

Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Muller

Interviewer: Charles Petranek

n.d.

MR = Mr. Muller, MRS = Mrs. Muller

**Q:** What we're doing at the University is we're going to write a book on German traditions and how they affect people today and the traditions that you passed on to your children or things that you feel are German anyway. Whether it is or it isn't, it doesn't really matter. I talked to Father Rohleder down here at St. Anthony's and that's how I got your name. He said that you were good people and that you could help me out a little bit.

**MR:** One thing, about the only German custom is that she says the prayers before and after meals in German yet. She does this and stuff like that, but we don't have too many other German customs.

**Q:** Are you German? Do you have a German background?

**MR:** "Muller" is my name. It's a German name. My mom's mother was really part French. My grandmother was a German woman --- a big, stout woman, but my grandfather on my mother's side, he was a little guy. He was a Frenchman. My mother had a lot of French ways with the German. My dad and my grandmother on my father's side, she was a Lutz and that's German. My grandfather's name was Muller too.

**Q:** Where were your parents from? Were they near that district then?

**MR:** My grandfather, I think from as much as I know, he was from right out here towards...

**MRS:** Five-mile house.

**MR:** Five-mile house out in there. When he went to the Civil War, my grandfather...

**Q:** Oh, your grandfather was in the Civil War?

**MR:** Yes. German Township is where he got his picture and everything in there. He was listed in 1862. He was born in 1840. He was twenty years old in '60 and 21 in '61. He figured they was going to draft him, so he enlisted. He was in the war from '62 on until the end of it.

**Q:** Is your grandfather the one that came over from Germany then?

**MR:** I don't know for sure whether he came over from Germany. All we know is that he was out here at German Township. My grandmother was from out around St. James. That was before there was a Haubstadt. Haubstadt, well, it might have been crossing but St. James...

**MRS:** He knows more about it than I do. I can't remember nothing.

**MR:** With this church history, you see first from Vincennes was Evansville Assumption. Then there was St. James, and them was about the only churches around. That's the way that works.

**Q:** Vincennes and then...

**MR:** Then Assumption here in Evansville. That's clear down in the city quite a bit. Then they had a church at St. James along about the time. Then later on they got these others coming in. That was the way I read up on my church history. At one time, the people of Haubstadt, they didn't know whether they wanted to build a church at Haubstadt or whether they wanted to build a sidewalk to St. James. They had school there and they'd have to walk back and forth through the mud. They thought it'd be better to build a church there as to build a sidewalk all the way down there. It's about two or three miles down there to St. James. So that's when they first built a church at St. James --- I mean at Haubstadt. My grandmother come from St. James. She come to Evansville. Then from Evansville she

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went down on a boat down to Mt. Vernon. Then she had kinfolks down there. My grandfather, when he got back from the war, he went down to Mt. Vernon and worked for his brother-in-law, Steve Deig. This is the Deig's. They're the ones that died here a while ago. That was his sister's husband, Steve Deig. He had a lot of hired hands. My grandmother went down there to help out some people of her relatives. She was a hired girl. That was in the 1868's --- in the sixties, along there somewhere. That's where she run on to my grandfather because they went both to church down there at St. Matthew's. And that's the way that worked. Then later on all of them drifted to the bigger city to work, like my brother. I got another brother here and I'm here and my sister's here.

**Q:** When did your folks then move here?

**MR:** My grandmother, when she got married, she lived down there about halfway between down there where Mead Johnson's building now. They lived up the road a little piece. They lived there and then when my dad got married there was all that land took up, and he had to move southwest of Mt. Vernon.

**Q:** You mean Meads bought it up then?

**MR:** He left along about 1900. Then he moved from around on the east of Mt. Vernon. He moved to the southwest. He lived down there then and that's the way things went. There was no other place because they had that land. So that's the way it went.

**Q:** Did your dad eventually move here to Evansville?

**MR:** No. He lived down there from 1900 to 1950 when he died. He died then. The old home place is still there yet. My mother stayed there another ten years. She did till 1960 or so --- she stayed down there.

**Q:** So, are you the first one who moved over here to Evansville then?

**MR:** No. Louis was over here in Evansville before I was. Louis is my brother. There's only eight of us boys.

**Q:** Only eight?

**MR:** (Laughter) He moved over here first. He worked when he got married. He started working so he lived over there. Then my mother come in here and up to 1960 when she got older. She stayed with him the last two years before she died. The old home place is still down there yet. My one brother is still down there. Another brother owns another farm next to it there, and he farms.

**Q:** So, there are some still down there then?

**MR:** Well, my brother's still down on the old home place. That's 160 acres down there. They've got it all cleared up. Yes, he's still down there on that ground.

**Q:** Why did you come here then? What was the attraction?

**MR:** Well, you see, the way the farming is now-they was about one or so out of that that could farm and all the rest...My oldest brother went to Detroit. My second --- my one two years younger than me --- he

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went to Detroit. My other one he was up there, and he come back. Then he's in Indianapolis. That's the way they wandered around.

