

Dakota Memories Oral History Project

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Interview with Adam Boschee (AB)

Conducted by Jessica Clark (JC)

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JC: Today is April 17, 2005, and I am Jessica Clark the Theresa Mack Germans from Russia History Fellow and Project Coordinator for the Germans from Russia Oral History Project. It is a pleasure to visit with Adam Boschee in West Fargo, North Dakota. For the introduction record, will you please state your full name, and date and location of birth?

AB: My full name is Adam Gordon Boschee. I grew up in Lehr, North Dakota, but I was actually born in Kulm, North Dakota.

JC: When did your family move from Kulm to Lehr?

AB: Oh, my date of birth was October 15, 1945.

Now, my parents always lived in Lehr. I just happened to be born in Kulm. In fact, I was the first of all of my brothers and sisters that was born at Kulm. It was not a hospital, but a home where women went to have babies. Otherwise, all the rest of my brothers and sisters were born at home. In the house, they tell me, on kitchen tables or whatever. But, I was born in a home in Kulm. I think there was a doctor there or a midwife. But, I was the first one.

JC: So, are you the youngest then in your family?

AB: I am the youngest. Yes.

JC: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

AB: There was seven of us. I had two sisters and five brothers. [4 brothers + himself]

JC: Was it just convenient for them to go to Kulm to have you, or is it something new that started?

AB: I think that probably it was maybe two things. Maybe, something that they were starting to do. It was more trendy. And, maybe convenience.

JC: What is your earliest childhood memory?

AB: You know, I get laughed at sometimes about how I can always remember so much. I'll tell my kids and my wife, Karen, I remember things from when I was five. So, whenever I go back and say, "I remember that," they'll say, "Oh yea, you were five then right?" Yea, I think I was about five years old. In our family was like two families. My oldest brother Leroy and I am the youngest. He's seventy-five or close to seventy-five and I'm sixty or fifty-nine. So, there was quite a separation between us. The three younger ones, myself and Ruben and Shirley, and after that there was a separation, and there would be Floyd and Deloris and Clarence and Leroy. So, they were teenagers and older teenagers when we were born, especially when I was born.

So, when I started remembering things, I remember them as being fun. We just loved to be around them. Because, you know, little kids to be around teenagers was great. They got to do things. They took us along to a movie. They would smoke cigarettes, hide from Mom and Dad, and stuff like that. Of course, we didn't dare. When we got caught smoking by them and we'd get it from them. They would never tell Mom and Dad. I had a lot of childhood memories with them. One of the great memories or pleasant things was going to the movies and being around them and their friends. It was like the whole feeling of being with them. They were big and we thought we were big. They would have girlfriends, or they would wrestle and fool around, and we would think we were part of that. Many times we were pretty disappointed, because they didn't really want that much to do with us when their friends were around, especially when the girls were around. Of course, the girls liked us we were the little guys.

JC: Do you have a brother or sister that you were closest to when you were growing up?

AB: Well, Ruben and Shirley were closest to me. We did a lot of things together when we were youngsters. Shirley was just a fight on wheels. You know, we could fight. I'd fight with her and she would scratch me and I would pull her hair, but we were the best of friends. We would get into the darnedest arguments over the littlest things. All of the sudden I'd have her by the hair and she'd be scratching me. We'd be calling each other names, screaming and shouting. Of course, my mom would come and make order. Then it was better. Ruben and I were good friends. We still are very close. The three of us did things together and we connived against each other. They would set something up for me, and I worked with Ruben and we'd do something to Shirley. Yea, we were really close. Even when she was in high school and I was in junior high school, we were best of friends. We would hang around or her friends would come over, and we would see all these older girls. My friends would come over then, and we would all make supper. It was kind of fun.

JC: Which one of your older brothers or sisters did you hang out with the most?

AB: Actually, my brother Floyd went off to college, so I missed him. Clarence was the one I did a lot with. He would take me to the movies. Of all my brothers, Clarence would be an older type Dad for me especially. I liked to hang around Clarence. I did with all of them. Who ever drove or something, I'd get in and that was the big deal. Clarence would always be kind and watch out for us, even when we were older and in our teenage

years. He was the kind that he could mix it up. He could wrestle and he was the strongest guy. Oh, man. It took me until I was almost nineteen or twenty years old before I could compete with him when we'd wrestle. Of course, we wrestled. He would be the one that you could have so much fun with. We just tear around and wrestle each other down, laugh, and do all kinds of things.

JC: Was there ever competition between your brothers and sisters to see who could do something better, or who could get your parents' attention more, or your older brothers and sisters' attention more?

AB: Well, they always said that since I was the baby, I was the favorite. Of course, that's what they say. I don't think so, but maybe I was. When I think about it, I could get them in trouble in a hurry because I was the youngest. But, my brother, Ruben, and I would get in trouble. Of course, we got spanked on occasion. But, my mom's favorite thing was a dishcloth that was wet – one that you would scrub counters with and stuff. That was her piece. I'll tell you what, when you got out of hand you would get it and you would get it with that one. One of her favorite was _____ (??) [German Saying See 8:49]. I'll tell you what when she connected with that darn thing it hurt. But, as we got older, we were getting faster. She would swing and sometimes she missed. She was so kind. Then, when we really got out of hand [and] we really were in trouble, and she couldn't get us, she would say "Now I am telling Dad when he comes home." Then order came right away. My dad would spank us, but it wasn't something hurtful. He would do it in a way you would remember it. So, when Mom said, "I'm telling Dad" you knew it wasn't good.

There was such a difference between my mom and dad. I don't think I ever heard my dad say even damn. He was a very kind demeanor type man. Where, my mom she could swear with the best of them. I mean she could go off in a heartbeat. She would rant and rave about something and my dad would always sit back and analyze. You could get my mom to agree that Jessica is just no good. All I have to do is say the right things and she was on your side. And, you were all in the bad. My dad would say, "Wait a minute, now we got to hear her side to." So, that was a different treatment of those two people. Those are life lessons that you pick up. I think that type of thing really helped me in my profession in education, particularly administration. Regardless of how bad it is, I always remember what my dad says, "We have to hear both sides." I still do that even today. When I administer with teachers and parents, no matter how bad it is I tell them "I want to hear the other side." Because there might be something that I didn't know [or] that they didn't tell. Anyway –

JC: That's a good philosophy to live by.

AB: Yes, it is. I just love those people for that.

JC: If you think back to your childhood, who do you think did more of the disciplining your mom or your dad?

AB: Well, when I was really little I would say my sister Deloris. My mom worked out on the field a lot, when I was really little, shocking and all that. She was pretty active on cutting hay with horses and stuff like that. She was very proud of that. So, Deloris came into the picture. Deloris had to take care of Shirley, Ruben, and I. Deloris didn't spare the rod. I mean she was like our mom, and boy, we had to tow the line. I know one story. We had a neighbor girl that came over to visit us and we couldn't be much older than six or seven or eight. Her name was Arlene. Shirley, Ruben, and I, and Arlene, went down to the lake. We went swimming, with no clothes. Well it wasn't long and Deloris was down there. She had gathered all our clothes and hustled us out of that lake. No shoes, no socks, no clothes. I say it was two hundred to three hundred yards from that lake to the house across that prairie. There was stickers and rocks and stuff. Boy did she scoot us up there – no clothes on – telling us all the way that she had some – I can't remember what she had – but boy we moved. I always tell her that story. How we were in there naked, having a good time, and all of the sudden here's Deloris and we had to get out – (AB and JC laughing) Kind of funny now.

