

Interview with Albert Marx  
Interviewer: Charles Petranek  
February 1980

**Q:** You are eighty-four?

**A:** I am the oldest living Marx from the very beginning.

**Q:** Are you any relation to the Marx Barbeque thing up here?

**A:** Yes. Elmer is my cousin.

**Q:** Oh, I see. Did you come over from Germany?

**A:** No. My great-grandparents did.

**Q:** Your great-grandparents?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** When did they come over? Do you know?

**A:** I don't know. Just a minute, Maybe I can tell you. My grandfather's name was Peter Marx. He was born January 14, 1830. He died May 9, 1905. My grandmother and Pete's wife was Elizabeth Marx. She was born September 22, 1831. She died on November 8, 1897. I was born in 1895. I was two years old when she died.

**Q:** Oh, I see. Do you have any idea when your great-grandparents carne over?

**A:** No.

**Q:** Just some time before that?

**A:** I tell you, on the south side the records show that they are buried there. In those days they didn't put up monuments and most all of them people got cast-iron crosses--black crosses. Now this here is correct what I just now gave you because I took that off of my grandparents' tombstones. That is the reason that is right.

**Q:** Okay. Now where are your grandparents buried?

**A:** They are buried at St. Phillips on the north side of the church. That is the new cemetery there. That's the late cemetery. The first burials were on the south side of the church there.

**Q:** Did you speak German when you grew up?

**A:** At home, until I was fourteen years old, we talked German all of the time. That was all we talked. When I went to school up here at St. Anthony's we had German lessons, German Catechism and bible. All the lessons in the morning were German and in the afternoon it was English.

**Q:** What did they teach in German?

**A:** Religion, like Catechism, oral religious. In English it was Arithmetic. Of course, that was in the afternoon. I don't remember anymore. But anyhow whatever it was. Writings were all written in German. We wrote all in German.

Interview with Albert Marx  
Interviewer: Charles Petranek  
February 1980

**Q:** Did you live around here when you grew up?

**A:** No. I was born and raised out here across from Whirlpool on a farm.

**Q:** You came into St. Anthony's for school? How did you get here?

**A:** When I became seven years old my father sent me to Stringtown School. I went there two years. Three other boys from out there were around my age, too. We walked from out there, which was five miles and four tenths, to St. Anthony 's school up here. Morning and night. We did that for two years and a half. Then they built that Interurban Traction Line from Evansville to Princeton to Patoka up here.

**Q:** You mean that railroad track?

**A:** No, it was a traction line.

**Q:** Traction line, what's that?

**A:** Interurban. That is probably before your time, too.

**Q:** (Laughter) What's that called?

**A:** In those days we called them traction lines Interurbans. In other words, they had one that ran from Evansville to Princeton. Patoka is the next town above Princeton. They built this one here. After they built this the same company built one from Evansville to Mount Vernon.

**Q:** It is not a train, is it? What did you do on this traction line? Was it a train?

**A:** No. It was just a great big old streetcar.

**Q:** Streetcar?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Pulled by horses?

**A:** Electric.

**Q:** Electric streetcars?

**A:** Yes. It was called a traction line. They had three of them out here. One ran from Evansville to Princeton, the other ran from Evansville to Mt. Vernon, and the other one ran from Evansville to Rockport. We rode the traction line out here in the morning and at home. In other words, those days my father would go to work and down to the main office of the traction line, which was on Second Avenue and Locust Street. That was where the car stopped, and the people got on. Then he would go to town every month and buy a book of tickets where we could ride. It would cost my father ten cents a ticket for riding home and going in every day. He always bought a book for thirty days.

**Q:** So, you would get a round trip for ten cents?

**A:** It was twenty cents a day for a round trip.

Interview with Albert Marx  
Interviewer: Charles Petranek  
February 1980

**Q:** That was pretty expensive then, wasn't it?

**A:** No, I don't think so. It was ten cents. That was for students; otherwise, it was more than that.

**Q:** How long did that traction line stay into existence?

**A:** That traction line was discontinued... Well, I tell you, I graduated from St. Anthony's school in 19... Well, it was before the 1913 flood, I know that.