**Q:** Was there work here in Evansville for you?

**MR:** Yes. I worked around. I got on out at Briggs. Now, that was before Chrysler had it. I started there in 1936 at Briggs. Then I worked till '38. I got laid off there and then I worked over at the Day Nursery, for the sisters and different places in between until 1942. I got back on Briggs again and then it turned into Chrysler. When they moved over to St. Louis we went back and forth. This is the Greis's home here and here's where she was raised. She's only been living there fifty-nine years.

**Q:** You've been living where for fifty-nine years?

**MR:** Well, of course we lived up the street in a house. They moved here in '21.

**MRS:** We lived up there eleven years.

**Q:** When did you get married?

**MR:** In '36. We lived up there from '36 till '48. Then we moved back down there again. She was down here most of the time. It was just up the street. She lived in this distract, in St. Anthony's, ever since

**MR:** they moved from St. Wendel. She was born in St. Wendel.

**MRS:** Not all my life but since we moved from St. Wendel.

**Q:** You are German too then?

**MR:** Oh, yes. She was born in St. Wendel.

**Q:** Do most of your people still live out there in St. Wendel?

**MR:** Yes.

**MRS:** None of them.

**MR:** Oh, you mean her brothers and sisters?

**MRS:** Not my people.

**MR:** Oh, yes, not your brothers and sisters. Your cousins live out there.

**MRS:** I've got a cousin out there.

**MR:** They're all pretty well dead. There's a lot of Gries' out there --- a lot of them. One brother lives right across the street --- 1112 there. One lives out on Covert.

**MRS:** 804 Covert. My other one's dead. Leo and Clarence are both dead.

**MR:** Leo and Clarence are dead and the one sister's dead. Well, her other sister lives over on Third Avenue.

**MRS:** I've got two sisters on Third Avenue and one in Florida.

**Q:** Was St. Anthony's a real strong German parish at one time?

**MR:** Oh, yes.

**MRS:** When we first moved to town that was all German.

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**Q:** Is that why you moved to this parish?

**MRS:** No.

**MR:** They just moved in here and her dad got a job.

**MRS:** Well, I guess it's the only place my dad could find.

**MR:** They found this old house here for sale. They had outdoor toilets.

**MRS:** He knew the people real well when he bought it, so I guess that's why.

**MR:** The abbot Ester owned this place, or his parents did. He used to be the Abbot --- he died. He was the St. Meinrad's abbot. They lived in this house before, but they didn't build it. This house was built about 1895. But see, a fellow by the name of Stadler lived here first. We don't say for sure, but the track of this house is built on the same pattern of the way the houses were built in 1900. This was built a little earlier. The Stadler's owned it and then he lived here. I believe the Esters must have bought it from Stadler's. First, it was twenty acres in this lot all the way down there. Then different ones had it. Then this man had this. He had a whole bunch of lots there and he gave one to his daughters --- all them different lots that he laid out in these lots.

**Q:** So, when did they really start developing this neighborhood?

**MR:** The cornfield is right up there where you turn.

**MRS:** He said "when"?

**Q:** When? About 1900?

**MR:** I guess along about when this house was first built. They claim this is one of the first houses build around here. That was in around 1900, I guess. The city limits didn't go any further than the rectory down here then. Down here where the day nursery is, that was where the Heidelman's --- you know, he lived there and all of them big shots. They had a cow pasture and everything. That's why they named it Edgar Street and Harriet Street and Mary Street. They named all of them streets after their daughters. But that was their cow pasture before that. Way back in the 1900's. (Laughs) I was nineteen years old before I seen Evansville. I read a lot of history on that over there when I was over there working at the day nursery.

**Q:** That was the Heidelman's that lived there?

**MRS:** Heidelman's yes.

**MR:** I believe that's the name of them where the day nursery is. They used to have that picture hanging there. It's where the St. Vincent Day Nursery is.

**Q:** Yes, St. Vincent's.

**MR:** That's where the priest's house is. I forget what their name was. That was some rich people had that house and then they donated it and then a priest lived there, and they built first one this way and then another. It's a fairly old parish, it and St. Boniface and St. Trinity and them was all about...They all started up along about the same time. Well, St. Mary's, I think, started up, they started up pretty well close together. Of course, in the later years, like all of these, like Holy Redeemer and St. Theresa and all of them --- they all sprung up pretty close together too.

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**Q:** When did St. Boniface, not St. Boniface, St. Anthony's get started?

**MR:** I forget just when it was. It was back there quite a bit because a lot of these older people around here they all had their schooling here and everything. They come from far away here to school. It and Boniface and that Assumption was one of the older parishes. Then I think it laid in between St. Anthony's and Trinity up there. They was a older parish. This was more country people come in there. St. Boniface is an awful old parish too. They all come along about the same time. We got all them books around here.

