didn't have it, the rest of us all had it.
- BM:** When somebody died, when let's say, you, you're grandfather had stayed with you you said. Did he stay with you until he passed away?
- PW:** Yes, he passed away in the big house that I just showed you. Yep, in the bedroom, yep and ah, yes, and of course it was, we grieved more then, I mean it was, it was a sad thing, I mean. And there was a lot of praying going on. We'd pray the rosary many times during that time and it was just different.
- CM:** Where, where was your closest doctor?
- PW:** Eureka. For well, then later, at the time that grandpa died, well, we'd had a doctor in Zeeland, seven miles, Dr. Grace. And ah, that was already, he was in Zeeland. But for long, long time before 19 hundred and maybe 21 the doctor was out of Eureka, Gurtis. And there was very many of the children born around there with midwives, very, very many of them.
- BM:** That was general rule, wasn't it?
- PW:** Yep. Hm, hm.
- BM:** Was the midwife paid then?
- PW:** Oh, yes they would maybe buy her some material for seven cents a yard, three yards and get, sew herself an apron. That was big something like that, yes.
- BM:** Maybe some food?
- PW:** Well, everybody had chickens and cream and butter and, and food, I mean, the food, everybody had that I mean. Food was not a big treat then because everybody had it.
- CM:** Ah, how about farm accidents and so forth?
- PW:** Ah, actually, there was not that many that I can remember that were real, well, my dad was bucked off a horse and was in bed for about a week. And, and that's about the only accident that I can remember in a farm accident in our area.
- CM:** Yeah...broken bones and so forth?
- PW:** Well, not too many of them...I was, I broke my, my big bones right below the knee on ah...
- CM:** 83 broken bones.

- PW:** Yeah, I broke my leg right and, and I had to go to Eureka to the doctor and I was in a cast but, ah, it didn't heal up quite when spring work started and I got a hired man and it didn't work out so I was out there on the Minneapolis Moline new tractor. I left the crutches in the gas tank and took that tractor and went out there and plowed from 5:00 in the morning until 10:00 at night. If I had to get off out in the field, I had to roll myself. But I plowed. And one, I was standing on one foot all day long. That, that Minneapolis Moline new had a nice big platform back there and I didn't have to sit down. I couldn't because I was in the cast from my ankle to way up to my hip. Twenty-one days. My brother seeded then and dragged and what have you but I plowed, I did the plowing.
- CM:** What ah, did you, in your childhood did you have ah, saddle horses?
- PW:** Yes, we had saddle horses. And once I was, you know the big bigger, I had a real good saddle horse, a real fast one. We had saddle horses.
- CM:** And those were Sunday afternoon races with the neighbors?
- PW:** Well, that was so many boys sometimes you had to use some of those that you had at the plow before but that was all right too, we got them. Sunday afternoon races, you're right.
- BM:** So when, do you remember when you went from ah, horses to mechanized farming?
- PW:** Oh my gosh yes! I ah, I ah, I plowed with horses from the time I was nine years old until ah, 19 hundred and well, up to dad bought the first tractor in 1940 that we used to plow but we had big tractor to drag but that was not 109 to plow. Yeah, and I used that, I started plowing then you know with a tractor and a plow.
- CM:** What kind of a tractor was it that you had, the first one?
- PW:** It was 1530 International, three-bottom plow. And that's what we used. And then in 19 hundred and 43 when I got married I bought an Am 114 tractor, brand new Am tractor for 13 hundred and 85 dollars; I got a barrel of oil with it yet.
- CM:** Then that, that was the first rubber-tire tractor.
- PW:** That was the first rubber-tire tractor.
- CM:** And from there on how did you progress up?
- PW:** Well and then, and then I ah, in, in 19 hundred and 42 before I bought that tractor I went back to farming and I, my brother-in-law and myself bought a combine together. And we started combining. I had the first then in '43, I bought my own combine, we separated. But I had the first combine in that area. And, ah, I did custom work, \$4 an acre. They had to haul the grain and furnish the gas. And I did real well with it. And then in 1944, I bought a 127 tractor, brand new, 16 hundred and 80 dollars and a Baldwin combine that combined up from Nebraska for 18 hundred and 6 dollars. I had two combines and two tractors. I did custom work. Could do about 100 acres a day, \$4 an acre. They had to furnish the gas and haul the grain. Made good money. Paid for my equipment.
- BM:** I guess one thing that impresses me is that you were so willing to work.
- PW:** I worked day and night almost.