**Q:** Thirteen years. Did you start school when you were five?

**A:** No, I went to Stringtown when I was seven years old. Then I went two years up there. Then I must have graduated up here about 1913.

**Q:** Did you get a high school... ?

**A:** No, I never went to high school. I just got an Eighth-Grade education.

**Q:** Did you ever think about going to high school?

**A:** No.

**Q:** Why not?

**A:** I worked on a farm.

**Q:** You worked on a farm?

**A:** They needed us on the farm. We had one hundred and seventy-four acres right across from Whirlpool. It is all built up there now.

**Q:** Did a lot of kids go to high school then or not?

**A:** No, very few. Like Evansville College out here. My father used to come in and I would ride with him out there. He used to run a threshing machine. He would thresh wheat for different farmers. He drove out there down that road. I don't know the name of that street now. It was past Evansville College across Lincoln Avenue. I've forgotten a lot of those things. My dad used to say, "I threshed wheat, right here on this farm." That was the Henry Long farm where the college is now. That was where I threshed wheat." He threshed wheat on there (Evansville College). Now going back to high school, as far as Central High School is concerned, I can remember that way back, but I think it was the only one in Evansville.

**Q:** You mentioned there was a flood in 1913. Was that a pretty big one?

**A:** Yes. We had about seventy-six acres under water. We had some low land. We couldn't get to town at all. We rode the traction line to get groceries and stuff like that. The roads were all under water. That was the 1913 flood. Then, of course, the 1937 flood. Then, of course, the 1937 flood--was the worst one we ever had.

**Q:** Did you marry?

**A:** I lost my wife May 2, 1976. I have been living here since by myself.

Interview with Albert Marx  
Interviewer: Charles Petranek  
February 1980

**Q:** Did you both live here at one time then?

**A:** Yes. We have lived in this house since 1928.

**Q:** How many children did you have?

**A:** Four daughters and fourteen grandchildren. They are all living.

**Q:** Did you try to pass on any German language or German traditions to your children? Could they understand any German at all?

**A:** To who?

**Q:** To your daughters?

**A:** No. I didn't. Everything in those days was English. Back around 1912 and 1913 we started going to English. Then we finally went to the English language all the way through. It was right after the 1913 flood.

**Q:** Oh, I see. Then everything went to English then. In 1913 everything after that went to English.

**A:** Yes. We kind of went to the English language then. My father had a hired hand who couldn't understand German so we all finally got to talking English. Before that everything was German. I was the oldest one in the family. I got married September 8, 1920. I was about twenty-five years old then.

**Q:** Did you and your wife speak German in the house?

**A:** No.

**Q:** So, you don't pray in German anymore or anything like that, do you? You don't use any of the language?

**A:** Churches and everything dropped it. See, we had this priest up here at St. Anthony's by the name of Father Schutt. You don't happen to be Catholic, do you?

**Q:** Yes, I'm Catholic.

**A:** The first priest that I had when I was baptized up here at St. Anthony's was Seiler, S-E-I-L-E-R. That was in the old school building that they took down up here. He didn't live very long. He died and Father Schutt took over. When Father Schutt died everything was German there yet. Then when Father Kidder took over after Schutt died he went to English. Before that all the sermons, singing and everything was in German.

**Q:** When did Father Kidder take over?

**A:** I don't know.

**Q:** 1930's?

**A:** I kept Father Schutt's picture from the day he died but it would take me a long time to find it.

Interview with Albert Marx  
Interviewer: Charles Petranek  
February 1980

**Q:** That's all right. No problem.

**A:** But Father Kidder went into English right away. When he took over.

**Q:** Do you think it was during the depression? Did it happen then?

**A:** Before the depression.

**Q:** Is there anything that you do today that you would consider German?

**A:** Well, I can understand all German. I can understand people who talk German to me and know what they are talking about. For me to talk to them it puzzles me. Now I have a granddaughter who goes to Memorial High School. She studies German. I go out there and I talk to her about it. This is her first year in high school, but she is going to go four years with that German. I have a grandson who is my third daughter's boy. When he left Memorial High School, he went to Ferdinand up there.

