GARY KRAHMER

TAPE 1, Side 1

December 1, 1995

M.O'R.: This is Michael O'Rourke from the Washington County Historical Society beginning an oral history with Gary Krahmer. Today's interview is taking place on December the 1st, 1995, and taking place at his home in Hillsboro.

Well, you of course grew up on the farm here, not too far away from here, I guess.

G.K.: Yes.

M.O'R.: In Cornelius, was it?

G.K.: Yes. The farm was situated about two miles south of Cornelius on Cornelius Road about a mile north of the Forest Hills golf course.

M.O'R.: And the farm, of course, is still in the family today?

G.K.: Yes, that's right. As a matter of fact, it's a century farm, which means it's been in the family for more than a hundred years, and today it's been in the family for about 115 years.

M.O'R.: And your brother Cal farms it now?

G.K.: Yes, that's correct. He along with his sons farm the property, yeah.

M.O'R.: Okay. Well, maybe I can just start by asking you what your earliest memories from childhood are.

G.K.: Sure. I suppose my memory goes back to when I was about five or six years old, and I recall a lot of work having been done on this farm. We were in the dairy business, and of course

that means milking cows seven days a week and doing all of those things associated with dairying, which we raised all of our own crops for cattle feed, raised most of our own food for ourselves during that time.

Some of the memories I have were - it was a lot colder then, and I recall that during the wintertime the Tualatin River would raise high enough to create a huge lake adjacent to our farm, and as a matter of fact incorporated part of our farm, and when I was a kid we would go down there and ice skate a lot and play hockey and just have a grand time.

M.O'R.: On the fields, essentially?

G.K.: On the lake that had frozen over.

M.O'R.: And during the summertime that would be dry land?

G.K.: Yeah, that was dry land in the summertime, and we would raise various crops during those times. Today that has - freezing over of that lake has not occurred for several years now. Matter of fact, by 1950, '52, I don't think that lake has frozen over since that time, which is interesting because ...

M.O'R.: That is interesting.

G.K.: ... I can recall at least three winters where we just had a grand time skating - ice skating on that lake.

M.O'R.: And it would stay frozen for some period of time, then?

G.K.: Yes. Probably two, three weeks, and be strong enough, of course, to hold us kids up, although I do recall one time we were playing some game, and all of us - not all of us, but about three or four of us gathered in one location and broke through the

ice, and we were very fortunate that nobody drowned or got hurt, but ...

M.O'R.: So it was deep enough so that was a possibility?

G.K.: Yeah, it - oh, yes. Yeah, it was a fairly deep lake, right.

Other childhood memories, of course living on the farm, hunting and fishing was a part of life, and our father taught us gun safety very early in our youth, and we did a lot of duck hunting and pheasant hunting on the farm, as well as doing a lot of fishing on the Tualatin River.

Matter of fact, one of the things that has always been in my mind was the day before the opening day of fishing season. I had a terrible time sleeping at night because it was so exciting to me to go fishing in the Tualatin River on the opening day, catching trout primarily. We really had a lot of fun.

M.O'R.: So it was a good trout stream in those days?

G.K.: Yes, it was a good trout stream, and even today my nephews, Cal's sons, still fish in the river, and they catch quite a number of good trout.

M.O'R.: So that's nice to know, they're still there.

G.K.: Yes. Yes. That's right.

M.O'R.: Or maybe they've returned?

G.K.: Returned is probably an appropriate term given the quality and condition of the Tualatin River in the late 1940's and the 50's, primarily.

See, during my youth, like in the 40's, there was very little usage of the river for irrigation purposes. Almost all of the farms were dairy-type operations in that Blooming-Cornelius commun-

ity, and hardly anybody did any irrigating. But in the 1950's, the crops changed in the valley - more - going more to nursery-type crops as well as cannery, vegetable-type crops. And that's when heavy irrigation started on the Tualatin River, actually to a point to where you could step across that river at certain locations and not wet your foot during the driest time of the summer. Matter of fact, there are some photographs available, and you may have those, showing ...

M.O'R.: ... Henry Hagg?