JC: Talking about the prairie environment, what was it like growing up on the prairie?

AB: I have real fond memories when I was a little kid. We lived on a farm north of town. When I was little, I wasn't big enough to go along, when my brothers and Dad would go out in the summer to do haying or in the fall to do harvesting. I was just too small. My brother, Ruben, got to go along because he was just a little bit older than I. So, I would stay home. I was troubled all of the time about that. I didn't want to stay home. They said, "You have to stay home." I had to stay home with Mom and Deloris. Of course, they were in the house, so I was out and about on that farm. Doing a lot of things and experimenting with a lot of stuff. I think I cried a lot, because they went. I could of quit crying in about a minute, but I made it sound like it was all day, so they'd feel sorry for me. (AB and JC laughing)

I also remember getting to go along every once in a while. One fall, my older brother Leroy said, "Well, let's take him along. He can do this." I think I was driving a tractor and they were driving a binder or something. I thought I was the big guy. I was just really tooting along, and he would be in the back. He'd say _____
(??) [German 15:33]. I'd have to go left or right. I think I did okay. One time – I think it was my brother Clarence – He had this John Deere tractor. I wasn't very big. He said, "Now, you take this tractor. I'll put it in gear for you, and you drive it home. When you get home just pull the clutch out and stop." Well, those old tractors had the clutch with the lever. They didn't have the foot clutch. So, I drove it home. When I got into the yard, I was going to pull that clutch out. It was stuck. It wasn't stuck, just hard to pull. I think I drove around that yard for three or four hours. I finally, (laughing) I think, wedged my feet up and put both hands up and (making a popping noise and hand motions) pulled it back. I thought, "By God, I got it." I was driving around there pulling that clutch – that was close. (AB and JC laughing) I was as scared as I can be. At least, I was able to drive around the yard for a while.

JC: What were the winter months like for you?

AB: We spent a lot of time inside. We had to go to the barn a lot, because they'd milk cows in the morning and evening. I remember we'd go over there, and having this little old pedal tractor, chasing them up and down the barn. Then we got to milk. They milked by hand. We all had these little aluminum pails. When my brothers and sisters and Mom and Dad were done milking, we got to milk sometimes. My mom would leave a little bit in that cow, so there would be something left. But, my brothers would be milking and if you'd come by, they'd squirt [you] with the cow. I remember one spring, when these cows would get in the grass and [Clarence and I] would have these little pails and we'd sit behind these cows. When they got out into this grass, they got really loose. When they would go, they would go. I mean, this cow coughed and gave me a blast of manure all over my face. I about choked. He had to run me down to the house because I was choking. He was taking it out of my mouth, my eyes, and my nose.

But in wintertime also, we had fun because we'd go to the neighbors with horses in a bobsled. They'd package us up in the straw and these big coats. Then we'd go see the Benders. The Benders had kids our age, so we got to visit them. We'd rough house and run. We were sweaty all of the time. Then they would come to our place and we would go to the barn. We'd go up in the hayloft, where there was a lot of hay. We would have all kinds of games. Of course, church we would do that all of the time to –

Saturday nights were big. People go to town. They'd work all week, and then Saturday nights they'd go to town, buy their groceries, and take their eggs, cream, and all that stuff to the market. I remember we'd have to get cleaned up for Sunday church and Saturday. In the afternoon, we had to get cleaned up. They'd scrub us. They'd put us in these big tubs – I can't remember what they were made of – but you would think they were going to scrub our ears off in the hot water. They had the hardest thing they'd rub in your ears and clean them. Now I hated it. But, [Deloris and Mom] said "Your dirty and your going be clean when you get to town." So, that was our weekly bath. You get in that hot water and soap and brushes, and you'd wonder how dirty you could be. I suppose it didn't take very long, but to us it seemed like it was a waste of time.

JC: How far was the closest town?

AB: We lived about two miles north of town.

JC: About how far were the Benders?

AB: They were about two miles west. No, I'm sorry they were about two miles east. Yea, we'd go over there a lot or they would come to our house. They were closest to us.

JC: What was your favorite season growing up? Did you prefer summer, winter, spring, fall? Why?

AB: I liked spring into summer, because things were starting to grow. My dad had Angus cattle and I have found memories of going out with him and my brothers. We would be

in either a sled or a little old wagon with horses and checked the cows because they were having baby calves. I just loved watching. I also remember the danger, because there was always a dog or two. These cows are just nasty when you bring those dogs along. My dad would always say, "Keep the dogs in there." They'd get out and the cows would get all riled up. They were protecting their calves. For that reason, I think I enjoyed the spring and summer more than any other time when I grew up. Then, as I got older I kind of enjoyed fall for hunting.

JC: Did you go hunting as a child?

AB: Yes. I remember I had this twenty-gauge shotgun that was my dad's. My brother and I shared that. We would hunt ducks and rabbits and stuff like that.

JC: What was that like for you, going hunting with your brothers?

AB: Like I said earlier in the interview, being with them hunting wasn't as important as being with them. The fact that they would kill ducks or shoot ducks and geese – They, of course, let you shoot once in a while, first. They'd say, "You shoot first." I think they wanted to let you know you could get something. Anytime something fell and they were all shooting they would say, "Well, Adam got that one," and I said, "Yea, I did." You know, I probably didn't hit a thing, but they always made sure I had something to take home.

JC: Did you know your grandparents?

AB: Not my Grandfather or Grandmother Boschee. I never knew them. I don't remember my Grandfather Kautz. But, Grandmother Kautz, I remember her more than any of them because we would stay there on occasion. I didn't like staying up stairs because we had these pots that we had to use. I was always scared to use these things, but anyway – I think Mom and us and Mrs. Bender and her kids about my age would end up at my Grandmother Kautz's house. I am not sure whether it was at Christmas or at Halloween, but for some reason or another we would – I remember that house and the room. All of the sudden this little gal, this little person would show up and she had a white sheet on. She could see through. She had eye wholes and stuff. She was dressed in white and had this little switch. We were as scared as we could be; because we didn't know at that time, it was Grandma Kautz. You didn't know because she was covered up. But, she knew all about us, for some reason or another. She'd ask you some questions and point out to you some things that you recently did to make your mom mad. You wondered how. Then she would switch you, and man, it would sting. It wasn't real bad, but it would sting. Then she'd come up to you and say _____ (??) [check 25:54]. Then she would say what you did wrong. You would never do that again. Oh, what did they call it? *Belzanickel*? Something like that. *Belzanickel*. I remember that, but I don't remember what season that was.

JC: Usually it's around Christmas, I believe.

AB: Yea. Isn't there a *Krist Kindel* to or something?

JC: Um hum.

AB: But this is a *Belzanickel*, and boy I was as scared as I can be to know this person had this power to know so much about me. I wasn't really sure if I knew who was under the sheets. It was interesting. She knew all about us. Of course, we promised we'd be better.

JC: Kind of scary for a little kid?

AB: Yea. (AB and JC laugh)

JC: So how far away was your grandparents' place?