- BM:** You know, yeah, there was that ah, that ah, ah, family values of working that ah, always comes, seems to come through.
- PW:** Well, as long as we worked with the horses we'd get up at 4:00 in the morning and brush those horses down and feed them and get them ready and by 6:00 we went out in the field. And we, my brother and myself, we had to harness about 24 horses because we sometimes worked four teams. And sometimes five teams. We had 20, we harnessed 28 horses.
- CM:** So ah, 28 horses and how big of a herd of livestock did you have?
- PW:** Well, we would have the horses and maybe, maybe at the very most 12 milk cows as long as dad was still operating and then some stock 145 cows but not too many stock cows. It was horses. The horses got the good grain and the good hay. And my dad bought one stud horse in 19 hundred and 21 for \$2800 and in 19 hundred and 22 well, the first one my dad and the neighbor bought together but in '22 dad bought one for \$2200.
- CM:** More than a 153 tractors.
- PW:** That was, that was it then, see and I remember where we would breed as high as 120 mare, mares a year and if a colt was born and stood up and walked they had to pay for it. It was \$25.
- BM:** That was big business.
- PW:** Oh, that was big. My dad used to sell a lot of horses and he'd sell some for \$350 a piece, \$325. We had as high as 13,12 colts a year.
- BM:** What kind of horses were they?
- PW:** They were mostly Belgians but then ah, the one stud horse was a 162 and we didn't have him long and then he died on us but he was insured, life insurance on him.
- BM:** When did your dad start selling insurance?
- PW:** My dad started selling insurance, I'm, I'm not too sure but I maybe, I would say maybe in 1924.
- BM:** Oh, really.
- PW:** Hm, hm.
- BM:** Do you remember the company that he worked with?
- PW:** Yes. Northwest 169 Mutual Insurance Company out of Eureka, South Dakota.
- BM:** They're still in, are they still in business?
- PW:** Oh gosh yes! I...
- BM:** Did you sell for them then?
- PW:** I sold insurance for them for 27 years. I was a director for them for 24 years and I was adjustor for them for 22 years. I had three titles at one time.
- BM:** Like I said, you were a worker!

- PW:** And many a time I would start driving at home at 5:00 in the morning and go to Dickinson, North Dakota. They'd still be in bed up there because they were an hour later. But I got paid by the mile and by the hour, an open expense account. And I made hay when the sun was shining. I had many, many, many weeks in the summertime with 70 some hours.
- BM:** Well, what was your first car?
- PW:** My first car was a Model A, a 19 hundred and 30 Model A, bought in it 1933. And I got it from Aberdeen, South Dakota and it cost me \$285. It was a real good car.
- BM:** And you, did you furnish your car then for your business when, in your insurance?
- PW:** Yes. I refused to drive company cars because it would've been a hassle and I made more money driving my car and getting paid by the mile.
- BM:** When, ah, electricity came in was, when you built that, your family built that house in 1923 you said. Was there electricity in that?
- PW:** It was wired for electricity and the plumbing was roughed in. No, no appliances. But in 1925, no, no, no 1924, dad bought a light plant, a 32 volt light plant and ah, about in '26 mother got the first electric washing machine. So we had electric lights from 1924 on until ah, REA came and then but when I ah, when I farmed, I still farmed with the 32 light plant. But we had milkers, we bought milk, milking machines in '47. And we had milkers with the light plant, with the 32.
- BM:** Oh, you did?
- PW:** Hm, hm.
- BM:** When did REA come in then?
- PW:** '49.
- BM:** In '49, okay. Do you, how about telephone?
- PW:** Our telephone came in a little later. But years before we had telephones on fence wires and stuff and from neighbor to neighbor. And then we could call, we could call in to central because we had go to a farmhouse then we'd get to Greenway then we get into...we could call any town you know. And then that, that, that kind of wore out then. It didn't exist, then for a while we were out of telephone. But telephone came later, telephone came, it was after REA that time we got, that time we got telephone.
- BM:** One of the important things that I forgot to ask about was water. You said you had that crick behind the house there but did you have wells that you had dug?
- PW:** We had real good wells. We had, dad had a well before and then he dug one in, in 19 hundred and 20, let's see, 1922 I think, nope, it was 1924. He dug a well, real good well and ah, then when we got married we put in running water into the place in 19 hundred and 48. We plumbed it and put in everything.
- BM:** Did you have windmills out there then?

