INTERVIEW WITH FRED OSTWALD
FORT MORGAN, COLORADO

by

Timothy J. Kloberdanz

First Interview: January 13, 1976

Second Interview: May 14, 1976
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Today is January 13, 1976. This is Timothy Kloberdanz, Research Associate for the Germans from Russia in Colorado Study Project and I am about to interview Mr. Fred Ostwald at his home on 231 East Riverview Avenue in Fort Morgan, Colorado.

TJK Is that your full name?
FO No, really my full name is Johann Friedrich
TJK Johann Friedrich?
FO Yes. But through the years I dropped the John altogether and gone straight Fred.
TJK Okay. What is your age?
FO I will be seventy-seven this coming May
TJK You were born when?
FO I was born May 5, 1899
TJK Where?
FO In Russia, of course. Our people lived in the Don River Valley. In German they say, "das donischer Gebiet."
TJK What was the name of the village?
FO Makritzer-Chutor--that's all I remember about it.
TJK What was that near--any large city?
I don't know how far it was from Saratov, but I know that our people had to travel to Saratov for important legal papers, say--as a passport. They had to go to Saratov. Now, the nearest railroad town was some forty miles away, and I think they called it Chabrak. (Pause) That, as I recall, was the nearest town.

Was there any other large German colony or village near you?

No, there were really none of the original colonies were anywhere near us. They were much further north. There were other German communities, villages in our area. I don't remember too many names--they were referred to as Alt-Chutor, or something like that. Now, that seems to me like that is the only one that I can recall; however, I do know that there were others--the names have just slipped me.

Was your village located on the Bergseit or the Wiesenseit?

It would be the Bergseit.

The Bergseit.

Yes.

What were the names of your parents?

My father was John Jacob--Ostwald. Johann Jacob in German, of course. My mother was Marie Katrin.

Do you remember her maiden name?
FO Geist.

TJK Geist. Do you remember the names of your grandparents, by any chance?

FO Well, I remember the Ostwald grandparents. That was Phillip and Eva Ostwald.

TJK And they lived in the same village where you were born?

FO Yes, they lived in the village where I was born. As a matter of fact, the whole Ostwald clan was one family. Father and grandmother, of course, were the head of the Ostwald group. There were four sons and one single daughter that lived together as one family. All four of the sons were married. Phillip Ostwald, the oldest son, had a family. My father was the second oldest, he had a family of three children. At the time when he left for America a fourth one was on the way, but she was born four months after father left. Then Henry Ostwald, the third of the boys, had no children, and George Ostwald, the younger of the four brothers, had no children. The single girl, sister to the four, was a single girl that did not get married until the second year that we were in the United States.

TJK What was the religion of the people in the village?

FO They were Lutheran.

TJK They were Lutheran?
FO  Yes, however my own people were Reformed Lutherans.

TJK  Did they have prayer meetings?

FO  Yes, yes. They had prayer meetings. As a matter of fact, our people depended more for their religious instructions, you might say, in the prayer meeting than in the church. Our little town was so small we couldn't have a minister. Our school master taught school and then he would read the sermons on Sunday. There was a great big book of sermons available, and he would go through that and select the sermon for that particular Sunday and he would read it. Our people believed in singing and the **wolgagesangbuch** was the one that was used. Since most of the people during the time of going to school and confirmation had learned as many as eighty different songs, they spent most of their time while they were at church singing the songs that were familiar to them, and they had, like I say, eighty songs to select from.

TJK  Now, are you referring here, then, to what they used to call the **Bruderschaft**?

FO  Yes. The **Bruderschaft** was quite strong in our community. My own father was one of the leaders, or the elders. He no longer worked, and at the time when he was forty years old he didn't work any more. He had four sons now that were mature, and they took care of all the work, and grandfather had a cane, and he just went from place to place, meeting with other old men. All they did was sit around and discuss the meaning of the various scriptures that they had
chosen to discuss and debate on. He would also conduct the burials and at times he even performed baptisms where there was a need for it--say a child was born and was on the verge of death, it was immediately baptized, and grandfather would baptize the child.

TJK Do you recall any encounters between the brethren and the ministers, for instance, because you often hear some writers today say the brethren were often confronting the ministers over interpretation of a certain passage...?

FO Well, I can't recall of any such a situation developing, because a minister would only come to our village three or four times a year. At that time, or during that time, since transportation was so poor, some one of our village that had good horses and good wagon or in the winter time a good sleigh, would drive to the next village and pick the pastor up and bring him to the village in which we lived. When that happened, there was always a great preparation for the coming of the ministers, and everybody would line up along the street and as the minister approached, why the women would curtsy before the pastor, and the men would tip their caps. Ministers were held in great reverence. Maybe not so much willingly, but they came into the village more like a soldier, that had been decorated with all kinds of ornaments. The Russian government paid the salaries of the ministers. So they had certain privileges and honors, and anyone that abused a minister, he would have to answer to the government, and so he made himself liable to punishment.
TJK Do you remember any of the names of the ministers that visited the villages?

FO No, I don't remember any of the ministers that came to our village. I had heard some of the evangelistic Brothers that came through, but our ministers, I don't remember. Over the years you pick up some names, but I cannot say that they ever visited our village.

TJK I was going to ask--how large was the village, would you estimate?

FO There were--I tried to--have another older person give me an estimation as to the number of families in the particular village. Now, the man that I spoke to was considerably older than I, and yet he--he was in the village until he was about eighteen or nineteen, maybe twenty years old. But when I asked him, he didn't know as much as I did, and I would only been six when we left. They lived unconcerned--not knowing that sometime they might wish to know some of the information. But, going over it in my own mind, knowing--I still have a picture of our village--it couldn't have been much more than thirty-five or forty families.

TJK Relatively small, then?

FO Yes, relatively small, yes. Considering the length of the little village, that is about what I would say.

TJK Would you have any idea how old the village itself was?

FO The old, well yes I do have an idea. I was about three and a half, or four years old when we arrived there in the village. My parents
built the house in which they lived. In other words, the village that they had formerly lived in—all of the land had been leased from rich Russian land owners. They had leased it for a period of seven years. When that seven year period was over, the lease was not renewed, so they had to move on. (Pause) So I was three and a half or four years old, that puts it back to about—four and ninety-nine would be about 1903 or between '03 and '04 when they moved to the village.

TJK I see. What was the name of the former village, would you know that?—That they had lived in?*

FO I don't know that.*

TJK Was it near the Volga?

FO It was probably some (pause) fifty, sixty, seventy miles away—dessiatine—or, not dessiatine but—Oh, what is it, the word for the Russian mile? ...

TJK Werst?

FO Werst, yeah. Yeah, the verst. (Pause)

TJK I was going to also ask about the emigration. We can go into that, at least somewhat sketchy at this point. But, what year did your family come over?