**Q:** Did you go to school at St. Anthony's down here?

**MRS:** No. St. Wendel's.

**MR:** Well, see she went out to St. Wendel's. She was fifteen years old when she moved in town.

**MRS:** I had to go to part time school, but I didn't go but four hours a week.

**MR:** You know, on account of that work law business.

**MRS:** See, I wasn't old enough.

**MR:** Between fifteen and eighteen they had to go part time to school on account of the working of a dependent.

**MRS:** From sixteen to seventeen I had to go four hours a week just enough to mess up your paycheck. We didn't learn nothing. I tell you, they done some cooking you couldn't even eat it. The only thing that I ate when they fixed it was ice cream. They didn't cook like we do.

**Q:** Who did the cooking? The people in the school?

**MRS:** No, they had teachers.

**MR:** They had teachers to show them.

**MRS:** I guess they liked it, but my mother didn't cook like that.

**Q:** Did you want more German-type cooking? Or was it German?

**MRS:** I don't know if it was German or any unusual way or whether it was just not cooked the way I like. I like the German cooking.

**MR:** They was working up at Fendrich's and then they had to go ahead and work and go to school part time.

**MRS:** You cook it done and put it on any time. You let it cook till it's done. You don't put it on fifteen minutes before and then in twenty minutes you want to eat. You put stuff on and let it cook. Like me, I put my roast on at 8:30. I'll tell you one thing, at twelve o'clock or eleven thirty it's good and done then. But I'm going to tell you one thing with that broiled meat...

**Q:** So, you like your cooking things done?

**MRS:** I like mine done --- well done.

**MR:** We went to St. Mary's Medical. I was retired already a year. They went ahead and had steaks --- rib-eyes. It looked red in the inside and she said it had blood in there yet.

**MRS:** What do you think that red was in there? It was no piece of gold. (Laughter) It was plain blood, that's what it was.

**MR:** She don't like no rare. She's no French man.

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**MRS:** There was quite a few people around our table that didn't like it.

**MR:** There wasn't no French men there.

**MRS:** No French or what-you-call-its. I don't care.

**Q:** Do you do German cooking now around here?

**MRS:** I do my cooking just exactly like my mother learned me. I learned that when I was seven years old. I had to start help cooing out and I still cook just like she does. I got four sisters. Since they're married, they do different because they have kids and they're mandated to eat different stud. He did too when I first married him, but he got used to my ways.

**MR:** I tell you one thing, she always wants to go and eat out. They always say this is a good place-that's a good place. I even stayed over at St. Louis and I used to "bach" myself over there. Anything I hate is going and eating somewhere at someplace. Once in a while you can get stuff that's pretty good, but our eating at home here always taste better than any of these doggone eat places. (Laughter) Then she wondered why I wouldn't go eat.

**MRS:** I like to go out sometimes or what-you-call-it.

**MR:** But then they all brag on these eating places. Now when we went back towards St. Louis, once in a while you hit them just right and they do pretty good.

**Q:** What type of place did you like that you ate out at?

**MR:** I never cared a whole lot for any of them, you know. Like I say. If you just hit it there when it's about the right time, like these truck stops or road stops, then it was done pretty good.

**Q:** What type of German traditions do you have here as far as the holidays? Did you do anything special for Christmas that was German?

**MR:** When her mother died at the age of forty-seven and she was about twenty-one years old, she took over raising the family. One brother was older than her. They was nine children and they was seven of them younger than her.

**MRS:** My dad and my uncle.

**MR:** Her uncle stayed there and they was always about eleven of them. They had Christmas trees up, didn't you?

**MRS:** Oh yes.

**MR:** When the kids was littler. But as soon as they all got bigger, we didn't feel we needed one.

**MRS:** After the kids got married, they all come home for Christmas. Now they all got families themselves.

**MR:** They have their own. Being that their dad's dead, they ain't nothing to come by. Then they got their kids and their grandchildren. They got so many places to go. (Laughs)

**Q:** Do you fix any special foods for Christmas at all, or before Christmas?

**MR:** Sometimes they bake cookies.

**MRS:** I do more baking than usual.

**MR:** They always have cookies and stuff like that.

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**MRS:** But as far as the cooking, why, we'll have chicken and mashed potatoes and sauerkraut like German people. Cranberry sauce --- better cooking than usual.

**MR:** We generally have a lot of cookies like sugar cookies and oatmeal cookies and stuff like that. She's been fixing them all these years.

**Q:** So basically, you like some home cooking?

**MRS:** Yes.

**MR:** I don't care nothing about eating out at any of these places. We got our coffee when we want it and everything. They'll come along here at a lot of these places --- either they'll wait until you're done eating and they'll ask you whether you want any coffee or not. I'll say, "Hell, I'm done eating. I don't need no coffee now", or they'll come a way ahead of time. "Oh, let's have a cup of coffee" and all that stuff.