- PW:** Yes but the windmill was before my time, that was long before. Windmills were, were a necessity and they were in there long before my time.
- BM:** But you maintained them through the years.
- PW:** Yes. And then when we got our running water we put a, a system into the well and then ah, later we drilled another well and so I had two water systems and a peddle pump in the pond for the wife's garden. And she had the, the best garden in the county.
- BM:** 233 She, you had irrigation system.
- PW:** Well, yeah, we, we, we could use whatever you wanted.
- BM:** Did your mother do any outside work?
- PW:** Ah, she ah, she did some you know but not after I was born I 237 oh, what she did that I can remember is she would stack the haystack.
- BM:** Did she milk cows?
- PW:** Oh yes, oh yes, mother could milk cows. Oh, yes, she milked cows.
- BM:** And I suppose you had chickens?
- PW:** Chickens and turkeys and geese and ducks. I remember one year we had 124 ducks. One year. And about some 30 or 40 geese and then always only a few turkeys. And we had pigs. And we would butcher in the, we would butcher and, and we would cure our own, own hams and our side pork and we had hams and side pork till the new butchering time came again. Enough cured. Had a big smoke house and we smoked and cured.
- BM:** And did you have a root cellar?
- PW:** Yes, we had a beautiful root cellar. We kept a lot of stuff in the root cellar. We maintained it yet after that; finally when we got our deep freeze and our fridge and then we finally bulldozed it in.
- BM:** Yeah, with a large family like that you had to have quite a supply.
- PW:** Oh yes, it was there was a lot ah, in, in 1923 when we built that house it was all, there was all, all donated labor. Dad was the carpenter...oh, he had somebody to help him a few days but not many days. My sisters and my mother used up 5200 pounds of flour in 1923.
- BM:** Baking?
- PW:** Baking bread and, and noodles and, and cakes and, and you name it, pies and, and all kinds of dumplings, and strudels and you name it. All those, all, they used all that flour.
- BM:** And ah, feeding the volunteer help.
- PW:** Feeding, and, and of course the big family. We were 13 in our family and yeah.
- BM:** What were some of your favorite foods?

- PW:** Oh, boy oh boy. Favorite foods was maybe, well, I liked chicken very much and fried chicken which I don't have no more I can't but anyhow and ah, well, cookies and, and pies and ah...there was a lot of chocolate pie and lemon pie baked in those days, not too many apple pies. But a lot, a lot of chocolate pie and lemon pie and you name it. And mother baked a lot of kuchen and what have you, I mean, it was different. It was mostly raised, raised dough. My sister, Mary, when the year we built the house she did most of the baking. She would bake, well, she would maybe bake bread three times a week, as high as 18 loaves at one time. Three loaves into one, one big pan and then there was six pans of it. And she would bake that. And you know what they used for fuel? Cow chips in the summertime. And if it rained it was sad but we always had enough cow chips picked and in storage for rainy days.
- BM:** What kind of stove did she have?
- PW:** She had just range, just range.
- BM:** Just a range stove.
- PW:** And that, that was in the summer kitchen in the summer but in the wintertime we had range then we had coal stove in the, in, pot bellied coal stove.
- BM:** Now, I'm skipping around a lot I guess but ah, did your sisters go to school too? Did all, every member of your family go to school?
- PW:** Up to the, well the oldest ones I don't know whether they went to the seventh grade but yeah, then Lena, and I'm sure she went to the seventh grade, eighth grade maybe even and then four of my brothers went to high school and to college and four of the brothers farmed. See, my brother that was just older than I was, he went to high school and then I, I had to stay home. And then my oldest brother went to high school and to college.
- BM:** You know I, I just think of the, the logistics of raising a large family like that ah, the laundry that must have been and food I can understand, you know you can spend time on that but clothing, did you wear hand-me-downs or did you...?
- PW:** Ah, there was hand-me-downs and of course mother sewed a lot of our overalls...
- BM:** Did she sew?
- PW:** ...and shirts and stuff and underwear was bought, long johns and you had two pair of jeans every week. That was it. And you had, ah, you, your overalls you wore to school. Well later they were bought but earlier I remember where mother sewed our overalls.
- BM:** I wonder where she got the fabric?
- PW:** Fabric was easy.
- BM:** Did she mail order?
- PW:** No, no, no, no. We had general merchandise store right over three miles from home and one in Zeeland, seven miles.
- BM:** Oh, okay.