FO Alright, when you ask the question I have a pretty clear picture

[*The name of this "mother colony" was Kautz, as remembered by Mr. Ostwald in the interview. See pp. 36-37.]
of that. I know what it was that brought about the trip to America. My
father had served in the Russian army, been trained in the Russian army
as a soldier. When the Japanese war broke out and they were suffering
heavy losses, and they were Russian soldiers out into Manchuria where the
wars were being fought, it soon became evident that they would reach out
into this group in which my father had trained, that is, the age group.
So, in 1905 the war had gone badly and it became evident that it wouldn't
be very long until these people would be called from our village. My
father, with five other men, let's see--was there five or four other men?
--decided that they wanted no part of the Japanese war and since they had
heard some glowing reports of America, they made up their mind that
rather than go to Manchuria that they would go to America. So one night
they just skipped out. (Pause)

TJK Oh, this was illegal then, this was an illegal act, because they had been
called now to...?

FO No, they had not been called up. They had not been called up. But the
calling came shortly after they left. They were one step ahead of the
draft call.

TJK About what month would this have been in 1905?

FO Let me see--my sister was born the 5th of September--that would be
September, October, November, December--it must have been right after the
first of the year, in 1905.

TJK You talk of your father being in the Russian military, how many years...?
Four years.

Four?

Yeah, he had trained for a soldier, but never—he'd come home, had his family and had nothing to fear insofar as being recalled into the service. Except in times of war. But the Japanese war was eating up a lot of men and so...

What was your father's attitude toward the Russian military?

Well, (pause) I think that the general attitude of all of the Germans in Russia, they detested serving in the war, or army. However, they had to obey, and that was it. Doing something contrary to what you believe in is very difficult, but yet—you have to resign yourself, and that is what they had done, up to this point. But now, having had a family and another addition expected, they decided that—and father was not the only one, these other men also had children, except two. I believe that there were two that didn't have children, no—there was only one. My Uncle George's wife, she didn't have any children. Another one had two. And then, the others, they had more. I think there was a total of seventeen children in that group, at the time then, when the mothers left in 1906, the fathers came in 1905. They came to the United States by ship, stopped at Ellis Island, where they had to show at least $10.00 in their possession. Now, these men didn't have any more money, they didn't start out with enough and hadn't—didn't have enough, but while at Ellis Island, a man from Fond du Lac, Wisconsin that was operating a tannery happened to be in New
York, and he had to rely on immigrant labor to perform the dirty, stinking jobs that he had in his tannery. When he saw and heard of these five men that were to be deported back, why he stepped into the breach, and laid the $10.00 for each to come in and paid their transportation from New York to Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, and put them to work in the tannery, until he had been repaid. (Pause)

TJK I wonder, too, if he had probably made some on the side—you know, other than being simply repaid...

FO Well, no. No, I—those men never complained about this man. No, no complaint whatever. It was only the dirty job that they had to do for him. Handling these hides that were in the vats. (Pause) Later then, in 1906, mother with four children now, and these other women with their families, decided to head for America to meet up with their husbands. In this process—they had to have passports, two men of our village were empowered to go to Saratov, to have the passports prepared for these women and children. The story was said that the money necessary was used by these men to gamble and to drink. So they found out that they didn't have enough money to buy the legitimate passports, or get them, so they procured falsified passports, which later on proved to be a very difficult thing for these women as they traveled. (Pause) As a six year old I can remember some of the things that occurred on our trip. When we reached the borders between Poland and Russia, we were stopped because of the passports.
Here the women were, so far from home, very little money, a group of children, wanting all to go to America to be with their husbands and had been stopped to the point where the only way open was to go back home. So while they were sitting in the group and mourning, some of them crying about their situation, a man came along—he was of Jewish descent—saw them in their misery, spoke to them in German, realized—he asked them why they were crying. And so they finally told him what had happened. Well then he said, lucky for you that I came along. He said, if you can make up so many rubles, he says, I'll see to it that you get across the border. Well, they didn't have as many rubles as he wanted, but he settled for the amount that they did have, And so, he said, now I'll come tonight—he said, be prepared to go with me. That night about 10:00 it had rained, but the rain had now stopped. He came and called and the women were all prepared, they had their worldly possessions wrapped up in bundles, there were no suitcases, no trunks. Each carried a bundle according to the size of the person. This man led the women and children across a field. Muddy, clear up to their waists, to a railroad siding, where a train was waiting to let another one pass. He opened a car door in one of the freight cars and he says, "Climb in." When they were all in he pulled the door shut. They had paid him off and he was gone and they were in there. Now, this was cold, terribly cold, even though it had rained, it was still cold. He didn't tell them how long they had to stay in there. These women had never been outside of their village. They'd never seen a train up to the time when they left
Chabrak, as I told you. Now, all at once, they were thrust out onto the world, could speak nothing but German, never been out of their back yard, you might say, didn't know how to go about things. They stayed in that train, that freight car, that night, they stayed in the next day, and the next night. Very little food, that they had with them when they entered the cars, no facilities, toilet facilities or water. At the end of the second night mother said to these women, "We are going to have to get out of here, because we are all going to die." The women had taken the clothes, you might say, off their backs and wrapped their children, to keep them. The women were suffering terrible with the cold. Those that didn't have children or only had one or two fared fairly well, but those with more really suffered, like my mother. The next morning they heard a man walking along the track. My mother said, "I'm going to open the door now and talk to him." She opened it. The man had already gone by the car in which they were. She called to him and he came back and he spoke in German. He said, "Was in aller welt tun Sie hier?" [What in the world are you doing here?] Anyway, the women opened up and told him what had happened, and he said, "Well, I can sympathize with you, but," he says, "I have to take you up to the proper authorities." So he took all of them up to these authorities.

TJK Where were they at, now?

FO In Germany.

TJK Oh, they were in Germany, now?
FO  They were in Germany, now. Ja. The train not only had crossed the border between Russia and Poland, but also between Poland and Germany. They were at the outskirts of Berlin. When the authorities saw the pitiful situation and condition of these women, I guess out of sympathy, they took care of them. My mother was assigned to the hospital. I was assigned to the hospital. I was in the hospital for two weeks and mother was in for six weeks. Our children were being taken care of, they had no worry. I can still remember, after I was better and walking up and down the stairs with wooden shoes on....because I made so much noise (laughter). After, or during the time a contact was made with my father ... in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Again, the German people did this, made the contact. He had wired sufficient funds...to bring us to America. We embarked on the little boat at Hamburg, Germany-from there we crossed the English Channel to Liverpool...I believe it was Liverpool. We went off the little boat, there was a smaller ship that took us across the ocean. It was a converted cattle car, uh, boat. We, because we were poor, our passage was booked for the lower level where the, all the, equipment was clanging, and our traveling companions were ...Jewish and Polish people. It was a very disagreeable place to be in--the stench and the filth, was awful. I took seasick on the little boat and I never got on my feet again until we reached the American shores.