**Q:** St. Meinrad?

**A:** Yes, St. Meinrad. He studied up there with the intentions of being a priest. He changed his mind after two years. He went over to Paris, France and decided that he wanted to take up French. He was over there five and a half years and studied French. Now he is a professor at Notre Dame. He teaches two classes every day-all French. He comes down here and says something to me in French that I just don't know. I say some words to him in German and doesn't know what I am talking about, either.

**Q:** When your wife was alive did, she cook a lot of German foods?

**A:** She went to a German school out here at St. Joseph, Indiana. When she got about fourteen years old her father moved off of the farm and moved into town.

**Q:** Do you know why he moved off of the farm?

**A:** He retired. He turned his farm over to his second oldest boy.

**Q:** I see. So, he moved into town. Do you cook German food?

**A:** Like everybody else.

**Q:** Do you make any wine or any home brew?

**A:** I don't. I don't believe I buy a fifth of whiskey a year. I might. I didn't last year. Yes, I bought one fifth of whiskey last year. Generally, at Christmas and my birthday the girls get me a fifth of whiskey. Of course, last Christmas I got whiskey. I still have three left. The only time I have a drink is before I go to bed so I can sleep good. Now, I can't take that because I'm taking that high-powered medication and that doesn't work with liquor.

**Q:** How has this neighborhood changed? You have been here now for almost fifty years?

**A:** Well, I don't know. She can understand German, but she can't talk it. Years ago, she could. She came from Illinois and they spoke German all of the time. Her husband has been dead for many, many years. As far as many changes here I wouldn't say there was very much. The only thing we have here now is

Interview with Albert Marx  
Interviewer: Charles Petranek  
February 1980

more rent houses than we did when I came here. At that time people owned their own homes. They are all gone and dead. All of those houses over there across the street are rent houses.

**Q:** Do they keep them up pretty good?

**A:** They do pretty good. The man that owns them keeps them up pretty good. Looking at this house here you wouldn't think it is about ninety-eight years old.

**Q:** Is that right?

**A:** Yes. The old lady that lived next door told me before she died that she lived here. She told me about the houses. There is one house down here in the next block between Tennessee and Louisiana; there is a brick house between Maryland and Columbia on this side; and this house. These were the first three houses that were built. They have been here all of this time.

**Q:** Did you work around here? Where did you work?

**A:** In 1945 I went into real estate. I am a retired real estate salesman. I've always been a salesman.

**Q:** Is that right?

**A:** Yes, ever since I came to town. I went into real estate in 1944 and retired in 1970. I sold a lot of property here. Before that I sold automobiles but in real estate there was just more opportunity to pick up deals for yourself. I rented this house first in 1928 for seven months. I paid eighteen dollars a month for rent.

**Q:** Cheap!

**A:** Then I bought it. I asked him one day, I said, "Ed would you sell me this house?" He said yes. No, this is how it went. He got sick and died. No, he lost his mind. That's what it was. They took him out to the hospital. He and another patient got into a fight there in the room while they were cleaning the floor and the other patient killed him out there. Then I bought it when they put it up for sale. I bought this house for three thousand, two hundred and fifty dollars. It's got a slate roof on it that has been there ever since. Then I went to work and knocked all the plaster down in that room there. I put new plaster in this room here. I knocked all the plaster off in all of the rooms. That's dry wall, the kitchen is dry wall, and I have a room in the back that is dry wall. Then I replaced every window and window frames all over the house. I've only had some trouble with my roof. About eighty or eight five percent of the churches or public buildings have slate roofs on them. Did you know that?

**Q:** I didn't know it was that high, but I knew a lot of them did.

**A:** Well, here is what used to happen to me. It still happens down there at St. Anthony's Church. Say, we have a severe thunderstorm. BOOM! It vibrates the earth. Sometimes one of them breaks off. So, after two years I would have to go up there and replace one of them. So, I went up there in 1977 and drilled three thousand, two hundred and forty-two holes. On the wide slates I drilled two holes. I put a one-and three-quarter inch screw in there, a quarter inch thick through every slate.