- PW:** And there was a lot...when I worked in the store in 1924, if a family got a baby they'd come and maybe buy 10 or 15 yards of flannel at seven cents a yard. And then they would make diapers. There was no throw aways, no nothing. They had to be diapers and they were made from flannel. They had striped and dark flannel for every day and then on Sundays they had some white flannel ones. And the good material in 1924, like that the women made their dresses from, was maybe 27 cents a yard. Gas was 12 cents a gallon. And butter, there was no butter for sale and no bread. They made their own butter and their ah, but cheese I remember real well came in five pound blocks and it sold for nine cents a pound.
- BM:** Did they make, you made cheese too, some like cottage cheese?
- PW:** It 325 on the farm. Oh, yes, a lot of it, a lot of it. They also made cottage cheese and then they made one, they let the cottage cheese ferment until it got real and then they, they cooked the cheese which was real good I mean, it was almost like boughten cheese only a little softer.
- BM:** Hm hm, hm hm.
- PW:** And what I liked the best was the crust that was in the pan.
- BM:** Oh! Could you beat all the others to it?
- PW:** Well, it was divided.
- BM:** Oh. Ah, dear. What other kinds of work did your mother do? Did she do ah...
- PW:** A lot of knitting
- BM:** A lot of knitting.
- PW:** A lot of knitting and a lot of reading. And, and ah, she made a lot of shawls. See, they would buy that that, 16 ounce French serge, black serge and make big, black shawls and she would those tassels around the outside, buy that thread and make those tassels. She would tie them and there was little squares and all those, those tassels hanging down then. And every body that got married then got, you know, not just in our family, other families too. Well, every body had to have one of those shawls. That was the thing.
- BM:** Does you daughter have one yet?
- PW:** No, no but my wife had one but I don't know what happened to it.
- BM:** You don't know what happened to it?
- PW:** She, ah, I think she had her mother's or somebody's but we had one in the house for a while. Yep.
- CM:** How, how did your families dress when you went on sled rides to church or wherever you went to town, they would, on Sundays when you all went to church, the whole family...?
- PW:** Well, you know in the wintertime we probably only eight of us went to church, you know. And we were dressed, we were warm and we had blankets in the sled and what have you and we had good horse blankets and we had some ropes made from horse hide and then some from cow hides and there was a lot of blankets there and stuff and we had good 357 sheep skins and overall shoes, and caps and mittens and we were dressed warm.