TJK  How long was this, the voyage?

FO  That was about twenty-eight days ... Mother would, each day the people
would have to come up to the upper level deck and she would take a blanket and the little children on up on her first trip. She spread the blanket out and leave the children up there and then she'd come down and pick me up and carry me up two flights of stairs . . . and then back down again when the day was over. As far as food was concerned, we couldn't eat. I couldn't eat at all... the only thing that I could eat, they had some hard bread. Mother would get boiling water and soak this hard bread in boiling water as a soup and then I would eat that. Other than that I couldn't eat, every time I'd eat it would-just be vomited out. So I, I was nothing but a problem to my mother. We arrived at Fond du Lac, we...at Ellis Island, where we were disembarked, I don't remember at all crossing the gang plank to America. I do remember some things that occurred later. As we came in here, people were separated, men were directed to one side of the building, women to the other. This was for the purpose of health inspection. I can remember that as a boy, a rather large ... uh, being sent in with the women. Everyone was plum naked. Pretty soon a woman came along and saw me in there and she took me by the arm and said this was no place for me. And took me over to the men's side. After our health inspection we had been accepted, I guess, or approved and passed the health inspection, we were then permitted to dress again and we were soon taken to the depot and put on the train heading for Wisconsin. I can remember during that time after the health inspection that we were given candy and oranges. As far as I can remember in my life, those were the first oranges I'd ever
seen or had. Of course the candy was very welcome as well. In Russia I, we had never had candy that were anywhere near like that. I do remember having had some candy, they called them **Kunfeck** in Russia. They were a kind of a fruit-filled ... candy, wrapped in little wrappers, very tasty, but you wouldn't get any more than one....

**Tape 1, Side B**

**TJK** Okay, just to back up a little bit, how many were in the group now, the women you were referring to, and the children. How many would you say?

**FO** Well, there were, uh, as I recollect, either seventeen or nineteen children. I believe it was seventeen children, in the group. Now the families . . .

**TJK** And four women?

**FO** Four women... uh, four mothers. Yeow, there were five women. There was ... Jacob Ostwald was my father, George Ostwald was his brother, there was Henry Baumgartner, uh...resided here in Fort Morgan. Then there was a George Loos and a George Nidens. Those five men came over together and George Ostwald's wife was the only one who didn't have children. Mrs. Niedens had two, my mother had four, uh, Mrs. Loos had, uh,...four or five, and then the, the uh, the uh Baumgartner family, I don't recall the number of children they had. These children are still around here. There's Henry and
David and, uh, uh, there are more but I can't name all of them any more.

TJK Okay, so it was a sizeable group.

FO Yes, a sizeable group. However, they did not all arrive in America at the same time. When my mother went to the hospital she was the only one that was detained in Berlin. The other women went on to England. I think one, or two, were detained in England. Two of them went directly then to America. My Uncle George's wife ...and I think one of the other women, I don't remember which one it was, they went on straight through....but, uh, the rest of them came to America at different times.

TJK I was going to ask too, uh, what did your mother think of the German spoken at that time, it was different, wasn't it, from what she spoke in the village, and your family was used to?

FO No ... German spoken here?

TJK Um hum.

FO No, no. Strangely enough, when we arrived at Fond du Lac, Fond du Lac at that time was a German community. We came into a German community. The man that had helped them, that was instrumental in bringing dad to Fond du Lac was a German. So, and they could get along fairly well. The German they spoke was very much like the German spoken here, except for the High German accent, the guttural sounds that the High German has. Our people spoke a plain German
language, but without the dialect. When I speak German to you I don't have a German dialect, such as the Norker people, or the Frank, or the Krafter, you see. Cause I'm a mixture. Down south it was a mixture of people living in the same village. Not one from one village up north. So they combined and assumed a language all of their own, as they were customarily doing. They each- uh, community had their own dialect, well that's the way they developed.

TJK Yet yours was closer to the High German, or the standard German,

FO Yes, yes, yes, yes. I don't use the kind of dialect that you had in that last one ...uh, you find that more as you go into the south of Russia. The Odesser people, for instance, and the Norker people. Those two, in my own mind, are the farthest from the written word, or the printed word. They had a dialect that is contrary, they'd take a book and read it, the German, and then revert right back to their dialect when they speak.

TJK I see. Then, too, your mother had no trouble in Germany then, either? Being understood.

FO Oh no, no, no no no. No German at all, no trouble at all.

TJK What about, uh, was there any Russian that you had picked up and used?

FO The Russian. ...uh, that our Ostwald family had was like the English had. The "okay," things like that, just a word here and there. There was no Russian taught, in our village. The Russian that my
father acquired was during the time of training in the Army.

TJK  Did he speak Russian fluently?

FO  No.

TJK  He did not?

FO  No. No. Now, we had only a few. Now, my Uncle Henry...he could speak Russian fluently. He had a little more education, a little more world-wise, and so he acquired a little more Russian. Now, we had a few people like my uncle's wife. She had grown up in a Russian community. When he got married to her she spoke broken German. And could really rattle off the Russian.

TJK  Where was this at, now, this village she was brought up in, do you know?

FO  Well, that was in that same general area, but her father was living in the German village at the time, carrying on his trade, whatever it was, I don't know.

TJK  What was her name, do you remember?

FO  Uh, uh, Hadung...was her name.

TJK  Ah, I see. Okay, now before we continue with your family in Wisconsin, I want to go back to some of the things about Russia. For instance, you were talking before [the interview started] about a fire that you remembered.
Yes, yes. In order to get to the fire, uh. . why don't we start out in the farm practices?

Okay, fine.