G.K.: ... Henry Hagg and Paul Mertorvan standing alongside this very small stream which was the Tualatin River. And of course the ultimate result of that was the construction of the Hagg Lake dam and reservoir, which made a lot of difference, of course, in terms of keeping water in the river in the summertime.

M.O'R.: Right. Well, now, you mentioned the irrigation in connection with that, but of course the flow was always low in summertime anyway?

G.K.: Oh, yes. It was always low in the summertime.

M.O'R.: But it was lower still as a result of the irrigation?

G.K.: Right. Right. We - as kids we swam in the river in the summertime, and you could almost go anywhere and not go in over your head, although there are some holes, deep holes in the river. But generally there was a very low flow during the summertime.

M.O'R.: Uh-huh. And then when the irrigation started, it got even lower?

G.K.: Yes, that's right.

M.O'R.: So probably swimming was less possible then?

G.K.: Oh, yes. Yeah, very much so. And I also recall when we did swim in the river - we didn't realize it at the time, but how utterly polluted it was, because like everybody else in those days we used the river to get rid of our waste products. And there were food processing plants as well as meat processing plants in both Forest Grove and Hillsboro, and there was no treatment of waste water at that time to any great extent. Hence most of that water that they used for processing went into the river.

M.O'R.: It came out of the river and went back into the river or -?

G.K.: Well, yes, in some - well, I'm thinking about the water supply here. Hillsboro has used water out of the Tualatin for many, many years, but Forest Grove, I think their water supply at that time came out of what is called Carpenter Creek, I think, which is more north and west of the city of Forest Grove, rather than the Tualatin.

But I recall the bacterial growth on some of the snags and limbs in the river would be a good half-inch thick. It was just - thinking about it today, it was ugly, and us kids were in that river swimming, you know?

M.O'R.: So this would be some sort of slimy ...

G.K.: Didn't bother us.

M.O'R.: ... slimy stuff?

G.K.: Yeah. Yeah. I honestly don't know how the fish could have survived, but fishing continued to be really quite good during those years. We didn't do much fishing when the water was real low. The good fishing during those times were like April and May, and then again in the fall, when the fall rains started and the

river came up, then fishing would be good again. But where those fish went in the summertime, I don't know, because the river was so polluted.

M.O'R.: Sounds like it. You said that you weren't really aware of it as kids?

G.K.: Right. Right.

M.O'R.: Except you noticed the bacterial growth on the limbs and ...

G.K.: Yes. That I do recall, because each time you would grab a stick or something to hold on for whatever reason, it would be slick, you know? [laughs] And this growth would flake off of the stick. Yeah.

M.O'R.: Yeah. A lot of stuff there for the bacteria to sink their teeth into, huh?

G.K.: Right. Right. Yeah, it was pretty bad. But ...

M.O'R.: Did you notice ...

G.K.: ... people just weren't aware at that time, you know.

M.O'R.: Did you notice odors coming off of the water or anything like that?

G.K.: I can't recall that we did. I suspect there was odor at that time, but we were having too much fun to be concerned about that, you know.

M.O'R.: Did you ever see anything floating by on the river, in terms of ...

G.K.: I don't recall any floating masses of material, but I truly have to believe there were such. Perhaps not up high where we were, it may have occurred lower in the river where it had more of an opportunity for the bacterial growth to develop.

M.O'R.: Right. But those operations you mentioned, the meat packing plant and some of those places, were upriver from you; is that right?

G.K.: Yes, those that were in Forest Grove were upriver from us. But they were the only facilities above our farm in terms of a commercial-type operation, other than, of course, dairy farms on up the river, as well as - during those days there were no facilities for garbage disposal. And I recall, and I know where there are a few of them today, where people would - farmers would dispose of their garbage, tin cans, paper products, along the river bank, and of course then there would be leeching from that into the river, so that contributed to the pollution of the river, also. That may still be occurring today, because I know - like I say, I know where there's two of those garbage dumps that are still there. They're not being used anymore, but they are still there. So there could still be some leeching from those into the river.