AB: They lived in town. I remember them living in town. The other thing I remember during that time when my Grandmother Kautz passed away. Tradition at that time is they would bring them into the home. I remember my Grandmother Kautz in that house in the coffin. I think she was there for a couple of days. When I think back now, that was common at that time. It was kind of an eerie feeling. I didn't want to stay in that house alone with Grandma there, and the coffin open and stuff. I didn't know about that –

JC: Was that the first funeral or death experience that you dealt with?

AB: Yes, that would be the first one that I can remember.

JC: About how old were you?

AB: (long pause) Seven or something like that.

JC: Fairly young then.

AB: I do recall a young child that died. That would have been my first funeral that I actually attended. I was as scared as I can be, because I had never seen anyone our age that had died or had been killed. That was pretty scary.

JC: Who was that? Was it a local kid?

AB: Yea, it was a local child. I don't – (short pause) I don't remember the name.

JC: Well, how about your father? Were you really close to your father?

AB: In a sense yes. I learned so much from him. When I was born my dad would have been forty-four and my mom would have been forty-two. So, they were older parents than the normal ones. But, it didn't seem to make any difference to me. My dad – When we were teenagers he was out there. He would tell us he could beat us in foot races. I don't think

he could anymore in foot races, but he would always play catch with us and stuff, even in his sixties. My dad was sixty-two or sixty-three when I graduated from high school, and to me it wasn't a big deal. Most of my friends had younger parents, but I never once associated that my folks were old and somebody else's parents were young. It made no difference to me.

JC: Where was your dad from?

AB: Actually, he had more relatives in the Wishek area than Lehr. He's related to all the Rudolphs in the Wishek area. I think his parents were from the Wishek area.

JC: Do you know how he met your mom?

AB: No, I don't. I heard that during those years, they went to dances. That's probably where he met my mom.

JC: Were you close to your mom?

AB: Yea, I was close to my mom. Yea, I was fairly close. She would share a lot of stuff with us and she was a very emotional type of person. She was compassionate and would cry easy. She would get mad easy. Oh, but she was great for kids. She babysat my daughter and my niece, when we were working. It's kind of interesting, we paid her twenty-five dollars a month to keep my daughter Amy. After Amy started going to school, Karen found out that she never cashed those checks. She kept her for years and never cashed the checks. Isn't that something? How special can that be?

Amy and Tina, my niece, still talk about my dad and my mom, and how my mom was just like going to a restaurant. She would fix them anything they wanted. They would tease her. She would tell them – Some of the things – Oh, my mom, she was just a special lady. She'd tell these little girls "Now don't you take a runaway." Of course, they always thought that it was funny that Grandma says "Don't you take a runaway," meaning don't you runaway now. And, my dad was special to. He would sit around with them and talk to them. But, they'd played tricks on her, and I think she loved that. Even though, sometimes when you think about it, you think it was mean. But, I think she really liked having those kids there. And, they still have fond memories. Grandma would fix anything they wanted. It was special.

JC: Growing up did you have any close aunts or uncles?

AB: Not really. (short pause) I remember a lot of my aunts and uncles, but not really close ones. I would say it's because I had older brothers and sisters. I didn't have real close aunts or – I knew who they were. Of all the brothers of my dad, I knew Uncle John best. He died of colon cancer, I believe, in the sixties. He would always give me a dime or something on Saturday nights. I could always count on Uncle John. He'd give me something when he seen me. If I was with my dad, he would always reach in his pocket and out with something.

JC: Did they live around the area you grew up?

AB: Uncle John did. He lived north of Lehr and probably west. Now some of the other brothers, like my dad's brother August, lived in Dawson. I recall going up there at times because they had a bunch of boys. Most of them were older like my older brothers' age, but I remember going up there. Not often, because it was quite a drive in those days. Boy, some of the things that those guys did would just scare me to death now. Riding horses. Bucking horses. Riding cattle. Boy, its crazy. They did some hard stuff, but so did we all. You wonder why you didn't get hurt.

JC: Thinking back to the house you grew up in can you describe it?

AB: (pause) We spent a lot of time in the basement. There was a large, full basement, and that's where we ate. There was a kitchen down there and a sofa. I remember, especially in the wintertime, my dad would work hard. So, on Sunday afternoons, he would be taking a nap. And, I remember crawling around, over him, and under him, and through the feet. I remember that real well. You think back, you wonder why he didn't (pause) clobber you or something. He just laid there. I don't think it was any different from when my kids were around me, you just tolerated those things. It was something that was a bonding thing. Just like when your own kids were with you, they could crawl on you and you could just let them do it. It's no big deal.

Then on the second floor that was the formal house, where they had a formal dining room. They had a glass cabinet they called it the *glasschrank*. In fact, Deloris still has that. I was always told to be careful with that, because if you break that glass, or you go in there and break those cups or something, you are going to have trouble. Then further, on the south side of the house, there was a sofa and there was Mom and Dad's bedroom.

Then, there was a third floor. That's where the boys or the kids slept. I remember being there and then there was this – Oh what do they call those things? They were built out and they had a railing on them. (pause) A balcony thing. We just loved going out there, but we always had to have either Mom or one of the older ones with us because it was quite the drop down. When your younger you always think you can hang over things, but – I just loved going out there at night. Sometimes, the older brothers and sisters would go to sleep out there, I don't know how we thought we could sleep out there. We never made it, because the bugs were bad or something. We just laid there and we were all covered up. We'd count stars and talk about different things. I remember that house pretty clearly. In fact, I think its still there. The living area was mostly in the basement, where it was warm, and all the eating took place. Mom did a lot of baking. The second floor was pretty formal.

JC: Upstairs where the kids slept was it just one large room?

AB: No there was two rooms.

JC: Two rooms, divided boys and girls?

AB: Yea. It was colder than a stinker up there. When we'd get sick as a little kid, my mom would always come up. Then, you slept under feather ticks. There's no heat up there. So, you slept under feather ticks. Of course, your body heat and feather ticks was all you needed. You were really warm in there, until you uncovered. But, if you weren't feeling good or something, she would come up. She would have this warmed grease and garlic, and she would rub the bottom of your feet with that. Then she would put thick socks on. I don't know why, but you just felt a whole lot better. They'd do things like that.

My dad was good at this: If you had a stomachache or something – I remember that too in the house, because they had a wood stove or a coal stove down there. If you had a stomachache, he would take a thread, just a sewing thread, and an egg. He would tie that around you, and then he would (demonstrating the process) take that and throw it into the stove. Then the stomachache went away. Wow, when I think back, it worked. At that time, we just felt better when it happened. I think that was because you believed it would. I don't know if it really did, but you could believe it.

I know the coldest winter months [when] you got up in the morning, [and] you uncovered from that feather tick, you didn't spend time there. You went down to the main floor in a hurry, where the registers were for heat. We never slept alone. There was always two or three of us, and sometimes four of us, under a feather tick. So, you were pretty warm with your brothers. That was okay.

JC: In your home did you speak mostly German or English?

AB: Mostly German. In fact, when I went to first grade I didn't know very much English. To this day, I give my sister Deloris credit. If she wouldn't have been my first grade teacher, I don't think I would have passed the first grade. That was so strange, because my mom and dad spoke German all the time and that's how we grew up. They knew English somewhat. Even in later years, like when I lived in Hankinson, and would call them in Lehr, if I spoke in English all the time it wasn't real. They didn't speak a long time. As soon as I started talking German, they'd talk all night. So, yea. We spoke a lot of German. It was more of the German-Russian. We could understand each other in that area.