In the old country, of course, or in Russia, in the colonies, the original grant allowed a certain acreage to each male inhabitant. . . As the families increased, the same acreage was reallocated over every twelve years, that's the way it was in the area where my father was. Now, the family that had the most sons would wind up having the greatest amount of land. Now, this was the, in the colonies themselves, in 1890 and '91 a very severe famine took place, covering the greater portion of the German colonies. Some colonies were prepared for it, others had to suffer. It was during this time that my father, my grandfather, grandmother, three daughters and four sons, one daughter-in-law, the oldest son had become married at an early age and, and decided if they were to survive the famine they'd have to move. So they turned their back on their original land holding and traveled south to find the new area where growing conditions were better. In their travels all that they took was what little belongings they could on their wagon, they had two wagons to travel, and traveled south and they located at a place that was on, well I've forgotten that ... a certain river flows through there and they settled there and they had a wonderful crop up to the time that the grain was in the dough stage. The Hessian fly came in and no time at all their crop was gone. They described the bug that came in and sucked the sap, so I decided
that was the Hessian fly. So, when the year ended they didn't have anything to carry them through the winter, so they again moved. Now, they finally came to this other little village where I was born. They rented that for a period of seven years, they done fairly well, but at the end of that time they had to move. Now, machinery was something, because they moved so often, had not been acquired. The harvesting was done-scythe and cradle ...and the women would come along behind and take a few heads, uh, stems of straw on their heads, in such a way, and wrap up their bundles and ... now, where they owned their own land, up north in their original colony, now they had to pay rent on this land. I don't know how much they paid, but anyway the land was some distance away from the village in which we lived. When the harvest was completed, it was set up out there in the field until it ... was dry enough to stack. Then the grains would be hauled in to the village. Behind every yard, house and yard, there was a special backyard, or a Gumpa, as it was called, in which the grain would be stacked, until such that it would be threshed, either on the ground or by machine. Now, to begin with, the harvesting was done on the ground. They'd prepare a threshing platform, you might say, be wetting it down and brushing it until it was perfectly smooth, and wetting it down and brushing it again until it became hard. Then they would spread their grain out on this and they had corrugated rolling stones that they would pull over that. Sometimes some of them even just used animals, horses, to go round and around on this spread grain until it was all threshed
out. Then they had these tether forks with only two tines in it. They'd lift and fluff the straw and leave the chaff and the wheat down below. Of course, it would be swept together on a pile and later it would be clean. Now, as they made money, they were in a good area now, and as they made money, they acquired tools, and the tools were some that were brought from America. The John Deere wagon was not an unknown product out there. The McCormick mowing machine, the McCormick plow. The early American reaper had found its way already over there. They didn't tie bundles, but it cut the grain onto the platform and the man was sitting back there and he'd take a rake and rake it off at regular intervals, you see, like that. Then it would still have to be tied. Then, later on of course then, the binder came along. Now after they'd made a little money, threshing machines made their appearance, even in our little village. Machines would have to be hauled from place to place with horses. Eighteen, twenty, and more horses would be put on one of those big machines, and then be moved down from one place to another. Now, one day ... the machine had pulled in on our side of the village, and incidentally. .to the best of my information that I have gotten, our town was set, my mother said from ....... from about five o'clock to about eleven o'clock, that would make it southeast to northwest. I don't know just exactly why it would be set in that direction, but they, not knowing what north, south, east or west was, went by the clock. So this was the way it was lined up. we were on the one side of the street. Machine had pulled in and in the process of... uh, setting the machine, a little wind had picked up. But, they were anxious to
go ahead and thresh, so the machine was started up. While he was stuffing straw into the boilers... a sort of a whirlwind hit. It took the straw and pulled it right through on fire and whirled it all over, and it caught fire, and one-half of the village, all of the backyards burned. All of the grain had been stored, stacked in here, and burnt up. Now the people on the other side of the street were safe. This one-hundred and fifty feet plus the yards that were in between protected them. Everybody over here was concerned about not only losing their grain, but also their homes. The houses, themselves, were adobe brick, and the roofs were straw. So, everybody was protecting their home and just let the back burn...

...It would have been a catastrophe for these people if it had not been for the ever-normal granaries that were a part of the general practice of saving from each year's crop enough in case of something like this that they had enough to carry through. Now, sometimes we pride ourselves on our foresight, that we've had a ever-normal granary in America, but that was already done way back there in those colonies. They knew the need for these things, and actually it was used for, as a dual-purpose. Not only did it protect them in times of catastrophe, but also was a source for providing food and sustenance to those who could not harvest. Some people just didn't have enough management that they could produce a crop. That they were too poor to have an acreage leased, and that had to live off of charity. They would be fed through the winter out of this, and then in the following years there was always an assurance that the seed had been kept here, so anyone that was short of seed could
always come to these, and for every bushel that they borrowed, they'd give back two or three, maybe, I don't recall just what it was, but they had to give back, to keep that normal granary always filled up and to take care of their needs.

TJK Now, following the fire, were any precautions taken to avoid another one, do you remember?

FO Uh, there were certain precautions taken that never again would a man be permitted, that didn't keep a screen over the smoke stack. The other thing is everybody had installed barrels filled with water all, at all times.

TJK But did they uh, keep building the uh, thatch roofs, then, the straw roofs?

FO Oh, yes.

TJK Oh, they did?

FO Yes, they kept those. Down where we were, or where we were, I don't recall of ever seeing a tree.

TJK Humm. You were really on the steppe then.

FO Oh yes, it was steppes, yeow. Now, I can remember in the spring of the year, after the thaw...um, grass had started up, the cow herder and the horse herder had been hired, and they start in at one end of the village, and the horses that were to go out onto the pasture would be turned loose, and he would take them through
the village and take them on out into this huge area of pasture. The same would be taken, the next one would be, say the cattle would be released. He'd come down the street, everybody knew the time he was coming. The women had milked the cows ... and turned them out and when they joined the marching cattle herd and go on out to grass, and in the evening they'd bring them back ... Whenever a cow or a steer or a calf got to his gate where it belonged it would separate itself and walk in and find its place in the yard ... be taken care of. The pigs were driven out the same way and they'd come through, down the street, and they'd get to their gate they'd go into their gate. Geese ... that would be taken out and herded by little girls would come down the street and go into their little yards.

TJK And they each had their separate day now, the different ..., animals.

FO Yes, their own yard.

TJK And this was a communal pasture, it was shared by everyone in the village then?

FO By all, yes. I remember being out there in the spring of the year. You never smelled such a beautiful aroma... out there in the pastureland. Everywhere you looked it was actually a flower garden of wild tulips. Spring up all over. And you know that smell of a tulip (pause) yeah, I can remember that yet.

TJK Then there was a beauty about the country there?
The country is beautiful, yes, the country is beautiful, and very productive, yes.

Were you constantly breaking sod yet, I mean were you still opening new areas in the village where you were?

Uh, on occasion. Say the community had rented so many acres of land—every so often after the expansion they became more wealthy, certain farmers reached out and rented additional land, and that of course had to be broken, to put under the plow.

I was going to ask too, do you remember sugar beets ever being cultivated in Russia?

Not where we were.

Not where you were.

No, no, no. Our people down there were raising wheat, Gerste [barley], Hafer [oats] ... and I've heard them talking about flax... but I cannot... say for sure ... that I've saw it growing. But wherever their crops were they always managed to have a large garden...

And they would grow what in the garden, then?

Watermelons... TJK Ah...

Cucumbers...cabbage...

Potatoes, too?
FO Uh, I can't say about the potatoes, yes, I can tell you about potatoes. Uh, my mother told us children about the time when there was a shortage of potatoes. That they would peel their potatoes and cut the peel just a little thicker than normal and plant the eyes of those potatoes in their gardens. And they would produce good potatoes ... she says a whole nest full of them .... yes, so they must have grown their potatoes. However, just ...I can't tell you because—maybe I didn't recognize it, or was—not interested in it.