- CM:** Did you ever heat any rocks and stuff like that ah...
- PW:** Ah, well, yeah but not, not too often, yes, hm, hm. Ah, I remember well when they heated rock when dad and mom went to names day party to 363 on ah, January the 20<sup>th</sup>. And that was six miles. And yeah, they would and, and other times they'd, yeah, hm, hm.
- BM:** Did you have a lot of rocks on the farm?
- PW:** Yes we had rocks and picked a lot of rocks, we had rocks.
- BM:** Did, what, was your soil, farming soil pretty good?
- PW:** Oh, yes we had good...but we, we raised a lot of cattle and horses. We needed pastures, we had...our land was pretty much 50-50 uncultivated and also the land that I've got now is still the same. I rent out pastures and I ah, yeah, we had a lot of...when, my dad at one time had 14 quarters of land.
- BM:** My, it was a big farm!
- PW:** Well, see, he had six quarters over in, in Dewey County in South Dakota; like 379 Langcross and Trail City. We had two farms over there. Two of my brothers lived over there.
- BM:** Of your family members, who do you respect and sort of use an example?
- PW:** Well, an example you might say, 386 Tuey was older, but I think John was the one that was younger. We were kind of raised together, brought up together. I think we were together the most. I think I ah, I think I treasure him the most. He's still living. He lives in Utah now. But ah, we were kind of...Joe was older but he went to high school right away so I mean he was out of the...but we two used to chum around together and what have you. I mean we were together. Tuey was older and then he was already gone and there.
- CM:** So when your mom and dad would go to town and so forth, would they come back with any treats?
- PW:** Oh, oh, oh, always candy!
- CM:** Always candy?
- PW:** Always candy! And then they were, they were so large you got so many candy, I mean each one got. They would maybe bring two, ten or ten or two or maybe got two-ten cent ah little sacks of candy and that was pretty big sacks you know. And then, then they were so oh, yeah, you got candy. And, of course, I stayed with grandpa that and I even got apples a lot more time and I got candy too up there and we'd run to grandpa's house and he had candy too! Ah, we were, we were pretty fortunate. I must say that, compared to some of the families around there. We had, we were, we had more, more candy and more better clothes and, and more things and my dad was real successful. And we had better things than some of the families around there, more meat and more, more chicken and more what have you. I mean we just had more of that stuff.
- CM:** More, more than any...
- PW:** And we had, you might say, I almost shouldn't say it but almost better dress clothes too.
- CM:** Yeah.

**BM:** What ah, is there something else now that we didn't ask that you would like to know, share with us?

**PW:** Well, I can, I can tell you, ah I mean if you want a little bit of my life history where I started and went through it. It's, I can put it out pretty good. When, when I started going to school I was seven years old. And, of course, by the time I was in the seventh grade I had to stay home from school. And I had to do a lot of, I had to be the hired man for the neighbor a lot because they didn't have no boys. So I worked up there a lot. They were just three quarters of a mile from us and they were Hartzes and I was there a lot. And then after I grew older, I mean, I still and then during thrashing time and stuff like that, well, once I was big enough to work the thrashing machine, I helped my dad run a thrashing machine and we did custom work for 23 years. And I was ah, 435 a lot and after that quit, I still run a thrashing machine. I had a combine and I still thrashed for the neighbors and thrash...we'd still binder later and then we thrashed, you know. But then the time came along, the thirties came and I put in the crop for myself already but I stayed with dad in the same place. But I couldn't, I couldn't harvest. I put in three crops, never took one off. So we would go west. We'd go out to California and we'd start 443 feeds in Modesto and then we'd come up to Stockton and then we would pick cherries and then we'd work on ah, for a big outfit. It was Speckmann and I run the first 448 RE Two Caterpillar tractor that was on track, on the experiment farm. And almost the first slaughter too, that was a whole bill then.

And then from California we'd go to Washington and we would work in the harvest fields there. I ah, I was a field boss for two years for a big outfit that thrashed peas. We would mow with the mowers and bunch them and then we would haul them six-header boxes and take them to a thrashing machine that had automatic feeder and one would feed up, to feed them in there and then they had some sacks sewers that sewed the sacks. But one year I drove, I pulled a combine by Colfax-Washington south of Spokane, 72 miles. And I had 21 horses on there to pull a combine on the hilly area but then later we only had 16 on there, two-12s and one-four but before it was three-six and one-three. And up the hill the, the land was so hilly that sometimes I didn't even see the horses, just the ears maybe in front 470. And those, those combines that, everything was sewed into sacks. And when we went round the hills and round and round, when we got way up when they opened that shoot they'd always have five sacks in a shoot then they'd open it. Some of them rolled a quarter of a mile down the hill. That's what the, that's what the sack haulers picked them up down by the, along the...