Interview with Albert Marx  
Interviewer: Charles Petranek  
February 1980

**Q:** Is that right?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** That must have been a lot of hard work, wasn't it?

**A:** Not hard work but I had some special safety equipment up there. After I put the screws in, I painted that a green roof. The paint deteriorated between the bolt and screws so then I got the idea of painting that section there with shellac like you put on floors. Boy, that stopped. I got up there and did that myself. I got safety equipment. Suppose I was to have a heart attack, which I haven't had. In the Marx family we have not had the first heart attack even way back. I got a special ladder and laid it on top and through a rope over and anchored on down. Then I got a rope to go around my stomach that was anchored on top of the ladder. In case I would have a Heart Attack as far as I could fall would have been to the end of the ladder. I've been offered seventeen thousand five for this house.

**Q:** Is that right?

**A:** I'm going to live here as long as I live. After I am gone all the girls can take over and do whatever they want to with it. I have been under this house thirty-five or forty times, I guess. I never saw the first piece of deteriorated timber under there. It's all yellow poplar. You see that furnace there?

**Q:** Yes.

**A:** That is two hundred and thirty-five thousand BT units. Unless the temperature goes to maybe five above zero then I would set it back around forty-five. But, if it is high and it has water in there, say, it was around fifteen or twenty I throw that thermostat all the way back and even shut off the electric switch on the furnace. It don't turn a wheel. My gas and electric bill last month was only thirty-seven dollars and forty-two cents.

**Q:** Is that all?

**A:** Yes. This thing just don't run of the night. I put four covers on me, and I sleep good. And I'm by myself.

**Q:** You like it colder in the house?

**A:** Yes. I don't have to have a warm house to sleep in.

**Q:** Okay. Very good. Why don't your daughters know German? You never taught them, or they never taught them in school.

**A:** They never talked German in school, and we didn't talk German here.

**Q:** I see, Do you have many relatives living around St. Phillips?

**A:** St. Phillips, I do. That's where my grandparents lived.

**Q:** Do those people still speak German out there?

**A:** No, I don't think so. I never heard them. Years back that was all German out there at St. Wendel. You take this father Schutt the second pastor at St. Anthony. He was a good priest but when he got up on

Interview with Albert Marx  
Interviewer: Charles Petranek  
February 1980

that pulpit he would be up there for a whole hour. Then Father Kidder came he spoke fifteen or twenty minutes.

**Q:** Do you go to church pretty regularly?

**A:** Every Sunday. I've been going for eighty-four years.

**Q:** That's something.

**A:** The last four or five years we had Father Temple up there. The Bishop transferred him, about two and a half months, ago to St. Theresa. Boy, I tell you they hated to lose him.

**Q:** Is that right?

**A:** Yes. They don't make them any better than that anymore. Of course, Father Niehaus is still up there. He was pastor, too. When Temple took over here the collections went up five hundred dollars a week. Now he is over there at St. Theresa. They had a priest there that people didn't go very much for. A lot of them left there and went to St. Joseph, some went to St. Anthony 's some when to Holy Redeemer after the second week that Temple was over there the trustees in the nine and eleven o'clock Mass had to assist people to get seats.

**Q:** Is that right?

**A:** That's how they filled up. They just don't make them any better than Temple. He goes out there in front and don't care what kind of weather it is. Whether it's cold or not he's out there when they're leaving. He is just that kind of a guy.

**Q:** Yes.

**A:** You know, he told my son-in-law married to my second daughter this story. He was called out there to the Patrick Gilligan family two hours after they were killed to give them the Last Rites. You are not Catholic?

**Q:** Yes.

**A:** Are you?

**Q:** Yes.

**A:** He gave them the last Rites. He told them he never saw such a mess. There was blood all over the floor. And that Gilligan, his face was just beat to pieces.