M.O'R.: Right. Now, you said that there was a meat packing plant in Forest Grove. What other kinds of industrial or commercial operations were there that impacted the river that were upstream from you?

G.K.: Primarily the food processing facilities were the largest contributors of pollutants to the river. However, both Hillsboro and Forest Grove at that time, as well as Cornelius, had - they had wastewater treatment facilities, but they weren't very effective. So all of the wastewaters gathered from those cities went through those treatment processes, but not being very effective, it was a combination of commercial and industrial as well as residential wastes that were being discharged into the river.

In Hillsboro, the Coomer meat processing facility, which is out on Dairy Creek where the Pietro Pizza place is now - matter of fact, the old buildings are still there - they directly discharged into Dairy Creek just above where it conflues with the Tualatin River. I remember some of the old guys around here saying, "Boy, that's the best place in the world to catch fish."

M.O'R.: A veritable banquet.

G.K.: Right. But all of the blood products and everything that they washed down, you know, would go directly into the river there, and it had to be a tremendous contribution of pollutants at that location.

M.O'R.: Now, that's just off of Highway 6 there, right?

G.K.: Yes.

M.O'R.: Right.

G.K.: That facility has not been in business for quite a number of years, but they had big business back then. Most of the farmers, a lot of them, would take their cattle or hogs to Coomer's and have them processed for meat purposes.

M.O'R.: And there were vegetable packing plants as well?

G.K.: Yes. There was a large Birdseye facility here in Hillsboro, situated where the new county Justice Center is going to be located, and they processed vast amounts of vegetables in that facility. The wastewater would leave the facility, it would go to the wastewater treatment plant situated just north of Jackson Bottom, and the only treatment that water received was it would be run over a screen and they would screen out the large particles of vegetables that were disposed of in the processing plant. And the

water, then, would be discharged into the river. So essentially there was no treatment at all of that water.

M.O'R.: Right. Except for the big stuff?

G.K.: Right. Right. That was the way of life, not only here in this valley, but the Willamette River. The history of the Willamette clearly shows that we used that river to dispose of our waste, and of course Governor McCall made corrections to that situation when he was governor and caused it to be cleaned up, and the Tualatin was the same way.

M.O'R.: Well, that's a great little vignette on the state of the Tualatin during those years. But I wanted to ask you a little bit more just about your own childhood experience on the farm.

G.K.: Sure. Sure.

M.O'R.: You mentioned the ice skating. Now, your father, obviously was a dairy farmer?

G.K.: Yes.

M.O'R.: And you did mention earlier that one of the earliest memories you had from, you know, the time you were five or six or something was all the work on the farm.

G.K.: Right.

M.O'R.: Did you participate in that work?

G.K.: Oh, yes, I did. Oh, yes. Seven days a week.

M.O'R.: What were your jobs?

G.K.: Oh, my. It was a variety of work. In the winter time, most of the work consisted of, of course, milking the cows at 6:00 in the morning and 6:00 in the evening, and then feeding those animals during those times also: throwing loose hay down from the hay mow, if you will. That was always fun because when you got

enough down you could jump out of the hay mow onto the haystack, and that was always kind of fun.

And then we raised beets that we fed to the cows, and we stored them in a kind of a cold storage area associated with the barn. And we would have to load these beets into a cart and wheel them up and feed them to the cows, and of course we would feed them grain at that time, also, so we had to dump these sacks of grain into a cart and go along and feed the animals.

We also had horses at that time. Matter of fact, we had no tractors. Horses were our main source of power for the machinery that we operated. And of course we had to feed the horses and always - every day, of course, we cleaned the barn of the manures from the various animals. And milking the cows, of course, you have a State inspection of your milking facilities, so we spent quite a bit of time making sure that we kept those facilities clean.

Also during those times we went to school, and obviously there wasn't much time for after-school activities, such as sports, so none of us boys got to play sports in school because we had to be home doing the work on the farm.

In the spring, then, of course, there was a lot of planting to do of the various crops, and us boys would participate with our dad in getting the land ready for seeding and plant the seeds and of course ...