**BM:** The lower part.

**PW:** ...the lower part. And then of course after com...we'd finish combining and, and thrashing beans and stuff, peas, then we would go to Yakima and pick hops. And then after hops we'd pick apples and we'd pick apples, maybe start in...well, Yakima and 484 Dryden and Chelan and then we'd come back to Montana and I'd a beet contract with old Buchsbaum for three different seasons and we'd top beans, beets. And I was the chief, I had a contract. And then I had to cook for 12 people sometimes. Well, we changed off but I was the chief cook and I was the contractor and but I topped beets. And we contracted them. Then we'd come home around well, already November by the time we'd come home. We hauled the beet tops yet for 495 them to hired out and then we'd come home. Then we'd spend the winter at home and do the same thing next year.

**BM:** Now you made money at that.

**PW:** When I picked apples, I picked 26 hundred boxes of apples 500 only one man which was over three carloads. I got five cents a box; I made \$8.00 a day and better. That's more than the governor made out

there at that time. That was real good wages. In, in harvest fields we only got \$3.00 a day to pitch header box or what have you all day. In 1933 we had a real short crop. We went up to Harvey, North Dakota, to work in the harvest fields because that's where all my relatives are you know, in Harvey, the Weigels and what have you. And I worked in the harvest fields up there for \$2.00 a day I started but I was fortunate. My boss's son got sick. He run the thrashing machine and the engine and so I had to do that and I got \$3.00 a day but I pitched headers bags too but I got \$3.00 a day. And after we finished up there and came back to Linton, North Dakota, 518 Beekers had the store over here and I went in and I bought an overcoat and which is cashmere now, it was then too, and I brought 522 Brownbuilt shoes what are Florsheim now and I bought a felt hat and either hankies or socks for less than \$14.00.

**BM:** My goodness.

**PW:** So after that...

**BM:** Things have changed haven't they?

**PW:** Yeah. After the 30, after I, after I finished being a bum I came home and in '39 I started working for the highway department and I worked four years for the highway department. I first I lived in Wishek then I moved to Ashley. I lived and worked out of Ashley. I used to run the snow plows through Linton here and I was in the maintainers and then I was well, they called me an assistant district engineer for a while because I took care of the snow fence crews and of the guys that had to mow the ditches with horses then see. So I was the, kind of the chief there, made a little money. The first month I worked the highway department I made \$172.00 with and, at the same time 80 men at Ashley worked on WPA that got \$82.00 a month.

**BM:** Now what year was this, 193...?

**PW:** This was in 1939.

**BM:** 1939.

**PW:** And then I ah, I, I started making more money and I ah, worked and, and I worked ah, well I, I worked six days a week. I went south of Ashley which was only a half a day to the state line then went east to the Dickey County line was 18 miles, that was until 3:00 I was back home. But when I went to the Emmons County line, that was 26 miles. I would leave Ashley at 6:00 and come back at 6.

**BM:** Hm. When did you retire?

**PW:** I re...

**BM:** Did you ever retire, have you ever retired?

**PW:** Well, I, yes, I, I did retire in 19 hundred and 80, I only did part-time yet. I did part-time yet but I retired. I took full Social Security and I did part-time.

**BM:** And how old were you then? In 1980 you would have been ah, 68.

**PW:** I was 69, going to 69. And then in, in 19 hundred and 81 when we built the home in here and then in '82 we moved in here and I still did part-time but not too much. And then I quit. And we built the home in '82, moved in January the 29<sup>th</sup> and in '84, October the 6<sup>th</sup>, the wife passed away. So we were only in that new home for a little better than two years.

**BM:** And you lived there until...

**PW:** Until '94 and then I sold. Then I moved to Bismarck for four years but I came back the day after Thanksgiving last year so...