JC: Did you teach your children German?

AB: They can't speak it. I think my daughter knows more. They always tell me that they know when I was mad or when I was upset. Then the German I used they always knew there was a problem (AB and JC laugh). They've often said, "Well, why don't you teach us?" I said, "It just didn't happen like that. My parents didn't teach us either, we just happened to be in that environment. They spoke it all the time and the neighbors spoke it. That's how you pick that up." So, Karen and I, we spoke that when we didn't want the kids to understand, and then we would rattle some of that off. They all knew when things weren't going okay [and] what certain words meant.

JC: How far were you from school? Was the school in the town?

AB: About two miles. I remember going to school. My dad would take us to school in a bobsled in the wintertime. Sometimes the snow was really deep. I remember one time we came home, and for some reason or another, that darn bobsled tipped and the horses ran and we all fell out. My brother was in front of the house. I think he was testing some other horses or something.

I remember that it was Logan County School. There was two schools in that town. There was Logan County School and then there was the McIntosh County School. Since we lived in Logan County, but we only went to Logan County School until my second grade. Then, they closed that. Then, all the kids went to that one school.

JC: What types of subjects did you learn in school?

AB: Oh all the basic ones, math and English and stuff. The interesting thing in Logan County – there was eight grades in one room and one teacher. That teacher would teach everything. The interesting thing about that is, when she would be working with the older kids, like the seventh or eighth or sixth graders, and you were doing some of your work, you couldn't help but listen to what they were saying and what they were doing. I had a male teacher, other than Deloris. They would have the older kids help you. So, if they were teaching, let say for example the third-graders, maybe the seventh-graders came over and helped. That was in Logan County School. When I went to McIntosh County School that was different. Then we were all in one grade. That was an adjustment for us.

JC: When you moved to the larger school about how many kids were there in your grade?

AB: Fifteen. Eighteen.

JC: Were you able to speak German at school if you wanted to?

AB: Oh yea, with some of our friends we spoke a lot of that, sure. In the classroom we didn't, but more on the playground and stuff. We got into English more so because we were forced into it in the classroom. We had some interesting teachers. They were really firm people. I remember one time in the third grade, that was my first year in that new school, some of us would tease this one boy because he had come to school with red overshoes. We said they were girl overshoes. Oh, did we ever get in trouble. All of us, I think there was three or four of us boys, next week had to wear our sisters' overshoes. I remember having to wear some white ones, and I was so embarrassed. Oh, my mom and dad said, "You had it coming." We teased that guy with the red overshoes and we really paid the price (AB and JC laugh).

But, we had some really firm teachers. Some of them didn't hesitate – they had those meter sticks – They didn't hesitate to let you have it with that. We had one, oh, she'd

club ya with a book a lot if you got out of hand or if she was doing a lesson or something and you even whispered. You never got it during the time you were whispering. It was afterwards. Then the one time – In the school, the basement room, I was in the one row and some of my friends were in front of me. She would be writing on the chalkboard and we'd whisper, make fun and do different things. She didn't say anything. She just turned around and she had the biggest darn book. She came down that isle. We never thought for a moment what was going to happen. She clobbered every one of us. "Woof, Woof, Woof" [sound effects] (making the hand motions) and you got it. You straightened right up (laughing). Like I said, the meter stick wasn't out of bounds.

JC: Were the students in the school primarily German-Russian or were there other ethnic groups in the school?

AB: Oh very much German-Russian. If they weren't, then for some reason or another, there was always a little teasing. Mostly they were all German-Russian. There were some that had Norwegian names, but their mom maybe German-Russian.

JC: Did the teachers treat the non-German-Russian students the same as the German-Russian students?

AB: Oh yea, very much so.

JC: What did you take for lunch when you went to school?

AB: Oh, it was some kind of sandwich. I don't remember much of that. By the time I was in the upper elementary school, they already had school lunches. But, I am sure my mom would have some kind of meat sandwich, boiled egg, and a piece of fruit or something. During those years, lunch wasn't that big of a deal. It was like getting to school and having fun with your friends. What you had for lunch didn't really matter. You never worried about it. If she would send a lunch with you, it was probably in a lunch pail or something. It never bothered me. I think nowadays, kids, if they have to take a lunch they want to take certain things, like a bag of potato chips and all that. But then, it was just like give me the pail and let me go. Cookies, homemade cookies were in there. Syrup and bread, some meat, canned meat or something like that –

JC: What was the typical recess hour or noon hour like?

AB: Man (sigh), we must have used ten thousand calories. We would run and run and wrestle all the time. I mean the boys especially. We would have all these games and they were all running games. We wrestled a lot, to see who was the strongest. Tag-team wrestling. We'd do a lot of running games. Tag running games. The girls were involved in some of that, but for the most part, we roughoused a lot.

JC: Did you get into any mischief during your recess hour?

AB: Oh, yea. There would be teasing going on. Then we'd get in trouble. One time we teased the teacher's son and that was not good. We didn't realize it, until she found out about it. Did we ever get it for that. The interesting thing is, at that time if you got in trouble in school and you went home, you were just glad they didn't know. If the teacher ever told – I remember one time, I got in trouble with a male teacher. I mouthed off and he just clubbed me good. I mean, he really slugged me. My dad, for some reason or another, was there to pick me up. He told my dad what he did and (making a slapping sound) – Today of course, you'd have an attorney with you. But, when he told my dad what I did and what he did to me, when I got home, I got it again (making a slapping sound) for being out of line. They couldn't call you names and stuff. They could discipline you, but they couldn't humiliate you.

JC: How many grades were in the new school?

AB: It went through high school.

JC: Did you have a favorite teacher?

AB: In elementary school? I would say Mrs. Wittmeier. She was our sixth grade teacher and the boys were all in love with this lady. She was from Streeter, North Dakota. I think she was a Dockter. No, she was a Wittmeier (short pause). No, she was a Dockter. She was married to a Wittmeier. One way or another. She was the prettiest thing I had ever seen in my life. A lady with dark hair and slender and kind. I mean she was like looking at a picture. The boys they just all had a crush on her. Sometimes fight because they all had a crush on her. I think she was very young, maybe twenty-one or twenty-two. But, she liked us too. She really treated us nice. We would sometimes get out of hand, but with her demeanor and because we liked her so much, if she showed any anxiety we would lay off. She would be my favorite.

JC: What was your favorite subject?

AB: (long pause) Oh, when I think back, probably something with history or geography. I loved geography. If I were to pick anything, them would be the ones. And of course, gym class was always fun. We got to go outside and run, jump, and wrestle.

JC: Did recess hours change during the winter and summer months?

AB: Didn't seem to make much difference to us. We would go outside no matter how cold it was. We were always dressed really well in the wintertime. Our parents knew and we knew, we had to have good clothes on. Still, I think back sometimes and we just seemed to get along no matter how cold it was. I remember having really cold feet sometimes or cold hands and it seems like you just got past it. You would go inside. You were out long enough. I remember the Logan County School – Every school had this metal flagpole outside. They always said "Don't stick your tongue on that metal flag pole." I would see kids do that. I said I would never do that. They'd have to run and get the teacher because there they were hung up with their tongue sticking on the flagpole. They

had to come out with some warm water or something. One day I did it. There I was. They had to run in get the teacher out and put warm water on me to get me off.