TJK Were there mills in the village, do you remember?

FO No, we had no mills. Now, when they stored grain at home ... and grandfather would take the wagon and load so many sacks of grain, grandfather and grandmother would drive to a place called Martinovka ...where there was a mill. Then they would exchange the wheat, uh ...out of ever so many sacks, I don't remember the number, the miller would take one sack to make the rest into wheat. They'd bring the flour and the bran back home. The flour for the family and the bran would be used to feed the horses. They had a great big trough out in the barn where the wheat chaff and the bran would be mixed to kind of a, uh, sloppy dough stage, and then each horse was given a portion of this. I can still hear the horses slobbering the stuff up (laughter).

TJK Do you remember any of the oil mills or sunflowers being grown or anything like this?

FO Uh, yes, they grew sunflowers, but here again, there was no mill,
at our place. They would take their sunflowers and have them processed somewhere else. Now, the cooking oil was really sunflower oil. Yes. Now, the residue, the shells, and the residue of the seed itself was compressed hard, and you could get the flavor of the inner seed by chewing this and then you'd spit it out after you had...as kids, we would take chunks of that and chew on it.

**TJK** I want to ask about the work, and the work ethic. Because some writers have said that the reason the Germans from Russia who came to this country and especially in the beet fields made it, was because they had been used to hard back-breaking work already. Would you say that the work was that demanding in Russia?

**FO** No, no. No, I would not say that. As a matter of fact, I think we're jumping to an assumption when we say that the Americans [sic] came here because of the hard work in the beet fields. When our people arrived here, and some of them realized how much hard work there was here, actually wanted to go back. Because their life out there was easier than what we were experiencing in here. Now my own family never gave it another thought to go back...we were here, by applying ourselves we expected to make progress, and we, we did. But there was never a thought expressed—now, some of the women, or the mothers that came later, actually went back, some of the families went back. We have a Mr. Weber here that tried to get his family to go back and the three boys said, "No, we're not going to go back. You can go back if you want." And they talked him out
of it, he stayed. But there were other families that went back... and they stayed six, seven or eight months and hurried back. Some of them couldn't make it. They stayed too long and were caught up, I know a man in Denver that was in that situation. During the early years there, he said he himself became a Communist. Later, of course, he escaped out of Russia, and came over. But, uh....

TJK Humm. But the work was not as nearly as back-breaking as...here then?

FO No, it wasn't, it wasn't, it wasn't the work. It wasn't the work. In the first instance, like with my parents, it was military service. Uh, then there was always this feeling of superiority on the part of the Germans as compared with the Russians. We did not want to become integrated into a society, into a people, who we looked down beneath us to... because we thought they were just ... I'm speaking in general terms.

TJK Sure. What did that feeling stem from, do you think? Just this feeling of superiority that they did feel...?

FO I think it's inherent, in every nationality, to feel superior to somebody else. And it's not just the German people that feel that. I know Hitler appealed to this instinct in the human race, to feel themself superior, and tried to use that, and quite successfully, I might say, to where the German race thought that they were a superior race. That's only saying a small portion of ... the British
..for two-hundred years ruled the world because they felt that is ...being a superior race. We've become, as Americans, infected with the same feeling of superiority. It is a natural thing for any people, to feel that they are somewhat superior. Not only on the national level, but even as individuals. In our daily lives we find that if were not careful it will creep into our lives. To feel superior to somebody or something. Those of us that let ourselves go, that feeling grows. Those others who hold it down, sometimes it's quite difficult and we have to catch ourselves ever now and then. Because after all, I think we're all alike, we have the same human needs and aspirations all over this world, no matter what our color, or ethnic society is, that we are a member of.

TJK For the Germans in Russia, then, these feelings too might have been heightened by the fact that they were a minority, in the midst of so many Russians, too, that...

FO Well, that- I don't know that that plays a part in it..."I think that what I have is better than anything you may have." Part of it was based on religion—the Lutheran people, even today, feel sometimes that their religion is somewhat superior. The Catholic believes that his religion is the first religion, and the only one that ought to be. The Lutherans, an off-spring of Catholicism, you see, feel that when Luther took that step that religion became refined into the true religion, and then of course the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians and the Methodists, they never
ask, "Why am I?" They simply take it for granted that this is superior because "I am a member of it." And so I think religion played a major role. Those others were heathen people. In the Bible we find that the Jews thought of themselves as God's elite, elect--the chosen people of God. The others were as dogs. You know about it.

TJK Right. What you're saying is that these feelings the Germans had in Russia were by no means unique, they were merely universal among all people.

FO Right, right. Quite universal, and uh, I am amazed at some of the hang-ups that people get about this feeling. If they would recognize it for what it is it is nothing to be worried about, concerned about, it is simply a natural thing for everyone to feel that way. Now, my children can do no wrong, you see? (Laughter) Mine are all good!

TJK Yeah, but see, you recognize it, which is the important factor there.

FO Nobody else's. Any thinking person that wants to can see the truth. And truth is what we're all after, we're all seeking it, but we fail to stop and think how this truth... apply in my own life, my own actions. How do I accept it? I only want ...me..to be free of all of the things that I see wrong in somebody else.
Okay, we covered somewhat agriculture in Russia. I want to talk about education a little bit. About what you remember of the village schools, people's attitude toward education, learning.

Yeah, alright, uh, you're on now? Alright, in our little village we had a school house situated about three or four blocks from where we lived. The school house itself was also built like all of the residences of the village of mud-brick and thatched roof, uh, it had hard benches, straight-back benches to sit on. The subjects taught were the Bible, the New Testament, Bible history, the song books, uh, reading--there were a few students, children of wealthier people in the village, that were taught writing. Not everyone could afford pencil and paper, and so they didn't get to write, learn to write. There was a little arithmetic, the time-tables were taught up to the tens. Uh, no ...I don't recall that anyone learned to do figuring on paper, adding large columns, or multiplication, except in the smaller ways by using the multiplications by tens, or by fives, but they couldn't do a problem of more than three columns. Geography was not taught, history was not taught, uh spelling was taught in the earlier grades. I think the advancement was based more or less on the whims of the teacher. If you had your lesson good, you were moved up to the next bench in front, and when you reached the front bench in the school you, I guess, was ready to graduate. There was no such thing as grades. You just simply went on up the ladder to the front row and then you
graduated. Uh, confirmation was held at about the age of fifteen, at which time you then became an adult, and entered the affairs of the community. As far as education is concerned, uh, I think most of it was learned by heart, by memory.

TJK It was parochial in nature?

FO It was parochial in nature. Education was based primarily on religion. Other than that I don't know that very many children went on beyond the village school. May well be that the children of the wealthier families might have gone on to school, but they'd leave the village and go to the closest town to take courses in Russian, and of course there they were exposed to a better education.