**Q:** How was it at St. Anthony's before? You were probably in this area in the thirties, weren't you?

**MR:** Well, she was. One thing --- they had one mass where they preached German.

**MRS:** Father Schutt was that. When he got on a pulpit it was an hour or an hour and a half anyhow.

**Q:** Is that right?

**MR:** He preached German. Of course, that was before my time there.

**Q:** When was that?

**MR:** He died in '32 didn't he? That was along about 1930 or 1931.

**MRS:** Well, he was here when we come in here and we come in here in 1921.

**Q:** He preached one mass in German --- the whole services in German?

**MRS:** Well, we had everything in German as far as I can remember.

**MR:** Especially at that certain mass.

**MRS:** I don't know when they started this here English business. See I can't keep nothing.

**MR:** Well, they had it, but what I mean --- you had that high mass, that 10:00 mass --- that was German.

**MRS:** We had one what-you-call-it. It was prayed with the overture and everything in German then.

**MR:** They had all German then in the 30's. Of course, he died in '32.

**MRS:** I guess it was like that until some of them young priests come.

**MR:** Along about '25 or '30 along there he had that. I know I stopped in there one time. They had a children's mass. I was working out here on a truck farm helping somebody, when I thought, durn them was awful little people here at St. Anthony's. The whole of one 9:00 mass --- all the kids was in there and it filled the church.

**MRS:** We used to have children's day and we all had to go up front. Now the kids are there in the back, and the sisters are in the back too.

**MR:** Scattered around.

**MRS:** It ain't like it was when we first come to town.

**MR:** They was watching that everybody didn't snicker and go on either.

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**MRS:** I always did like St. Anthony's. Now I went to all the churches, practically. For mass, services, funerals and different things. But still I fall back to my St. Anthony's.

**Q:** Why is that?

**MRS:** For one thing, we got two good priests. Father Rohleder --- I'm not so used to him yet, but Father Campbell and Father Niehaus and Father Ketter and Father Schutt --- they were just ideal priests. We had a lot of young priests. They were all good. I ain't got nothing against Father Niehaus or Father Rohleder --- you just have to get used to them. He's got a lot of different ways than Father Campbell did, a lot of different ways than Father Niehaus had too.

**MR:** When Father Ketter was here, he broke in all of these new assistant priests. The had to somewhere.

**MRS:** Well, they still do.

**MR:** He broke in the biggest part of them.

**MRS:** Father Niehaus does too.

**MR:** Yes, he had quite a few. Father Rohleder was here once as one, that's why he worked his way back here.

**MRS:** A lot of young priests here --- that Von Seckel and Muenstermann and that one up that at Jasper, that fat one, Father Finess was here, both of them priests from St. Wendel. What's their name right quick?

**MR:** Foster and Foster. Yes, they were here.

**MRS:** Yes, both of them Fosters was here. I believe Wannemuehler.

**MR:** Oh, yes, they was a couple of Wannemuehler's.

**MRS:** And Father Deig and Father, that one that got burned out here on First Avenue.

**MR:** Oh yes.

**MRS:** In not hardly any little time I could read you a big list off that was here.

**Q:** Do they have any German services at all now? Or anything that's German at all?

**MR:** No.

**Q:** Why do you think a lot of it changed?

**MR:** The older people died. I never was learned much German. Of course, I always stayed with my grandmother. When they talked in German, they'd always think I didn't know what they was talking about --- I'd say...(Says something in German, laughs.)

**MRS:** I tell you one thing; these young kids don't want to talk German.

**Q:** They don't?

**MRS:** No, they don't. I got a cousin out a St. Wendel and he had to go to the army, and he was gone, I don't know, I guess, about two years. I don't know, maybe a little bit longer. When he come back, when he come here, you know, by dad he talked German. Now when I started keeping house, he said I could do the right thing, but he said one thing I'd have to do, I'd have to talk German to the kids, to my brothers and sisters. And he come back, when he come back, he come to see us, and he blabbered English and pop said (German phrase). He said oh, uncle John it sounds so funny. He didn't like the way

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it sounded --- the way he talked. Now you don't lose anything like in two years or something like that. He might have been gone a little bit longer than that. The older ones though that come back, they all talked German.

**MR:** Old Pete Koch --- he's the one that his German helped him out. He was over in that Battle of the Bulge. He was going down through there and everybody had to stay scattered. He talked German back and forth on them damn German soldiers. They thought he was German and then he sneaked through like that; without otherwise, he might have got killed. He answered them when they thought he was English --- he answered them in German. They thought he's just another German soldier. He was my brother-in-law's brother. Here, I don't know whether you know anything about a history to look at it but see their name was Gries. There's a little town of Gries right here somewhere --- there it is. I wouldn't doubt whether her folks and them Down fellers are of Brenner Pass. Her sister married a Brenner. They's quite a few of them out at St. Phillips. That Brenner Pass --- that was a narrow place between the mountains between Italy. When they fought with swords and on horseback they could always watch through there. They could keep the enemy coming through.

**MRS:** If you can use that book you can keep that.

**Q:** No, I just need to take some notes.

**MR:** Then in Austria --- there's where the Mullers was. That there's my nephew. He was up there and studied for a year. Why, every damn business has got "Muller" on it.

**Q:** What is your first name?

**MRS:** Josephine Elizabeth. Josephine E.

**MR:** If you want to know what the word "Muller" means, I just happened to find it in the German dictionary. See, right there, ain't that "Muller"? What is it there?