JC: [Start of Tape 2] Let's change the subject from schools and talk about playing. Tell me about the different types of games you played as a child.

AB: When I was in the second grade, I know our teacher, during recess and noon-hour, would have wrestling matches for us. He would pair us up with different kids and he would be a cheerleader. I was all pretty good at that wrestling. Unless they were much bigger than me, I did pretty good. Then he would coach the next person and so on. We played that not only in second, but in other grades.

On Saturday nights, all the kids that went to school would meet and play games, like Pump-Pump-Pull Away. I think we were at the city park and we played that all night long. It was just incredible how much running went on. Of course there was slides there and stuff. That was important to us. To meet our friends, and see who could run fastest and see who was strongest.

JC: When you were playing these games did you have a favorite place to play?

AB: When we played these, especially on Saturday nights, it was the park. The Lehr City Park. There was just lots of kids up there and lots of games going on. There always seemed to be adults up there supervising. But, at school, the playground was the big deal, especially in elementary school. The big playground out back. We'd played softball. The teacher was out there organizing teams.

JC: Did your school have any organized sports that you played?

AB: In high school? Oh, yea. Basketball was a big sport, and track. We didn't have any football. But, basketball was a big sport.

JC: Did you play basketball?

AB: Oh, yea. I played. In fact, I played right up through my senior year. In fact, we had some fairly good teams. Good memories and some good players. I was one of three senior boys and that one team was fairly good. We got beat in the regional tournament. Everybody was disappointed. Track – We had track. That was hard. Baseball for a while. But, that was all in junior high school and high school.

JC: Growing up did you have any pets?

AB: We always had dogs and horses. We always had a favorite dog. On the farm, for some reason or another, there'd always be stray dogs that showed up and we'd want to keep them all. Of course, my dad would do away with them or give them away. It wasn't just that happened at our place. I think that's why it happened that way. Sometimes if we had a dog that came on the yard – If you were going to Jamestown in a car, the next time

you went to Jamestown in the car that dog was probably in the trunk. Then they stopped about Streeter and open the trunk and let him out. We cried and cried. We'd sit in the back and watch this dog, who would chase the car trying to come along. We'd drive away. We'd cry because we'd got attached to them on the farm. My favorite pets were always our dogs.

JC: What were their names?

AB: Oh, Fenny was one. I remember Fenny was one of those dogs that would herd sheep. I can't remember what kind they are, but she was so smart. You could send her to get the cows and she'd do it, if they weren't too far away. If you said Fenny and pointed, she'd go out and all of the sudden all the cows were coming. You show them, she'd bring them. It was incredible.

We had lots of animals on the farm. I remember getting the living dickens beaten out of me by a goose one time. We had these little houses and when they was laying those eggs – My mom always said, “Don't you go in there. If the gander gets you –” What does mom know? Sure enough, I went in there one time to get an egg out. I think they put them under clucks and stuff. I went in there. I turned around and here was the gander. He came in there and he just gave it to me with his wings out flopping up and down (motioning like the goose). I was black and blue and balling and running. I'll tell you those were rough times.

Horses, we always had horses. I'll never forget. There was so many of us and we always had riding horses. I remember we went on Sundays – There was a family, the _____ (??) [Name 1:00:59], and they had boys about our older brothers ages and our age. Many Sunday's we'd go there with horses. We'd ride there because they had straw piles and all kinds of stuff. Guess what? I would always get the horse that – There wasn't enough saddles, so I'd have to ride bareback. I'd have to have the worst bridle. It was probably a straight bite bridle. And the lamest horse. Well if you wanted to go along, that's all you had. So you went and you didn't complain. Well, you complained about it. But, if you wanted to be part of the action –

Then we'd go over there and we'd play cowboys and robbers. That somebody didn't break their neck – The younger ones, we'd be riding along full gallop on a horse and the older ones would come along and just push you right off the horse. We'd go spinning and tumbling down. Then you tried to do that to somebody else, but they were all bigger. Then you always get a horse that somebody else had abandoned or got thrown off of. It was generally better than what you had, so you get on it. I think back on those times – That was rough. You were as scared as can be, because your riding along at full gallop and some of the older guys are coming along side you to push you off. If you didn't have a saddle, it was easy for them to push me off. But, if you were in a saddle, then you hung on for dear life. The worst part is they'd come along side and pull your horse's bridle off (making a sound effect). There you are sitting on a horse and saddle. That horse was running like a wild one, and you had no way to control it. Those horses ran home.

They'd run home to the barn. They'd get up to the fence and stop short. They'd either jump the fence, or they'd stop short and send you flying.

JC: Did any of you ever get hurt?

AB: I think we got bruised, but I never remember anybody getting – A sprained ankle yea, but broken bones and stuff, I don't remember that. But, I'll tell you we got thrown a lot, especially the younger ones.

JC: Growing up did you ever hear any family stories?

AB: My dad knew stories from his relatives. Even though he wasn't born in Russia, he had stories, he had heard from his ancestors from Russia. All about these horsemen and stuff. They were robbers that would come over. They'd be good horsemen but they were really nasty folks that killed people. He had heard that from his grandfather. Those were always very interesting stories for us young kids to hear and he could tell them really good. Whether it was the *Kusaks* or whatever, he bought that stuff. Boy, when he started talking about that stuff, we'd ask a lot of questions and listened. He'd tell about horsemen, good horsemen coming, and hooks in their feet, hurting people in the steppes. In fact, it kind of made you wonder. Here you're a little kid and you think you're a big shot riding this pony – Dad is telling you about what he had heard about his ancestors. When you watched movies about the *Kusaks* and how they killed people and the horseman on the steppes and all that – You thought *ja*, you're just a little player here.

He could make up stories about jackals and hyenas and coyotes and stuff. Kind of scare you a little bit. He'd talk about hearing a coyote and hyena, and he'd talk about them dragging little kids off. You were thinking, oh man, that can't happen to me. He had good stories.

JC: Were there any superstitions that really scared you as a child?

AB: When we were kids – I remember that kids would get ringworm. It was a callus or a scale or something. It always seemed to be in your head. Then they'd loose their hair and have a blotch of hair. It was almost like this scaling. I remember getting that. I had it right here (pointing to his forehead above his right eye). Then my mom took me to a lady by the name of Mrs. Kranzler . There's several ladies that did *Brauche* . I had to lay on my back and then she came over, and she had no shoe on, and she took her big toe, never touch it – She would say things. Then she would go with her big toe over this over this ringworm. It went away. Not right away, but it went away. It probably would have anyway, but I remember that. And a lot of kids had *Brauche*. It seemed to work. I don't know (laughing). So superstitions, yea there was –

JC: Did your family have favorite rhymes or sayings??

AB: Not that I can remember. (pause) We had to pray every night in German, but nothing that I can remember like rhymes.

JC: What prayers did you say?