M.O'R.: Most of these crops were feed crops for the animals?

G.K.: Yeah, most of them were feed crops. We always had a large garden also, of course, for the family use.

But then in the summertime it was an endless job of weeding. Weeding, weeding, weeding. Forever we weeded.

We also raised some onions. My grandfather was - he farmed the farm before my dad took it over, and he would always raise three or four acres of onions, and of course those were all hand-planted in the spring, and then we would weed those onions until they were ready, and then we'd go through on our hands and knees and hand pull the onions. We'd go through and pick them up by hand, and then they would be put in a dryer facility, and they would be allowed to dry, then, for some time. And then eventually, after they were dry, we had this old machine that would remove the tops off of the onions, and then they'd fall into a sack. And then we'd load them up and Grandpa would sell them someplace. I don't recall where he would - where he sold those. But we spent a good deal of time doing that.

We raised corn for cow feed, and obviously most of the work associated with that in harvesting it was by hand, chopping it down by hand, loading it by hand, taking it to the barn where it was put into a grinding machine that would eventually discharge the chopped corn into a silo. And then of course in the winter time you have to throw the stuff out of the silo and into a cart and feed it to the cows.

So there was a lot of work, just a lot of work - which was good, because we learned a work ethic very early in life, and that helped all of us through our lives, no question about it.

We also did all of our own butchering, meat processing, and that was always kind of a fun time, because Grandpa and Grandma would work with us on that, butchering hogs and cows, processing

hams, bacon, making our own sausage. And it was always exciting because we got to test the sausage and test the hamburger, you know, to make sure it had the right amount of spices and salt.

Also during those times there were - a lot of grain was grown in the area, for cattle feed primarily, and they didn't have combines. We had threshing machines that were permanently located at each farm. Well, there was one farmer in the area that owned a threshing machine, and he would go around the community and place his thresher at various farms, and then all the farmers would get together and work together to gather the grain in order that it could be processed through the threshing machine. And we kids got to work along with the farmers in doing that.

M.O'R.: So the farmers would just cooperatively ...

G.K.: Yes.

M.O'R.: ... help everybody harvest their crops, including your own, huh?

G.K.: Yes.

M.O'R.: I mean, thresh their crops, rather?

G.K.: Right. Right. And that usually was about a three-week period during the fall, and we kids, depending on how old we were - when we started out, we would carry water for the guys in the field, so they'd have a drink of water every once in a while, but then as we got bigger, we got to work on the processed grain. It would all go into a burlap sack, and we'd load it onto a truck and haul it to a granary, and then dump it in there for winter storage.

In our situation, we raised wheat and a lot of oats. Cattle apparently like rolled oats. So in the winter, again, about every two weeks we would load up this box wagon; it had old wooden spoke

wheels on it. We'd hitch up to horses to it, and I can recall many times - there was a feed mill in Cornelius - and jump on the box wagon and drive the horses two miles to the feed mill in Cornelius and unload this grain so it could be rolled, and then we'd pick up what we had taken in two weeks ago, take that back home, and then that served as cattle feed for the next two weeks. And that was always kind of interesting, driving those horses on the county road into Cornelius.

M.O'R.: So the feed mill when it processed this grain, then, would actually take precisely the grain that you gave them and give it back to you in processed form?

G.K.: That's correct. Yes.

M.O'R.: So the inventories didn't get mixed up, then?

G.K.: That's right. Yeah. Not like today. Yeah, you would get your own grain back. And they - as I understood it - I didn't pay that much attention to it; I was too young - but I understood they used what they called a steam roller, and these rollers that would flatten the grain out and also inject steam into it. Why, I don't know, but I recall that that's how they processed the oats, especially.

M.O'R.: Maybe to soften it up a little bit or -?

G.K.: Might be. Might be, yeah. But I know the cattle sure enjoyed it. They really slurped that up.

Also, we - Sundays were a day off on the farm, although we had to milk the cows and feed the cows and clean the barn. But the rest of the day we got off. And of course we always went to church on Sunday morning after we got done with the chores, and then Sun-

day afternoons we kids were allowed to do essentially whatever we wanted to do.