**Q:** Yes. "Muller".

**MR:** See, we all called it Muller. There's a muller and a miller.

**Q:** Miller, a miller of...

**MR:** Well, he grinds. See, a muller-he mulls. They used to have a rock and then they'd have to mull it. He'd mull all that stuff. He was a wheat muller. He's not a saw miller, he's a wheat muller. That's what they used for that. Muller come from that name. We went by the name "Muller". There was doubt among the English people --- but when they got this social security and stuff in --- that's the reason. We got two brothers and my sister --- they didn't look careful. They wanted the English way of spelling the German Muller is you put an "e" in there. M-U-E. My dad and my grandmother and all of them, they didn't like that idea. They wanted to have our name M-U. They put that their umlaut on there.

**Q:** Yes, two dots.

**MR:** Then they'll go and type it and they've got double "i's". Oh, they'll mess it up! But I got two brothers --- one that's a year younger than me and the other one, George, he's about five years younger. He didn't watch it when they got to writing it like that. My brother that lives here in town, his name was Louis. Ludwig in German and Louis in English. He went out to Serval. He just said his name

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was Louis Miller. Then war time come. He had to change it and make it M-U-L-L-E-R and tell our birth certificates. Well, a lot of then, when they got their birth certificates, they'd try to stick that 'e' in it. Our brother Lawrence went down there to our parish. That priest there went and wrote it M-U-E. They had ours that way too, but we went to the courthouse and we wouldn't accept that one. We went ahead and seen to it. My sister got married. Of course, her name got changed to Mathis --- that way she don't have to worry about it. Otherwise, she'd have spelled her name M-U-E-L-L-E-R.

**MRS:** She was gonna put it on his brother's mailbox, and he said nothing doing.

**MR:** She wanted mom to put it on her gravestone, but mom didn't put it on there. They said no they was gonna put M-U-L-L-E-R and not M-U-E. Yes, we still stay with that Muller name. I bought these two over at St. Louis. Did you ever see a picture there like this?

**Q:** No.

**MR:** Of course, I bought that over there.

**Q:** Have you ever been to Germany?

**MR:** No . I never was over there.

**MRS:** Oh, heck, he won't even go to Florida. (Laughter).

**Q:** You won't even go to Florida?

**MR:** Being as my brother lives up in Detroit, we've been up there several times.

**Q:** So, you haven't travelled very much ten?

**MR:** No. I want to show you a card that she found somewhere (leaves room talking). (Returns) I believe I got it here.

**MRS:** Most of the places we went was to St. Louis when he worked in St. Louis. He worked there nine years and nine months.

**MR:** I'll show you a Christmas card that was found in a book. I'll show you they's a lot of Mullers around. I went and done a little --- printed my name. It was "J" and I had to put my first name in front of it. That's a Christmas greeting. Can you read that?

**Q:** No, I don't know German at all.

**MR:** You don't? Well, I'll try to butcher it up for you.

**Q:** Okay.

**MR:** What it is --- it's a happy sometime around Christmas. (Reading German phrase.)

**MRS:** (Reading German). Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**MR:** Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year is what that is. That there means friendly, a friendly and a happy new year. It was in some kind of books that Mr. Glaser got and that's some of his cards shows where he works or what he owns --- I don't know what. See there, that's J. Muller. This place here --- he looked it up --- that their name of that place is in northern Germany. That's the name of that place where that port is. That happened to be in there and being that my name is Victor J. ...I'll show you the picture of my grandfather that was in (leaving room, inaudible.) Here's his war. That's where he must

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have went to the Civil War. Now I would say that was taken in the 1860's. My oldest brother, he thought he should have that, but he bought it on sale --- when I had a sale on. His youngest grandson --- or no, his boy --- that was Winston's dad. His youngest boy lived to be ninety-three years old, almost ninety-four. Then here's the picture that was taken after he come back. That's my grandmother. Of course, this is what I took --- one of the different ones. He lived there in Mt. Vernon. This is my dad and my mother when they got married in 1897. My dad was twenty-four going on twenty-five or would have been twenty-five, I believe. My mother would have been --- she was already twenty-three around about the time she got married. This was my mother when she was a teenage girl. I didn't see none of these pictures or even this one of my grandfather until after my grandfather --- Hold it a minute! That was my grandmother when she was a teenager. We got that off of tin types. This woman --- they wondered who it was --- that was old Aunt Grace. That was one of the Curt's boys.

**MRS:** That's my brother --- the one that died.

**MR:** That's the one brother that's died. This here is an adopted child. That's my brother. Here's another one when my brother was there. Is Luther or anybody along in here?

**MRS:** Where's your family pictures?

**MR:** There's an uncle that died here about a couple of years ago.

**MRS:** Here's my family pictures, too.

**MR:** Yeah, there's both of them. This brass bed brought \$975.00 at the sale. It was about 1978 in August. See, that was an antique. This was a table. This wardrobe --- now it didn't bring so much-- \$130.00. Now these things didn't hardly bring nothing. Where's that table at?