AB: They were one sentence prayers, like “*Ich bin _____*” (??) [German 1:07:27] and “*_____*” (??) [German 1:07:30]. You didn’t dare go to sleep at night, before you said one of the two. My mom would be at the bottom of the steps, “*_____*” (??) [German 1:07:42]. Then we’d have to say it and she would have to hear it. Sometimes Ruben and I were able to say it together. Most of the time he would say one and I would say the other, because he said that one, I’m going to say this one. Sometimes we’d say it together. For the most part, she stood at the bottom of the steps and waited.

JC: Were you raised Lutheran or Catholic?

AB: Lutheran. We were Missouri Synod Lutheran. I think my dad was Reformed before he married my mom . But, then we were Missouri Synod Lutheran. I got confirmed with the catechism.

JC: How far was the church?

AB: The church was in town. In Lehr.

JC: Did you have any types of music or entertainment in your house?

AB: My dad would play that – I still got it. I don’t have it. Well, I have it here somewhere. Its that little box accordion. He would play that a little bit. My older brother, Clarence, would play that. My dad had this mouth organ. He would play that all the time. We just loved it when he played that. He could play some smooth, soothing stuff. I often wanted to do that – take lessons and play. He played it by ear, just by sound. He had like two or three tones or songs that he could play. He would get that out and we’d just sit on his lap or nearby. He’d just play.

JC: So, you never learned how to play?

AB: No, no. We’d always take it and play a line or something of a song.

JC: Besides your brother Clarence, did any of your other brothers or sisters learn how to play?

AB: Not that I am aware of. I know that Clarence did the box accordion.

JC: What were confirmation classes like?

AB: Very strict. We had them every week and we had a little catechisms. I still got it. Every week we had to know so much and if you didn’t you got in trouble with your mom or dad. Our minister was really strict. He was a nice guy, but very strict. When we got

confirmed, we had to answer questions in front of the congregation. If you didn't get them right you just didn't get confirmed. You were as scared as can be. You didn't know what questions you were going to get. You all had to get one or two questions and you had to answer them right and in front of the congregation. I thought my lord what was that? I did it. I think everybody did.

JC: How many people were there in your confirmation class?

AB: I think there was about eight of us in that class.

JC: About how large was the congregation?

AB: (long pause) I don't know. Probably a hundred, hundred and twenty.

JC: So, pretty intimidating when you had to get up in front of them?

AB: Yea, I'd say there was about seventy-five that day. I still remember walking in there, getting on your chair, and wondering what the question was going to be that you had to answer.

JC: Did anybody not answer the questions right?

AB: Nope, they all did. One person cried a lot. He (laughing) was crying before he had to answer the question (laughing). I thought, oh man (laughing). I remember his name but am not going to say. (AB and JC laugh) Even at Christmas time, when we were little kids we all had a piece in The Annual. We had to know a verse of some sort. Oh man, we practiced those and you always hoped you got a short one. My mom would always say "Do you know it? Do you know it?" She'd say that in German. Then when you get to the Christmas Eve program you better know it. If you didn't you had it. This one boy (laughing) he knew it all the time, but when he had to get up in front of the people he cried (laughing) and he could never finish (laughing). He'd start crying and we even tried to help him sometimes (laughing).

JC: Oh, how old was this boy?

AB: Oh, I don't know. We were maybe ten or eleven, or something like that. It was so – We couldn't laugh at him, because we'd get in trouble. He'd get up and start saying something and just (in a crying and mumbling voice) "I don't know." He'd just cry. It never fails. Everyone would say "That's okay. That's okay."

JC: How was your relationship with the pastor? Were you able to approach him?

AB: Oh, he was a great guy. He was strict, but we would go on hayrides and stuff. He wrestled with us. I'll tell you what, he was as sweating as we were. I mean he would thrash all over that hayride. I just can't imagine the girls on there. They had to sit and watch. But, he'd get in there and we'd jump him – Two or three of us at a time wrestled

around his neck. Then he'd throw us off and jump on us. He was a great guy. But when it got to confirmation, you had to know your stuff, or else.

JC: Were the church services and confirmation classes in German or English?

AB: They were in English. When I was there, it was English.

JC: What about your older brothers and –

AB: They had German. Leroy, and Clarence, and Deloris, and Floyd were all confirmed in German. Ruben and Shirley and I were the only ones confirmed in English.

JC: After confirmation, did your family have a special celebration?

AB: Oh yea. We had a big shindig at the house. Sandwiches. The brothers and sisters and my godparents came. Grandpa and Grandma and – Grandmas wasn't alive any longer.

JC: What type of food was served at the party?

AB: Food? Ham, potato salad, *kuchen*. All the good ole' stuff was there.

JC: What was your favorite childhood dish that your mom would make?

AB: Noodle soup. Noodle soup and for dessert graham cracker crust with chocolate pie and homemade whipped cream. My wife always laughs at me because (pause) I always say to her "When are you going to make that homemade noodle soup?" Well, she had noodle soup today in fact. Homemade noodle soup, and then of course she had canned chicken with it. Then that dessert – I mean that was special. That was pretty good.

JC: Was there a traditional German dish that you mom made that you really enjoyed?

AB: _____ (??) [German 1:15:17], she made those. _____
_____ (??) [German 1:15:20] and those were really good. I liked those to. *Knoepfla* she made those a lot, with sauerkraut. Cheese buttons. I didn't like those. She made those a lot, but she would make special ones for me, without the cottage cheese in them. She would make just straight ones. She could make chocolate cake with frosting. My brother and I could eat that all the time. Now my sister-in-law –Before my mom died, my sister-in-law got that recipe. She makes it every once in a while when we're in Wishek. That's real good. That chocolate cake with that caramel frosting (spoke softly; unintelligible). But favorites good ole' homemade noodle soup. Good ole' homemade chicken noodle soup.

JC: What was your least favorite?

AB: _____ *Kase Knoepfla* with the cheese in it. I didn't like that. That was not a big deal for me (AB and JC laughing). Everybody else thought it was wonderful, but I thought, oh lord give me something else.

JC: What was your favorite holiday growing up?

AB: Christmas.

JC: How did your family celebrate Christmas?

AB: Well, we'd go to church. After church we came home and you got to open your Christmas gifts. My mom had a Christmas tree up – a real Christmas tree with all the balls and lights and stuff like that, and gifts and presents and stuff. That's probably why it's my favorite. At church, you would get this paper sack. Every kid got a paper sack doled out and given out by the elders. In that paper sack was a little sack of candy and an orange and an apple and lots of nuts and different kinds of sweet candy and stuff. I think it had your name written on the outside. Wow, it was something special given in church. Then you got to go home and opened your gifts. Didn't get that many gifts. Well, when we were little we did, but as you grew older we had to draw names because there were so many. You couldn't buy gifts for everybody. So, you'd just buy for one and that was still good. That worked out pretty good for us. But Christmas would be my favorite.

JC: What was the traditional Christmas dinner?

AB: Probably ham. Ham was big at our house. My dad just loved ham, and ham with the bone in it. I still get laughed at, because I like ham with the bone in it. When we get to choose I'll say, "I want ham." "Oh yea, you gotta have a bone in it right?" "Oh, yea I can get by that." For us it was this or goose. My mom would make goose or duck or chicken, but I know ham would have been the big one.

JC: Did you celebrate with your immediate family? Did you invite your grandparents?

AB: Our immediate family. I don't remember too much about my grandparents, other than my Grandma and Grandpa Kautz. But, Christmas time I don't remember them ever –

JC: How did your family celebrate Easter?