TJK What about discipline in the school?

FO Discipline in school was entirely up to the schoolmaster. He was permitted to give not only ordinary discipline, but even beatings took place in school. Quite often the young man that would be disciplined in school would get it again when he arrived back home. The parents had a feeling that during the time that they were in school, that it was the schoolmaster's privilege to discipline, no matter how severe.

TJK What about Russian influence in the school, was there any, uh...

FO There was no Russian influence in our village. We were an autonomous village, no German, or Russian, influence whatsoever.
only contact we had with Russians would be some itinerant Russian would come to the village, bringing a two-wheeled cart loaded with grapes, or a two-wheeled cart loaded with fish, and he would drive up and down the street and peddle his wares. Occasionally, every few months, a Russian would make his appearance in our village with combs, scissors, needles, thread, trading it for eggs and other produce. (Pause)

TJK  Do you remember much about the social life in terms of traditions and customs--like during the festival days, or....?

FO  Yes, I can remember in the fall of the year, Octoberfest or Harvestfest, the celebration that went on two-three of thanksgiving. The older people spent most of the time in religious services. But the younger people, younger married people, and uh, those between the ages of say sixteen-seventeen, uh, there would be some drinking, dancing, music, music and dancing, and of course being as young as I was I was not permitted full knowledge of all that went on. (Laughter) In the spring of the year was another time of celebration. It was about the first of May, May Day, that was celebrated in a peculiar way. The girls that had a boyfriend, the boyfriend would make a May basket and set it up on their house. A girl that was not very popular or had mistreated a boy of some kind, he would manage to set up sort of a scarecrow for her. (Laughter) And whenever that happened it about broke the girl's heart. The girls in Russia of Russian-German parentage were like the girls in America--they liked to be (pause) loved. (Laughter) I can
remember the young people--after the parents had gone to
church or had attended prayer meetings, how they would
congregate in bunches in the various houses in the village.
As a small boy I, in all of my innocence, I was well aware of
what went on. (Laughter)
TJK What about the position of women? Were women treated as
inferiors, or--
FO Women took their place in the fields, the same as men. Women,
more or less, were taken for granted, that having married they
had become the property of the men. (Pause) It was only now and
then where women received their due consideration in the way of
kindness, special kindnesses, favors shown to them. But as a
general rule they were taken for granted that now you are part
of the family and you take and make the best of what your lot
is. (Pause) Men of that period that I can remember took a
terrible advantage of their womenfolk. It was the women that
done all of the work (pause) during the winter--fall, winter
and spring. They were the ones that had to bring in the (pause)
straw. They'd go back in the backyard and load up a great big
bundle of straw to start their fires. They would bring in the
manure squares to feed the fires and hold fire through the
night. They were the ones who milked the cows, that fed the
calves, that slopped the pigs, they were the ones that looked
after the chickens, they were the ones, of course, that kept
the homes, prepared the meals. The men, on the other hand, had
their little fur coats. They would gather in the house and lay
around the built-in stoves enjoying the warmth and
telling tall tales of how strong they were, how rich they were, what great hunters they were. (Laughter) Drinking a little bit, singing a little bit. They lived a "life of Reiley," so to speak, compared to their womenfolk.

TJK Were the people, do you think, uncommonly superstitious in some of their...?

FO Yes, they were very superstitious. I know in my own, in our own family, my father, or my grandfather and grandmother to begin with were very superstitious. They believed in all of the superstitions of the time--of spirits, evil spirits. They had something they called an Alp. It was supposed to be a big bird, and he would come through the night and settle on a body or a person with his claws and that body would squirm and suffer under the pangs of those claws bearing into their--and if somebody would speak to them, this bird would take off and they would be released. And then they believed in witchcraft and hexes to the extent that some of those hexes would have power enough even over the animals owned by this particular family. By placing a spell or a hex, animals would die, for no apparent reason. There were some that believed that health of their family was dependent to a great extent on not provoking a hex to cast a spell on them. They believed in cures that could be affected by incantations of kind, certain kinds. (Pause) They had a sickness they called, uh, well, in English you would have to say a navel out. By going out to a wagon and raising the tongue and getting under that with the tongue laying on top of
your shoulder, and you would raise up and say this certain incanta-
tion, and you would get relief. The effects of this sickness would
immediately stop and the cure was effected. I don't know that I've
ever saw it practiced but I've heard the old timers talk about it.
(Pause) My father, at one time, had an infection on his one hand.
They called it die Ros (pause) and so grandfather took him, and they
drove to another village to where a man was supposed to be located
that could cure that. Dad's arm was all wrapped up, it was red clear
up to his elbow, so they say, I don't remember it. They went there
and this man recited this incantation and rubbed the arm and says,
"Alright, you're ready to go home." In a few days his arm was well.
Whether the cure was through faith or the incantation, who knows?
(Pause)

TJK  Do you remember other folk medicine that was used? Because there were
no doctors nearby, were there?

FO   No, there were no doctors. They used what they had. For instance, if
there was inflammation, sores with pus, they would go out into the
pig pen, pick up some fresh droppings, and wrap this around in the
form of a poultice, and it would cure it. It would draw the pus out
and would cure it. (Pause) I don't recall offhand here again that any
of it was used in our family, but it was a formula that was handed
down from in the families, and they all knew about it.

TJK  Was there any friction, though, between the minister and the people
who would practice some of these things, for instance who believed in
witchcraft?
FO No, no, no, because there was no ministers there. So there was no—
even the very devout of the most devout Christians practiced, or
took part, in this sort of thing. So contrary to the admonition
within the Bible against calling on witches and hexes they still
had a certain faith in the practice and used it. (Pause)

TJK For instance, would the women having children, oh, midwives, these
would have been common in the village then, right?

FO Yes, the children were brought into the world by midwives. We had no
doctor in our, on our village. We had a couple of men that performed
functions of a doctor in the form of bloodletting. They had small
round capsules in which there was a small knife concealed, and they
would snap this little thing on the backs of people, and that would
lance the skin and then the blood would flow. These people believed
that in the letting of blood they could protect their health. If a
woman didn't feel well, sluggish, she'd say, "Well, I've got to go
and have a bloodletting," and they would withdraw a certain amount
of blood—-I don't know whether it was measured or not, but they
required more or less of these bloodletting instruments. (Pause)

TJK Then did some of these old beliefs endure in this country, or...?

FO Uh, I can recall my grandmother having had several of those blood-
lettings in uh, this country. The same man that did it for her out
in the Old Country was here in Fort Morgan and right here in Fort
Morgan she had at least two times, to my knowledge, (pause) she
had gone to him for this bloodletting. When she came back you could see that something had taken place. Her face was pale and it took a week or longer before she recovered her color. (Pause) I don't recall that my father or mother ever had any of it done, but my grandmother believed in it and had it done.