There's about three or four acres of a timber patch on the farm along the river, and there's fir trees and cedar trees in the patch of timber. Matter of fact, it's still there today, although they have taken some of the fir trees out here recently. But one of the things we kids did that we really had fun with was we built a cabin - probably a shack, but to us it was really neat - down in these woods, and it's a place where we would fish. Matter of fact, in the summertime on some good nights we'd even sleep down there in this old cabin that we had built. But we had a lot of memories from that cabin when we were kids, because neighbor kids would come over and we'd all play down in the woods and stay overnight in the cabin, you know.

M.O'R.: Had you built the cabin yourself?

G.K.: Yeah, those kids.

M.O'R.: And your grandparents lived on the farm with you?

G.K.: No, they did prior to my birth. Matter of fact, the granary where we stored the grain in the winter time was their home when they lived on the farm, and then they eventually moved to Forest Grove, and then they lived their life out in Forest Grove. And then we converted the home they had lived in into a granary. But they lived there - I can't recall exactly when they moved, but I think it was about the time I was born in '35 when they moved to Forest Grove.

M.O'R.: And your grandparents, where were they from originally?

G.K.: Germany is the origin of the Krahmer clan or family.

M.O'R.: Actually, were they your grandparents on your father's side?

G.K.: Yes. On my father's side, that's right. Yeah. Yeah. Matter of fact, I have some photographs here that I'll share with you of some of the old folks.

Originally they came from Germany, but I think it was my great-grandparents that came from Germany and then they came into - what? - Missouri or something like that, and then came out to Oregon from there. I never knew my great-grandfather on my father's side, but I understand he was quite an individual. One thing I do know is that sometime in the mid 1800's, or perhaps later 1800's, the World's Fair was held in St. Louis, and he went from here to St. Louis to the World's Fair back then ...

M.O'R.: Quite a trip.

G.K.: And that had to be quite a trip, yes. Right. So he must have been quite an old gentleman.

M.O'R.: Did he come over about the time of the big migration on the Oregon Trail do you think?

G.K.: I suspect he probably did, but I don't know the history, unfortunately, that well. I should and I will talk to my mother about this. She's still living, and I'm going to ask her about this and see if she has any knowledge of the history, more than I have.

But see, her parents also - they lived right there, and they were dairy farmers. Matter of fact, their farm was about half a mile from my grandparents' farm, so my dad and mother lived as youths in the same community. And her parents or grandparents are also descendants of Germany.

M.O'R.: Okay. So this is on your mother's side?

G.K.: Yes, my mother's side.

M.O'R.: And you knew those grandparents as well?

G.K.: I knew my grandparents. I didn't know my great-grandparents on either side.

M.O'R.: Right. But you knew your grandparents on both sides?

G.K.: Yes. Right.

M.O'R.: So they were all four living, then, when you were a child?

G.K.: Yes.

M.O'R.: Now, you mentioned that your great-grandfather on your dad's side was a bit of a character and made this trip to the World's Fair. Were there any other reasons why you describe him that way?

G.K.: I can't recall any other reasons, but that's the one reason that gives me the impression that he was a pretty adventurous individual, taking on that effort to go to the World's Fair, which was quite a number of miles, and I don't know what forms of transportation they had during those times, whether they had trains at that time - I'm not so sure.

M.O'R.: Depends on exactly when he made the trip, I guess.

G.K.: Right. Right.

M.O'R.: But we could probably figure that out.

G.K.: Yeah.

M.O'R.: Well, what kind of person was your grandfather on your dad's side?

G.K.: Well, as most grandfathers you think he's the greatest guy in the world, and he really was because he spent a lot of time with us kids, and he taught us a lot about farming.

[end of side one]

GARY KRAHMER

TAPE 1, Side 2

December 1, 1995

M.O'R.: Okay. So you were saying that you weren't sure that your grandfather and your father got along?