**MRS:** I don't know. Have you got yours in there, otherwise you'll have to go down...(inaudible, is out of room)?

**MR:** Oh, I've got it down underneath of it.

**MRS:** That's our family. My youngest sister ain't on there. She wasn't born then yet.

**Q:** Is this you here then?

**MRS:** No, that's my sister in Florida. This is me. That's my brother across the street. That's the one lives on Covert Avenue.

**Q:** Who are these two people then?

**MRS:** Those are my nephews --- niece and nephew. That's the youngest nephew and that's the second to the youngest niece.

**Q:** Do you have any children?

**MRS:** No.

**MR:** No. Here is the table that my grandmother kept her clock and her prayer books and everything on. There's another table. This table brought \$250.00. This here brought --- I don't know how much. That was in that old Laurie Wiggs' house. This here \$400.00 ice box brought about \$30.00. It was about a year old. That's when they moved from the country into town. Here's some pictures that I took later on. That's different ones. Here's my dad. Here's when dad was married fifty years in 1947.

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**Q:** One sister and eight boys, huh?

**MR:** Yes. She's the youngest.

**Q:** She's the youngest? He quit then, eh?

**MRS:** (Laughs). It was time to quit.

**MR:** Here's the homeland where my uncle lived on out there on Highway 62. That's when they had that auction there that time. They're different. You had to pay --- I forget how much down --- before you could even bid. I believe it was a thousand --- or I don't know how much down. Twenty acres brought \$112,000.00. These three or four parcels brought \$622,000.00. This here was the one brought \$5600.00. This brought five, I mean brought \$44,050.00 apiece. That was little off the main highway. Here is Mead Johnson right about in here. That's where my dad was raised there. When they went there in 1870, they was a duck farm right out in there. They had to dig and lay tile and cut the bushes down just like down there where we lived. You had to cut bushes down to stop the well up. I can show you something else that I don't whether it's a German custom or not. It says pink on here but that ain't all. Look up between there and the light. (Laughs).

**Q:** Is that wine?

**MR:** Yes. I'll get a little glass and you can test some of it.

**Q:** Okay. Test it? I don't know how to test it. What is it, just called pink wine?

**MR:** No.

**MRS:** It's a grape.

**MR:** No, it's a concord grape. The way it was --- we couldn't get concord for all of it from that St. Wendel winery, so they had some grapes that wasn't like a blue concord. I had to have a little of that in here, but I filled this when I got one barrel and got that in one and got the other. I just had that on there but then this is mostly all concord. This is concord grape.

**MRS:** I thought they were all concord.

**Q:** How many gallons did you make of this?

**MR:** That barrel had fifty-five gallons in it and this other one's got fifty-five. That will last about four or five years. That's about four years ago when I made that other.

**Q:** Oh! Do you have a particular toast that you make?

**MR:** (Laughs). I guess I should drink a little every day or so. My father-in-law, her dad, he lived to be eighty-two. He took some wine every time in the morning. He took a little at dinner and night. He'd alternate it with the whiskey.

**Q:** That's good. That's good wine.

**MR:** We always give Father Rohleder and all them --- when their birthday is --- we give them some.

**MRS:** We don't drink it.

**MR:** Well, we drink a little, like now.

**MRS:** The wine that we drink, boy, we could put that all in a quart jar and then we'd have some left.

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**MR:** It would be a good idea, I believe. They claim that it'll keep your blood from having hardening --- you know where your blood circulates. Why I know is that old woman in our neighborhood she drank a little wine, I believe. Her dad did. He wouldn't have lived to be no eighty-two years old if he hadn't drank a little.

**MRS:** He'd drink about that much wine and then he'd put a little whiskey in there.

**MR:** He'd put a little whiskey in it, then he'd take a little in the morning before breakfast, then maybe sometimes in the evening or sometimes at dinner.

**MRS:** Every morning. Very seldom he took it in the evening, but most times it was in the morning.

**Q:** So, he drank wine then? Did he ever drink beer?

**MRS:** Oh yes. He drank beer.

**MR:** He drank beer too --- but then like I say --- he'd just drink a little. He didn't drink enough that he got tipsy or nothing like that.

**MRS:** No, but he drank beer. I drink beer myself. I like beer.

**MR:** Oh, you like beer and cokes and all that stuff. This here is good.

**MRS:** This is good when it's cold.

**MR:** We put this in a barrel in September.

**MRS:** When it's the coldest it's the best. I guess that's been in there about four or five weeks already. Well, I don't never touch it myself, unless somebody might come. I might take a sip, but very seldom I do that.