TJK I also want to ask about village government, do you remember anything of this?

FO I know very little about the village government, except that I do know they had an election at which time a leader was chosen. I don't recall the title that he had. But one of the better-read men, of good character, was elected as—well, we would call it mayor here. There was no council, but they would elect maybe a board of three or five older men along with it. These were the wise men of the village that would sit with the mayor and make the decisions. Then they had what we would call a town crier that was used to notify people for any special actions was taken by these people, or anyone that was found committing some small misdemeanor would be called in to come to the, uh, to a hearing. Now, the small affairs of the community were all handled by this small group of people. But if a murder would have been committed, then the Russian government would have stepped into the picture, and would have taken charge of that kind of a crime. But small acts of stealing, or uh, a disagreement between individuals was handled locally by the committee.

TJK And do you think things like, uh, oh, gossip, and just the regular
FO Well, of course, I can't recall that too much of that went on, except for one incident that comes to mind. About three doors from where we lived a family lived—the son was of small stature, one of the sons, and was married to a woman of considerable size. The other son of this family had served in the army and was home on furlough. A quarrel broke out between this woman and her husband, the large woman and the smaller person that was her husband. And they were fighting and the fight ended by the young brother, who was bigger than his older brother, taking the part of his sister-in-law and he was beating up on his own brother. The fight reached the street, at which time I was one of the bystanders. I was watching this fight. The younger fellow had his older brother down on the ground and was beating him up, when all of a sudden, out of the yard, came this woman with a pitchfork in her hand. And she came over there and she took the pitchfork and stuck her benefactor in the back (laughter). Because he had her husband down...(laughter). Yes, I remember seeing that, other than that I don't know any, any of the squabbles that were going on.

TJK What about the attitudes of the people toward the national, the Russian government and the Czar, for instance?

FO I don't know that anybody made anything, at all.
TJK: Was the Czar ever mentioned...?

FO: I cannot ever remember...I do believe, I do believe that back in my mind... I can remember a little picture of the Czar hanging in one of our rooms. I do believe, I think I can remember seeing that.

TJK: I wouldn't be surprised. (Pause) Now, we've already went into the reasons for emigration of your group, that is, that's your father and your mother and some of the others, of why they came to the New World. And how did they know about America, do you know that? How did they find out about the opportunities in America?

FO: There were letters, that had been written to other people in the village. Knowledge is spread, when a letter arrived in the village from America, it was read and reread and circled the whole little village. It became, there were no newspapers, you understand. But this is one way of passing on information and some people were really happy about this, "Look, I have a friend in America, he wrote me a letter, etc." There was one thing, I don't know that I told you. . .shut this off.

(Pause)

TJK: Okay, before we leave Russia entirely now, I want to ask a question that came to mind about some of the theological concepts held by the people. They believed in a personalized devil, didn't they?
FO Yes, Yes.

TJK I mean, evil did not exist in the abstract, evil would confront you personally.

FO Right, right. Yes. Well, my grandfather was a very devout person. A student of the Bible to the 9th degree. He was considered an authority. He pictured to us children, and he played a major role in our education, and he pictured to us a God of wrath. Great, big, huge God with fire shooting out of his eyes and great big beard, and stern look, and he would almost spit fire. Now that was the kind of God that my grandfather believed in. If you don't live according to his concepts, you are doomed. On the other hand, here was the devil. And he was always pictured with horns, great big long tail, that was constantly striving to degrade you, pervert you, getting you to lie and to cheat. Everything that was degrading, that would lead to your eventual downfall, and eternal punishment in the fire of hell, afire that was never consumed--you totally, but you suffered in misery and pain the rest of your, for all eternity. That was the teachings that they gave us.

TJK And aside from the religious teaching, did your father, or anyone, ever tell you about the history of the German people in Russia--how it came to be that Germans wound up in Russia? Was this ever told, or... ?

FO No, this came to me later as I studied, as I read, I, uh, of course, earlier in life when I could have received answers to some of the questions, the questions never entered my mind. It was only later that I became more interested in where I was from, and so I, uh,
became interested in it. Now the city of Kautz, or well, it had never reached more than a thousand people, at the height, was established somewhere around 1764. Our people were some of the original first group that left Germany, and I think it's reported there were around thirty-seven thousand people that in the period of '63 and '64 left. Because of the, uh, Catherine's proclamation, or invitation. They established their little village of Kautz, I suppose that one of the families, some more prominent families, their neighbors were from Kautz, I expect. Now, my grandfather, my father seemed to feel that he could still remember the great-grandfather that originally was one that came. I don't know. My father was born in 1872. That goes a long way back.

TJ K Yes, that could have been possible, though...'72.

FO Yes, '72 from '64 ... that would be 36 and 72, that's a hundred and eight years, isn't it? Something like that. Whether it's possible or not, I don't know. But he, he mentioned that. Now, they stayed there in Kautz, when my father was nineteen years old they left. (Pause) As far as the history of our Germans in Russia is concerned, I have to accept the historical fact that they did leave Germany after the Seven Year War. That they, too, were looking for a betterment of their economic condition, more than anything else, it was land that took them. (Pause) I don't think at the time that there was any other thought that motivated them, except free land. I think when our people were ready to leave for America, it was not so much for freedom of religion,
neither was that the case when they left Germany. When they left Russia, it was not in search of freedom for religion. It was to find a place where they could live a free and independent life without interference on the military, on the part of the military. They didn't, at that time, envision any wars coming to America. And so that was one of the inducements. The getting away from fighting wars. Their forefathers had fought the wars there between France and Germany and now Russia and Japan were involved in it, and I think this was really their goal.

TAPE 2, SIDE B

FO They came over to find the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. They had the impression that all one needed to do was to take a scoop shovel and gather up wealth and then maybe go back. Having come over, even though they couldn't scoop money together with a shovel, they soon found that there were other compensations here that made life, well not enjoyable, but at least it was a life that they could go along with.

TJK Do you think your parents had these glorified notions of America? You know, das gelobte' Land, the Promised Land?