G.K.: Right. Right. Obviously grandfather had his methods of farming, and of course my father's views of farming methods changed. As an example, my grandfather was a dairy farmer also, and of course in his day all of the milking was done by hand. Well, my father was quite short. He was probably about five foot seven, and he had very short fingers. And therefore it made it very difficult for him to milk a cow by hand with those short fingers. He couldn't get them - get his hands around the cow's teats.

And he was - as I understand it, my father was the first dairy farmer in this area to put in milking machines, and of course my grandfather thought, "Oh, my goodness, you're going to go broke," you know, and all of that stuff. "You're going to ruin the cows." But he was the first one to put in automatic milking machines where you didn't have to milk them by hand. And that's an example of where they disagreed on a certain process. And I'm sure that my dad did other things that my grandfather didn't necessarily agree with.

But that also occurred when my brother took over the farm. Dad, of course, was still in the dairy business, and Cal didn't stay in the dairy business that long because things were changing. Crops were changing and economically it appeared as though it would

be better to go into a vegetable crop type operation as opposed to a dairy operation. And of course my dad had fits over that, no question about it. And they eventually ended up building a new home on a ten-acre tract adjacent to the home farm. I'm sure they didn't do it so they could watch over my brother, but they were always there, and I'm sure he let Cal know when he thought he was doing something wrong. No doubt about that. But all in all, everybody gets along fine, and everything works out, you know.

M.O'R.: Well, I mean this is the sort of thing I suppose you might expect when you actually turn over your life and your livelihood to someone else, and then you see them change the way they do business.

G.K.: Right, and I guess there's been a few things occurred at USA since I left that I have to question, you know, but not for me to say.

M.O'R.: Yeah. Right. Others are sitting there in the seat having to take responsibility for the decisions that they make.

G.K.: Right.

M.O'R.: What about your grandmother on your father's side? What was she like?

G.K.: Oh, she was just a very, very nice lady. A very good cook, just a wonderful cook. Not that my mother isn't; she is also a very good cook, or was. But she was a quiet lady, not unlike Granddad, who was also quiet. She was a very short lady. Just a neat person. Both of them were just so nice to us grandkids, and I guess that's not uncommon, but you do remember those nice things that they did for you.

M.O'R.: So your dad must have inherited the height genes from your - from his mother?

G.K.: Yes. Yes, I think so. Yeah. Yeah, they were very nice people. Unfortunately for me, both of them passed away when I was in the service, and I was stationed in Okinawa in 1954 and '55, and interestingly my grandmother passed away and seven days later my grandfather passed away. So we always felt there was a strong bond and love between those two individuals, and that he died of a broken heart, you know. Whether that's true or not, but obviously it had a tremendous impact on him when she passed away. And unfortunately I wasn't here to be a part of that, but that's the way it goes.

M.O'R.: And what about your mother's parents? What were they up to?

G.K.: Yeah, they were dairy farmers, and they had a lot of children. On my father's side there were three children, my father and two sisters. One sister is still alive, living here in the Hillsboro area. But on my mother's side, if I'm not mistaken I believe there were seven children, and I think there were five boys and two girls. I think that's correct. So it was a pretty busy household.

The one thing I recall about Grandpa Gerskey - her maiden name was Gerskey - was that he thoroughly enjoyed baseball. He just loved baseball, and he would sit by the radio and listen to the Portland Beavers baseball game just constantly when the baseball season was on. I remember that so well!

Other than that, he was a pretty quiet individual. Very slow moving, didn't get excited about much of anything. By the time my

memory clicked in the boys were doing the farming, my mother's brothers were farming that particular farm. That farm has subsequently been sold to other individuals. None of the family is now living on that farm anymore.

M.O'R.: But it's still a farm?

G.K.: Yeah, it's still a farm. Mm-hmm, yeah. And it's situated adjacent to the Lutheran church in Blooming, just north of the golf course, the Forest Hills golf course.

M.O'R.: Okay. So very near your place, then?