**MR:** I'll tell you the truth, I believe it'd be better if a fellow did drink it instead of so many soft drinks.

**MRS:** Yes, that's one thing he drinks too much is soft drinks.

**Q:** Is that right?

**MRS:** Yes, and coffee too. He drinks quite a bit of coffee.

**MR:** We got that there Sanka this time. That ain't too bad.

**MRS:** I like coffee too.

**Q:** It's a habit.

**MR:** That's decaffeinated. That's not too bad.

**MRS:** One barrel, we made how many years ago? We made one whole barrel from our own grapes.

**Q:** I was noticing you have grapes out here.

**MR:** That one-year t hem doggone grapes that year they didn't get ripe --- something happened, and they stayed green.

**Q:** Do you trim your grapes back then?

**MR:** Oh, yes. But then they just didn't get ripe that year. Now this last year then we made jelly out of them. We may go on about once every four or five years. I still got some --- one gallon I guess of that four-years-old. We don't touch it until it's at least...We made it in September of '78 and then this October or right before Thanksgiving we got a little out and took. We had a celebrate. That's when we

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bought our temple. We took some up there for that. Then we take some up there for Christmas and on their birthday and stuff like that.

**MRS:** Do you know Father Tim?

**Q:** No, I don't.

**MRS:** You don't know him? He's a fine man.

**MR:** We took some up there for Rohleder when they had their doings too. They have meetings up there a lot of times. Them sisters --- they all like wine too.

**MRS:** When we had our anniversary, we took some up there.

**MR:** Yes, when we have something like that.

**MRS:** We've been married forty-five years --- I mean forty-four years.

**MR:** This year it will be the first forty-four. She raised --- you might say --- raised that family first. She was thirty years old and I was twenty-nine. I worked down at the boarding school. By her taking care of them children, we could have adopted children but while she was helping here at home all along anyhow her grandmother advised her. I got a brother and she's got a brother. Now sometimes how they turn out ain't a welcome. So, I don't know.

**MRS:** She said I've got younger sisters and he's got younger sisters. If we wanted to do something --- we could help them along. We was poor. They was poor so we just had to kind of slug along until we got kinda on the right road.

**MR:** Her brother lives across the street, so he comes over and helps for dinner. He was always down there. She does his washing yet. He's seventy-five and she'll be seventy-four. I'll be seventy-three. I helped at home until I was twenty-five years old. They was a big family there --- helped with on the farm and sawed wood.

**Q:** That was pretty important --- to help at home wasn't it?

**MRS:** Yes.

**MR:** Then I got out. I got there and worked at that boarding school, then come into Briggs.

**MRS:** Well, too, my dad --- he didn't have nothing.

**MR:** When they first worked in town there, they got about fifteen dollars a week. That was their durn wages. I was allowed forty cents an hour when I first started --- at Briggs there.

**Q:** Is church pretty important in your life?

**MRS:** Yes, sir.

**MR:** Of course, now since this slick ice was and that snow. We normally go every morning.

**MRS:** I couldn't even go in the morning. I've got heart trouble and sometimes I can't even hardly walk out to the garage. When it's windy --- otherwise I'm all right.

**MR:** Her brother generally drives then, but see it's been so slick and when it's down below zero and they can't get out in that air. Like he had a heart stroke and I can't inhale all that cold air. In nice weather we go pretty well during the week.

**MRS:** We go pretty well every morning.

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**MR:** Especially if it's during Lent or something like that going on. We go on Saturday night and then we generally go on Sunday morning. Now this last Sunday it got down to two below zero and then I walked up there about nine o'clock.

**MRS:** We went Saturday night. We went Saturday night, and it was warmer then. All of us went Sunday. I thought being as how it had warmed up to about twenty or more, well then, I had something in front of my face. I got a boy, one of my nephew's sons, he shovels the walk. I shoveled this morning. I got up and got dizzy and took two brooms and I guess I ought to take some more. We want to go to that funeral of that woman down there. She was married twice. First, she married a man by the name of Stratman who lived in our neighborhood. She had a boy and a girl. Then after, she married this man that she had knew already before she married. They lived down there. She would have been seventy-four and he would have been about eighty-five. Years ago, when he was so much older her mother thought there was too much difference in age. Then both of them lost their spouses. They got married. They married one another when they was both widowers. Then she just had one daughter and one son --- but that son --- he died. I think he must have had four children. Her daughter married somebody. She must have had four or five children or more. Then her husband died. She married a man that had five or six children, then they had five or six children. That made fourteen children.

**MRS:** No. He's got them five or six pretty loose.

**MR:** Well, she's got fourteen.

**MRS:** I think she had one. As much as I can remember she had one child and he had five.

**MR:** Yeah, where did them fourteen come in at?

**MRS:** Well, he had five.

**MR:** Five and six is only eleven. One would be twelve.

**MRS:** She had a bunch after she married this here next fellow.

**MR:** She either had to have more children from this second husband because they had fourteen children altogether. They had eighteen grandchildren. That boy --- he had four children. Fourteen and four is eighteen.

**MRS:** I don't know if that man had seven children when he married her. It was something. She told me once. I didn't pay that much attention because it was no benefit to me.

**MR:** At any rate, that was only one daughter. She had eighteen grandchildren. Of course, she had a son. The man that she married had..

**MRS:** I think he had five.

**MR:** Five or six --- or something like that. They had children, in other words --- his kids and her kids and our kids. (Laughs) Her uncle's first cousin, he had two of them. The had eighteen children with just the one wife. They never was married but once. That Mary Gries and that there Rosey Atlas --- I think they had seventeen or eighteen living, wasn't it? Seventeen living and one dead?