FO No, no, no. My parents had no other purpose of coming here, than to come to get away from the military control over their lives. They were seeking the freedom for them to be together, raise their families, uh, as I look back over the period of time I cannot help
but feel that (pause) what they searched for they found. None of my brothers had to serve in the army, they didn't have to take any military training. None of my brother-in-laws, married to my sisters, served in any way in any military action. I have son-in-laws now that served, but for all those years we were free of military responsibilities. So that in itself has been rewarding to us. (Pause) We came to Fond du Lac in the spring of 1906. Mother with four children. We were there a short time when a meeting was called and father attended the meeting at which time a representative of the sugar company from Toledo, Ohio was trying to influence people to come to Ohio to work in the beet fields. Father was still working in the tannery. Since they were farmers from way back there was certain attraction for him to go again into the rural areas of Ohio to work beets. We moved to Ohio, we worked beets during the summer, and that fall we went back to Michigan, not to Michigan but to Fond du Lac. We didn't like Ohio. The area in which we were, the ground is underplayed with sulfur. The water that is brought up stinks like rotten eggs, like sulfur. So we didn't like it. We came back to Fond du Lac in the fall of the year. Then the following spring dad got him a job in Oshkosh and each day he would catch the trolley to go into Oshkosh to work. His job there was in one of these medicinal factories grinding herbs and medicines of kind. He would come home smelling so beautifully, we enjoyed that. That dust settled on him and he would smell like the herbs and cinnamon that he would grind during the day. But he wanted to get back working
beets so we moved to Cheboygan, Michigan. During that time, that is only my father moved. My Uncle George who was also in Fond du Lac moved to Denver at that time. But we went to Michigan. While we were in Michigan in the month of June my grandmother, father and mother and two of my uncles and the still unmarried sister arrived in America at the urging of my father. We found a contract for my Uncle Phillip to work beets and grandfather and grandmother and the unmarried sister joined with us, became members of our family--well, we became members again of their family. They, the grandparents were the head of the family then. From that point on until their death we remained together as a family. Grandfather died in 1920, grandmother in '25. Grandfather was seventy-one years and some months and grandmother reached the age of seventy-five. The sister was married a year after we reached Colorado. We arrived in January of 1908 in Berthoud, Colorado.

TJK How did that come about, that you would find your way to Berthoud?

FO Well, this brother that had come to Denver had written back that there was opportunity here in Colorado. We were not exactly pleased with the climatic conditions in Michigan.

TJK What was wrong?

FO It was a rainy period. The heavy storm showers through the summer, the lightning and thunder. And much of it was still native timber. The peals of cracks and thunder would echo and re-echo
through the forest and my grandparents, they thought that the God of Wrath was going to destroy them. I saw it, certain crashes of thunder and lightning my grandmother dropped down and "Ach, du lieber Heiland" "O, dear Savior". (Laughter) When it's all over with, already still shaking and thanking God for not striking them down. We came to Colorado and we worked beets in Berthoud, six miles east of Berthoud. We worked three years. Father started out working by the day, he worked for a dollar a day and out of that dollar we had to live. We had no money when we arrived in Colorado so the dollar a day paid all of it. When he didn't work, Dad and Mother would take a great big cross-cut saw, walk about a mile down to the river and fell one of those great big cottonwood trees. Some days they would only cut two or three blocks of those trees off, took so much time to cut them, they were so big around. Then those blocks would freeze and Dad could take his ax and split them. When he had enough of them split he borrowed team and wagon and bring it home, that was our fuel. As spring came around there was a farmer there, Dad prevailed on him to let him have a dozen chickens. Using some of the cottonwood tree boughs and trash and stuff, he made a little lean-to shed for the chickens and pretty soon they started laying eggs, as the grass came out in the spring of the year they started laying eggs and we had our eggs. Another neighbor had some cows so he went up and he bought a little fresh heifer for fifteen dollars. He brought her home and of course he couldn't milk, so grandma offered to milk. Every time she'd get under, that old cow
would kick her. Until Dad couldn't take it any longer, he tied her legs. When he tied her legs, she'd jump up and come down in the milk pail. (Laughter) So he took her back and traded for an old cow. From that point on we had our milk, cream, and eggs. We worked at that for three years. During that time the family would work the beets in the summertime, after the thinning was over, and Dad would go around working for farmers. There was one fellow there by the name of Clark. He had eighty acres of hay. He would start in the spring of the year cutting hay and he just cut hay all the time, and stack it. He gave Dad a job. There was two men on the stack. One day, "Jake," he says, "You stack hay so easy. Why don't you stack alone on the stack for two bull rakes?" Dad asked him how much and he told him what he would pay and so Dad offered to stack. Well, I was off at home so I got the job of doing the stacker horse work. All at once I noticed my father, he had a stack built up quite high, slide off the side of the stack and he came down and he said, "Fred, let's go home." He says, "I've had all I want." So while we were getting ready to walk to the railroad to walk home the boss came, driving a nice horse and buggy, you know, he had. He says, "Where are you going?" Well, Dad says, "I'm going home." "Well," he says, "You can't do that, I'm paying you so much for stacking." "Yeah," he says, "I want to stack your hay, but" he says, "you're not going to kill me." He says, "Your boys out there standing on the seat to look over the top of the load that they're bringing in here, and they're trotting their horses to go back out and get
another load." He said, "Nope, I won't work for a man that wants to kill me." It's the only time in my life I ever saw my Dad backing away from a job. He went home and that was it. But in three years' time by living as economically as we could Dad had made enough to make a down payment on a little fourteen-acre farm. With a nice home on--where we were living we had two rooms put together. Those two rooms--each room was not as big as this room, maybe like that (gestures). There were, by this time we had five children. Grandfather and Grandmother, my single sister was married by then. But here we were, living in two rooms like this during the winter months. During the summer they had a little cook shack which was another 12 X 14, or something like that, out-side. But when we moved up onto the little farm there was a nice 5-room house on it. Things started looking up. We quit working beets as such. We rented sixty-acres of beet land and started farming. We did that for a number of years. Then in 1918, in January, we moved to Fort Morgan. We had our farm, we bought a farm south of Fort Morgan and we farmed that and then I had seen a girl here that I liked and was married. Dad helped me get started farming. From that point on we had no want after that.

(Pause.)

TJK What was the name of your wife at that time, who did you marry?

FO She was a Weimer. I had paid a visit to Fort Morgan and had seen her. I went home and I said, "Dad, why don't we move to Fort Morgan?" I said, "There's some nice people over there."

(Laughter.)
Came over and within six months I was going with her and in a year and a half we were married. We raised a family of four daughters. I now have ten grandsons and three granddaughters and two great grandchildren, one a boy, and a girl. They're all healthy and good. I'm proud of my offspring. I lost my first wife after fifty-one and a half years. I've told you, I've traveled around seeing all of this wonderful country of ours except the New England States. I met a lady in Anaheim, California that I became interested in. Under peculiar circumstance. (Pause.) But after corresponding and visiting by telephone we decided that we could travel together. Last November the 22nd it was two years and today she's up in one of the craft shops. She loves to do hand work. We're having a most enjoyable time. Twice a week we go out to eat. Sunday, every Sunday after church we go and have our dinner. On Tuesday we go back up and have another dinner, along with all of our art members. We get a reduced price because of that. Life is beautiful. Had a letter from one of my grandsons today, and wish that I knew, maybe I'll read you a little bit of it.

TJK  Good, I'd like that.

FO  (Pause) (Getting letter.)

END OF TAPE

END OF FIRST INTERVIEW
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