AB: That was my next favorite, because my mom would have these Easter baskets. She would hide them stuffed [with] colored eggs. There was always candy in there to. She hid them in the most creative places. When we'd get up in the morning they were hidden. We could see her making them during the week, and we'd helped her dye the eggs and all that. But, that morning when we got up the first thing, we started looking, all three of us. Looking under different places and you'd find your stuff. That was kind of exciting.

JC: What about 4th of July?

AB: Oh my. If we didn't lose hands and fingers. Sometimes with firecrackers it was incredible. In town, everybody had firecrackers, and we always threw them at each other. I mean you're not supposed to, but you always did. You'd light them and throw them (motioning) and sometimes they'd take. Of course, they were just those little black cats, but some of those were cherry bombs. Now cherry bombs would take your fingers off or bruise them really good. So, we had these little black cats. We'd throw them under girls' feet and stuff like that. Then you'd get in trouble, but it wasn't that bad. We would also get these firecrackers that had a stake on it. They were meant for being in the ground, but we would hold them. Then we would light them. They would have like seven or eight shots. We'd chase each other. We'd have little battles behind granaries and stuff. "Poo. Poo." We didn't lose eyes and stuff like that. The cherry bombs were those big ones. They were about this big with a fuse on them. And, if you put that under a pail, that pail would go up about fifteen feet and would have a bulge in it. So, you knew that you didn't want that stinker in your hand. You would be in big trouble. But, it seems like everybody (laughing) always had, at one time or another, somebody get hurt by those things. I never ever knew anybody that was permanently hurt, but there always some that got black and blue. Fourth of July was big. That was a big celebration.

JC: What did your family do for the fourth?

AB: We generally went to town. They went to Lehr. They had games for the kids. Races and all that kind of stuff. But often, we would go to Jamestown. There was the Stutsman County Fair (coughing). A huge fair (pauses) at that time. Then we got to go on the Ferris wheel and stuff like that. Pick our moment, bring lunch along. We'd have to meet at certain places and have lunch. Strawberry pop and minced ham sandwiches. I just loved those things.

JC: (laughing) How did your family celebrate birthdays?

AB: Mom would always make a cake of some sort. She would have creative colors on the cake. We would always have some kind of cake. She never missed it. She never missed it. It had candles on it. To me it wasn't that big of a deal, but we always celebrated it somehow.

JC: Going back to Christmas, did you celebrate that in school?

AB: We did. It wasn't a real big deal. We brought gifts for the teacher and all that stuff, but I don't remember much about that. It wasn't that big of a deal.

JC: Something that's traditional today is Valentine's Day and celebrating it in school. Did you celebrate this in school?

AB: We did. I think no – that was the May baskets was it? We used have to (short pause) – I can't remember how that went with the May baskets. We had to chase girls and kiss them or they'd chase the boys and kiss them. (short pause) You'd run like the dickens, I

know that. Valentines I don't remember much about that. I remember in school we would always have Valentine candy and we'd give it away and exchange them.

JC: Was anyone in your family seriously ill or injured while you were growing up?

AB: No, not that I remember. My brother Floyd got caught in the fly wheel on the silo, where the belt of the tractor was. He got burnt pretty seriously, and then he got blood poisoning. Everyone was really concerned. I was a little kid, we took him to the doctor and I heard my mom talking "Oh, if they don't take care of that, he's going to die," and that scared me. You could see it streak up his arm. Then my brother Ruben got caught in the same type of thing. Only his leg got burned pretty bad. It wasn't life threatening. My older brother lost one of his fingers in a binder, I think. It had a knife going back and forth.

JC: When you were a child did your parents ever talk politics?

AB: My dad was Republican pretty strongly and my mom would follow along. Dad would follow Republican presidents, and all, but no not a lot. I recall after the Second World War, my dad would talk about the Nazis and stuff. Not too much about politics though.

JC: Did anyone in your family have to serve in World War Two?

AB: No, no not that I'm aware of. (short pause) My dad always said he was too young for World War One and too old for World War Two. He was born in 1902, so he would have been fourteen or fifteen for World War One and thirty-nine or forty for World War Two. But, he really got caught up in it.

JC: Then your older brothers were probably too young still?

AB: My brother Clarence was in the army during the Korean War. He was the only one that was in the military.

JC: Did you like growing up in the country, and if so, why?

AB: I didn't mind growing up in the country, because it was a peaceful, wide-open time. When I think back now, with some of the anxieties – When you were a kid, the whole world was yours out on the country. You had all kinds of animals out there. You had horses and wild animals and cows. It seemed like you could absorb so much just by watching and going out and about. I never regret growing up there. You were able to get to know yourself when you were alone or if you were with one of your brothers or sisters. You always had something to do. When I was alone on the farm, I could do a lot of things and just experiment. Sometimes you wonder why you didn't blow some stuff up with gas and fires and that kind of thing. The fun in growing up in the country for me was the serenity. The ability to enjoy the wind, enjoy everything in nature. When I think back now, that kind of relaxes me.

JC: What was your most stressful childhood experience?

AB: (long pause; sigh; soft, quite voice) When I got in trouble with the law. I did get into some pretty serious trouble when I was growing up. I remember stealing something and I got in trouble with the law (a small, soft chuckle). There were some lessons learned from that. When that happened all the adults were there to try to fix their life, and I remember being in a parade for the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church. I remember being in a parade and being on a wagon. I was supposed to be an African American. They had painted me or colored me. There was several of us on there and as we were going to the parade some kids, probably older than me, would taunt me. They'd say "You know Adam, you know the commandant that says 'Thou shall not steal.'" That was hurtful. At the same time though, I thought you kind of got this coming. I remember that being a real high anxiety and it really took me down. You know what – it was a lesson.

JC: What helped you get through that?

AB: (sort pause; sigh) My brothers and sisters helped me, and my Sunday School teacher. Who said just "That's okay. You don't have to worry about that." My brothers and sisters helped me get through stuff like that, but it was it was pretty stressful. Then, I shouldn't have done what I'd done either.

JC: What was the scariest thing that you lived through as a child?

AB: (long pause) Oh my, I don't know. I wasn't scared of a lot of stuff when I was a kid, unless it was adult-generated. I think the scariest thing was, I had a problem with my appendix. I was seven or eight years old and they talked about surgery. Surgery would have been at Bismarck. They said at that time you couldn't eat nuts and you couldn't eat raisins, and all that kind of stuff. That was supposed to be part of your problem. One way to fix that was to do what they called wheelbarrows. What a wheelbarrow was – Somebody would hold your feet up and you would walk on your hands. (motioning) Your feet were up and this was supposed to – I don't know, help drain the thing or whatever. Man, I remember walking on my hands and it didn't bother me a bit because I didn't want surgery. That was the scariest I've ever been. They talked about going to Bismarck and being there over night. Having to be there and their going to cut into you and stuff. Oh man, some people die. And, then if it burst they can't save you. That was scary for me.

JC: Did you have the surgery?

AB: No (surprisingly). I never did. I was late twenties, when I finally had my appendix out.

JC: When did you start doing the wheelbarrow stuff?

AB: When I was about eight years old. Yea, so I don't know.

JC: What was the happiest time during your childhood?