**Q:** Is that right?

**A:** Yes. He said it was terrible. I have never witnessed anything like that in my life. I tell you. I have for the last twenty years been in favor of Capital Punishment. The Bible says, "Thou Shalt Not Kill", but I disagree with that from the point that if a man takes another man's life, they should take his life, providing he's guilty. I am definitely for Capital Punishment. I tell you even at my age if they convict this guy once for execution and they ask for six volunteers for a firing squad I would be the first one to volunteer and I wouldn't budge an inch. It wouldn't bother me a bit because I think what that man did

Interview with Albert Marx  
Interviewer: Charles Petranek  
February 1980

was terrible. He needs to be executed. That is what should happen. I tell you, the reason we haven't got Capital Punishment is because of the people themselves. A lot of people are not in favor of it. Then when the public is not fully convinced that this should be, the judges are the same way. I have never in my life been scared of nobody. If it came to be a fight well, let's have it if we are going to have it. On March 4, 1979 on the Home Federal Bank lot I had just come out of the bank and had two hundred and fifty-eight dollars in my pocket. I just got in the car and all of a sudden, this big colored fellow came around the corner. He said, "Hey, Mister, wait a minute. I want to talk to you." I dropped the latch on the door so he couldn't open the door. I rolled the glass down and he held a note up to me. First, he said, "Which way is the colored district from here?" I said, "It's over that-a-way." He said, "Listen, I will give you five dollars if you drive me over there." I said, "No, I don't know you and I have never seen you before and I am not driving you over there." He said, "Well, maybe you think I haven't got the money to pay you." He reached in his coat pocket. It was cool that morning and he pulled out a big roll of bills that you couldn't hardly hold in your hand. I said, "Now, listen Mister" and I picked up that weapon that I have in the car. I got one here and I got one out in the car. I just reached down on the side to pick it up. He didn't know what I was picking up, whether it was a gun or not. It was a rod eighteen inches long as thick as this finger and wrapped with tape. I said, "Now, I want to tell you what you do. You back off and get away from me. If I get out of this car it will be an undertaker for me or you-- one of the two. He backed off and looked at me. I started my engine and drove off. I don't have a gun here, but I'm going to tell you what I got handy. When I get up first, I have trouble with my hip, and I have to watch it. That's painful. I have had that for thirty years. Another time it was the same year that my wife died. She died on May 2 and this was about August the 10th or the 15th, somewhere around there. I was out at my oldest daughter's for supper. She lived right across from St. Mary's Hospital on Bellemeade. I got in the habit of driving up Bellemeade to come home to Garvin, make a right turn on Garvin. I got to Canal and Garvin where at that time they had an overhead light there. They don't have it there anymore. Right after that they took it down. The light caught me there and here came five colored boys all about sixteen to eighteen years old. I didn't have my later model car. At that time, I was driving a 1953 model red Nash station wagon. Three of them came on the side of the car and the other two stood right in front of the car. The three said, "Roll your glass down Mister, we want to talk to you about something." I just reached down and picked up that steel and said, "I'm not talking to anybody. I don't care what you want to talk about." I'm not interested." I said, "You tell them two guys to get away from that car in the front or when that light changes, I'm going to run over and kill them." Just at that time the light changed, and they jumped out of the way. I would have run over them and killed them. I had no sympathy for them guys.

**Q:** Is that right?

**A:** No. They got out.

**Q:** They did?

**A:** Yes.

Interview with Albert Marx  
Interviewer: Charles Petranek  
February 1980

**Q:** Do you have any trouble in this neighborhood with anybody? Blacks or whites or anything?

**A:** I had a fellow next door. She is living there now. She's got divorced from him. She is living there by herself-her and her children. He worked at Hallenberger's and got to selling drugs. They caught him so he got ninety days of work release. Some crooked lawyer got a hold of him and found something where he could get his time released some, so he served about thirty-five days. Right after that they got a divorce. He was an undesirable character. If he borrowed anything from you, you would have to go get it. He wouldn't bring anything back. So, the last thing he wanted to borrow was my lawn mower and I said I wouldn't let Russell Lloyd, the Mayor of Evansville borrow my lawnmower. Otherwise, it was a pretty good neighborhood.

**Q:** Yes. That's about it. That's about all the questions I have to ask.