**MRS:** The got one dead. It's a big family.

**Q:** Have you noticed this neighborhood changing quite a bit?

**MR:** Now here on this side ain't so had. Old man Marx still lives over here but otherwise all the older ones are dead.

**MRS:** They're all that a way except Marie Schaffstein. She's the only one.

**MR:** The older German people moved in like Niemeier and Miss...

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**MRS:** Mrs. Hosick and Mrs. Folz and Tarney. Well, Tarney's, they're both dead. Down this way there was Strukes.

**MR:** That man in that little first blue house owned his place and this old buddy over here, this old bachelor or whatever it is --- he owns his place and we own ours and they own theirs and Niemeier owns his. Hosicks own theirs and I believe now up here that there Murray they own their house and so does them people in there. Schmitt's own their house and Scaffstein and so does that other until they ain't just too many rent houses here. (Discusses another house, most is inaudible.)

**MRS:** As far as the people who lived here when we come here, there's only the Morris', Bessie Sondermann, Marie Schaffstein. Them's are the only ones that are living here that was here. Some of them died and some of them have moved away.

**Q:** Moved away? Where did they move? In other cities?

**MRS:** Some moved out here at the new...

**MR:** Woolsey moved out here in an east side like shopping center and some of the other shopping centers.

**MRS:** Woolsey moved out here on First Avenue.

**MR:** He moved out there by Good Shepherd to be way out there close to the drive-in theatre.

**MRS:** Well, I don't know where Waters and them moved to.

**MR:** They moved out there behind the airport. They was just renting. (Inaudible)

**Q:** Well, is there anything you can add as far as German traditions or ideas. There's a few ideas. You're pretty proud of your being German heritage.

**MR:** If you thought this would help you in your learning...

**Q:** I took down a couple of notes from that.

**MR:** This is in 1951. I got somebody to let us read it after they threw them away or whatever they done with it. I just ran off a few. It tells in here when they went down through that Brenner ¼ ass and all that stuff and different things in there. There's lots of history. It shows that town by the name of Gries.

**Q:** You're pretty interested in history, aren't you?

**MR:** (Laughs) Now here the little kids, that's the way they used to have the milk cans. The kids when they had them milking. That's in Austria. That says Austria, don't it? Don't it say Austria down below there? No, it don't say nothing. Here's where it says. Don't it say brothers and sisters?

**Q:** Brother and sister in Austria.

**MR:** (Showing a picture of brother and sister milking. Reading German) That there means Greek God. They used to sing a song out there at the benediction they called (German).

**Q:** Do you have a prayer book in German, or do you use an English one?

**MRS:** We don't use no more. I used to use that all the time now I can't read it. I could red some of it in there but not a lot of it.

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**Q:** Do you use this pretty much or not?

**MRS:** Not no more. They don't use those prayer books now. Those ones they use now they might not as well use. They don't go according to the watch-a-call-it. This way you could start your mass, you could go all the way through. Now you flicker here and flicker there and by the time you get done flicking around the mass is over. Our prayer books are not too bad. I believe it's St. Benedicts, or someplace we was --- I'd never find that place if it wouldn't be for him. For one thing I don't hear --- you know --- I don't understand exactly what is said.

**MR:** (Showing another picture). Oh, I know a few German words. They get to talking but they can't throw me off. But then them German words, a lot of them you know when they...I want to read you off the days of the week. (Reads in German the days of the week)

**Q:** Did you speak very much German when you were growing up?

**MR:** By my mother being part French to start with --- they had German in the schools.

**MRS:** Your mother could talk German because when I first went in there, I couldn't hardly talk with her. She always talked German.

**MR:** They talked German. She talked German. At Mt. Vernon they quit having German, but out at St. Wendel they had German yet. When they made their first communion and everything there. I went to a Catholic school all but one year. They switched over to English on account of all that World War business and everything there. We got our Bishop up here from Indianapolis and he can't say anything in German. My oldest brother, they had a half a day of German and a half a day in English. I think at St. Wendel they did too.

**Q:** You mean half of the day was being in German?

**MR:** They had German half a day and English a half a day. I don't know whether they had that over here too, when she went out to St. Wendel. Didn't they have it when you went to school?

**MRS:** No. I didn't go to school here. They had it out at Harrisburg of the two years.

**MR:** Didn't they have a half a day of English and a half a day of German?

**MRS:** We had them together. We had a book that was German on one side and English on the other side. It was all one book. I still wish I had my catechism.

**MR:** My first girlfriend --- they talked German at home all of the time. She couldn't say thirteen. When we went to public school, we had to learn how to count from one to a hundred. She'd have to say fourteen twice because she couldn't say thirteen.

**Q:** Why is that?

**MR:** She couldn't twist her tongue around to say thirteen. She could say fourteen, but she couldn't say thirteen. (Laughs) She said fourteen, fourteen --- [INTERVIEW ENDS ABRUPTLY]