AB: Oh, there's so many a times (long pause). Man, I don't know of any particular time. I may go with our parents and visiting friends. Christmas gatherings when we were all together and it was warm. Everyone was getting gifts and laughing. Those were happy times for me. Just the love of the family

JC: What was the most adventurous thing you did as a child?

AB: Before high school an adventurous thing – Oh man (chuckles). The first time I ever went away from home, I went to a bible camp in Garrison, North Dakota. Our minister that I said was so good with us, he convinced some of us to go. It was three or four days and I had never been away from home that long. That was an adventure for me. To live or sleep in a room, in a bunk, with a kid who I have no idea where he came from – I was never so glad to get home (laughs). I didn't think I'd ever get home. Everyday seemed like an eternity. I really never been away. Even though they had you active all the time, you just got so homesick

JC: How old were you?

AB: Twelve, thirteen, maybe eleven. Some where in there.

JC: How about an adventure in high school?

AB: Adventurous in high school? (long pause) Oh, man, I don't know. We did a lot with friends, from going to dances – Adventurous, I don't know. We'd hunt a lot, went to dances, went to beer parties. Nowadays beer parties are a no-no, but when I grew up in high school there was one every week. They were usually out in the country somewhere. There was people from Wishek and Lehr and Ashley. It was always kind of a – I don't know if we'd call it an adventure or not. There was always fights because some kids from Lehr didn't get along with some kids from Wishek (pause) from Napoleon or whatever. There was always somebody, and I don't know why, but it always happened, that looked at the girlfriend wrong. Then there was a real problem. Then we'd have fistfight. There was always lots of beer. I don't know if it was a good deal or bad deal. Some of my friends when I go to visit them, if we had dinner, we had homemade beer with our meals. That was the way of life.

JC: So these beer parties, would they be something that would tell your parents you were going to?

AB: No, no. But, it didn't matter if we got home at two o'clock in the morning, at six o'clock in the morning, you were still going to milk cows. I remember I was really tired one time. We must have been out most of the night. I think it was like five in the morning when we got home. We were we were making hay during that time and my job was to rake hay. That morning, my dad and I were going out. He had to cut hay and I was going to rake hay. As soon as he left, I made one round and stopped. I was so tired. I stopped and sat beside the tractor wheel and turned it off. The sun was on me, it was so warm and I was just beat. All of the sudden I fell asleep. It wasn't two minutes later, I woke up and

here was this man standing over me (laughing). He let me know about being out all night and having responsibilities in the mornings. I'll never forget that. He wasn't a big guy. He was only about five foot two, but man was he big in other ways.

JC: You've mentioned the dances. What were those like?

AB: Oh those, they were a lot of fun. We would go and meet a lot of people, meet a lot of girls and guys. There was always beer. Even though we weren't of age, there was always beer in the alley or somebody's car. Always avoiding the police. Sheriffs were always around and the local police. Some guys would get arrested. They were just smart alecks. You had to know how to treat people. Of course, you go to movies in Wishek. In the summer, especially when it got nice, there was a lot of beer parties in the country.

JC: Did you have a favorite movie that you went to see growing up?

AB: Shenandoah. That was when I was in high school. I always liked that movie, Shenandoah. I've seen it more than once. I've seen it on TV, but I think I went to see it twice. It was such a moving show.

JC: Well, is there anything else about your childhood memories that you would like to add?

AB: My childhood memories were very good. I learned a great deal. When you think back, you wish you would have paid more attention to certain things, but doesn't everybody? I mean you wish you would have done more schoolwork or been kinder to certain people. Maybe I got that from my parents too, compassion. I always hated when other kids got picked on. I didn't like that. Many times, I would come to their aid because they didn't have anybody and I was reasonably able to handle myself physically. So, if some kid would get picked on too much, I usually stepped in. If it was one of my friends, I'd just tell them "Your going to have to lay off," "Quite hitting them," or "Quite doing this." I mean "He doesn't deserve that." They would, but they'd look at you – And, I was prepared to do anything I had to do. I just didn't think a kid should be hit in the face.

JC: Did you get that maybe from your older brothers and sisters?

AB: Yea, yea. I saw my older brothers and sisters' get into it pretty good with each other. I saw them face off some other people, but I think, in particular, from my dad. He was a fair man. He didn't tolerate kids being picked on or hit by somebody else. Some of my friends that live in Fargo, that grew up with me, they still remember my dad. In fact, the one guy says, "I remember your dad he was one fair man." That boy that I'm talking about was beat up a lot by his dad, and he'd show up a lot at our place. My dad showed a lot of compassion for him and we saw that too. So –

JC: Why do you think it's important to tell your story to share your story?

AB: I think it's important for everyone to know. So much of our history has not been told because the way our ancestors grew up and the way they were treated and the way they were told that they couldn't tell who they were and where they were from.

Even when I grew up – One of my biggest fears when I went to college – It didn't happen to me because I practiced. So many students from Lehr had an accent. If you went to Lehr, Napoleon and Strasburg and listened today, you could still pick up accents. Well, one thing that I didn't want a college professor to know that I had an accent. So, I really, really worked hard so that I didn't have an accent. And, now I don't think about it much, but at that time it really bothered me. It bothered me when someone would say “*Ja* so your from Lehr, huh Lehr. From Lehr out there, *ja*,” and all that stuff. Even now, when I talk to some folks, they still think I have an accent. I can even mimic it now. That was one of the things that I really didn't want, to have some college professor mimic me and tell me that I got an accent. I worked pretty hard to get rid of it. I think I am pretty clean (laughing).

There are things that say that if you aren't very careful – “Plug it in” and “Plug it out.” When I grew up if they wanted a cord unplugged, they'd say “Go plug it out.” “Adam go plug that out.” It's no big deal. When you went to college and you talk about plugging it out, they go “Huh, what do you mean plug it out.” Or they would say something that ended with “not,” “Your coming over this Sunday to interview me, not.” We did that in high school, but when you did that in college somebody would say “Huh, what'd you say?” So, you cleaned all that up.

I look back to my parents and their parents and their parents' the history is really hard to come by. If you talk to the Norwegian people, I think they've done a better job at that. Maybe its because they came from there to here. Were our ancestors went from Germany to Russia and then to here.

JC: Are there any other thoughts or observations that you would like to share?

AB: I am proud of where I came from and who I am. I'll never be sorry that I'm German and I am proud of my heritage. I think that my parents were proud of their heritage and proud of their customs. I was taught their religion and I thought that was a special deal and that was thanks to my parents. It seems like that's not like it used to be. Our kids don't go to church like we did. We didn't dare miss church. If you were out late Saturday night, you sure you had to be in church Sunday morning. That's it you had to be in church. I appreciate that at that time I didn't I was like ‘oh man I have to got church,’ but today we appreciate that. When our kids grew up, I tried to have them go to church, but I wasn't as insistent as my parents were, on them going to church.

JC: Is there anyone else you would like to suggest for us to interview?

AB: Well, I already told you about Deloris. You know you might want to talk to my father-in-law, Ray Kessler. He's in Lehr, North Dakota. He's eighty-eight. He and I talk German all the time when were together. He could tell you about his family and his

background. He would be an interesting interview. And of course, like I said Deloris is probably like a gold mine.

JC: Well, I thank you for the opportunity to interview you.