**BM:** Hm, hm, we were sure glad to see you come back here.

**PW:** Well, I'm here!

**CM:** Ah, let's go digress a bit here and go back to some of the olden days when you say, "I remember when..."

**PW:** Oh, okay. I remember when some of the, of the boys were drafted into World War I. They would come to... we were only one mile from the railroad crossing, Milwaukee and 596 Zoo. They called it 597 Madra. That doesn't exist for a long time already. That already, the last thing was moved out in 1933 and that was the elevator and the rest was all, was gone. And ah, but when those boys came from the Napoleon, Wishek, Ashley area, they would have to stay with some farmer around there by 604 Madra because they had to catch the train to go to Minneapolis the next day. So they would, some, and the Napoleon boys and my dad was well-known in the area so some of us came up to the Welders. And then they'd stay there overnight and I remember some of those guys staying there. I can remember one's name: Lawrence Greiden. He came there, to our...no, ah 614 Greiden. Lawrence was his brother. And he came up there and stayed there overnight and the next morning he helped to clean the barn, you know and he was a big boy the way he could throw that manure. And I remember that. I was standing out in the barn, six years old. And then I remember dad hauling them to 620 Madra with the sled. And then I remember more coming down, the Schumacher and but ah, that, I can remember that. And I remember when I was four years old when my Uncle Frank Weigel died. And my neighbor, Joe 630 came riding into the yard with a gray horse and dad was standing by the windmill. And I was standing by dad. And when Joe told dad that Uncle Frank died, see they could call to Greenway and then they, he came on horseback. He was our neighbor. And when Joe told my dad that Uncle Frank died, dad said 639 "Lieber hat Gott im Himmel" and this is why I remember that. And then he went to the summer kitchen and started whining and I remember that like yesterday. We went in and told mom, yeah, 19 hundred and 16 and I can give you the date. It's in here.

**BM:** In that wonderful book.

**PW:** Yeah, in that Welder, Welder book. Okay! What have you here...what have you...okay. Catherina Welder got married October the 29<sup>th</sup>, 1900, and her husband died in 1916. Frank died July the 16<sup>th</sup>, 1916.

**BM:** So that's the day.

**PW:** That's the day.

**CM:** Then when you were working in the grocery store, what were the prices of some of the things there?

**PW:** Okay. The best thing I remember is like a big box of corn flakes was 27 cents, a small one was 11. A pound of cheese was nine cents, gas was 12 cents and ah, like ah, well, like in dry goods...flannel was seven cents a, a yard. And then the better cotton was maybe 11 cents, 17 cents was some of the better stuff already. And I remember, I remember getting some dress shoes in (it was a general merchandise

store) some dress shoes. They were nice gray shoes with a long strap that wound around the, ladies shoes, around the ankle and they were \$4.00. And then one of the ladies came in and said well, she saw some in 689 Mobridge they were almost the same but they were higher price. So my brother-in-law said, well, I can get them too. So he took them and set them aside. So a few days later she came and he sold her the same shoes for \$6.00, \$5.95. That was top price. Overcoats, real nice overcoats for \$11.00, \$11.00 for overcoats. And nails were six cents a pound.

**CM:** Nails were...

**PW:** Nails were six cents a pound, staples six cents a pound. And eggs were 12 cents a dozen. And on a Friday, Thursdays and Fridays I had to, I set in the basement of that store and I would nail egg cases together as high as 30, 60 dozen cases. And nail them together, I had to nail them together. They came in, in great big packages, wood packaged together. And then they had a form to set them in there and I'd nail them together and I'd have to have as high as 30 and 32 boxes for Saturday and Friday and Saturday business that came in because they, they bought eggs in the store. And they bought cream as high as well 28, and 30 and maybe more, 10 gallon cans of cream a day.

**CM:** And what were they paying for cream in those days?

**PW:** Cream, that I don't know, but I know they got between \$3.00 and \$4.00 a can. I, I don't know exactly what the price was for a pound.

**CM:** How about a ton of coal?

**PW:** A ton of coal, a ton of coal that, that we bought, that my dad bought that was Montana Round-up: \$6.00 a ton. And, and ah, lignite were cheaper. In 19 hundred and 40, 19 hundred and 40, I took, I borrowed a truck, I rented a truck from Greenway, South Dakota, from the elevator and I went over to 741 haul coal over there for my brothers-in law and the store and for some of the people that I knew there and I got \$6.00 a ton, laid in the basement. I think I paid \$3.00 out there, something like that.

*End of 9 August 2000 Interview with Paul P. Welder*