G.K.: Yes. Very near. Yeah. As a matter of fact, there was our farm, and then the one immediately adjacent to our farm was Al Krahmer, who was a cousin of our family, and then his brother owned the farm immediately across the road from the Lutheran church. So there were three Krahmer farms in a very close area there, and the Gerskey farm, my mother's parents' farm, was between Al Krahmer's farm and Fred Krahmer's farm, who was across from the church. So a lot of relationship in a very close area.

M.O'R.: Yeah. A real community there of people related to one another one way or another?

G.K.: Right. Pretty much all of them were of the Lutheran faith, and as far as I know all of us continue to be so today.

M.O'R.: I was going to ask you what the church was that you attended.

G.K.: Yeah. Interestingly, we attended the Lutheran church in Cornelius. I'm not sure what you know about the Lutheran church, but there are basically two synods in the Lutheran faith; one is called the Missouri Synod, and the other is called the Ohio Synod. And although their beliefs are very similar, they do have

certain restrictions in the Missouri Synod as opposed to more freedom, if you will, in the Ohio Synod. As an example, the Missouri Synod are opposed to their members joining fraternal facilities such as the Elks Lodge, where the Ohio Synod doesn't have a problem with that.

So my ancestry were raised in the Ohio Synod, whereas this other faction of Krahmers, although they are descendants back somewhere of the same folks, were Missouri Synod people, which is the Lutheran Church in Blooming. So we always went to Cornelius to go to church, and all these other Krahmers went to the Blooming church. I never understood that when I was a kid, but I was taught what the reason was eventually as I was growing up, and I always found that very interesting. Kind of always thought we were all the same.

And my brother and my sister both still go to the Cornelius Lutheran church, the one we were raised in, and because it's convenient my wife and I go to the Calvary Lutheran Church here on Jackson School Road just down the road here, along with my mother goes to this church down here. But we're all still in the Lutheran family.

M.O'R.: How would you get into town in those days?

G.K.: We had a 1936 Studebaker automobile, so we did - and I was born in '35, of course, so that's my memory of how we got into town is in the 1936 Studebaker. It was quite a classic old car. I wish I had it today. Unfortunately we wore it out. But that's how we got around in those days, yeah. We used to - we kids probably had something to do with wearing out that automobile, because every once in a while we would jump in it and we would play like we

were driving, you know, and we would push on the clutch and the brake and the gas and turn the wheels - we probably had something to do with wearing it out.

My dad and mother kept that car until - wow, 1950 or -51. No, I'm sorry. That's wrong. 1948. Of course, during the war years you couldn't buy a car. All of the effort was going into the military. But in 1948, then, they were able to trade off the old Studebaker and bought a Dodge car at that time. And I guess they kept that for about 20 years and finally - now my mother today is driving a Dodge. Yeah, but it's some late-70 model automobile. It's probably got 30,000 miles on it, you know. She just doesn't go very much.

M.O'R.: Sounds like that might be a potential great buy from somebody who's interested in old cars at some point.

G.K.: Oh, yes. Right. Yeah, it's quite an old classic.

M.O'R.: Not as much of a classic as the '36 Studebaker would be.

G.K.: No, no. That's right. And my grandfather had a 1936 Buick, wonderful automobile, and unfortunately I wasn't here, of course, when they passed away and didn't have an opportunity to get that old car. But he kept it in such magnificent condition. He would wash that car and polish that car, and it was black. It was just beautiful. I honestly don't know what ever happened to that. I suppose they sold it in terms of the estate at some point in time. Gee, that was a great automobile. It would sure have been nice to have that one today.

M.O'R.: Yeah, well, just as an aside I in 1968 purchased a 1959 Jaguar two-seater.

G.K.: Really?

M.O'R.: And I still have that car.

G.K.: You do? Wow!

M.O'R.: Although it's not running, and it's just sitting in my garage, but it ...

G.K.: Oh, you've got a ...

M.O'R.: It continues to appreciate. I've recently been offered $12,000 for it.

G.K.: Really? My goodness.

M.O'R.: And it doesn't run.

G.K.: Yeah. Oh, that's great.

M.O'R.: Yeah. It's amazing these things that don't seem very valuable at the time ...

G.K.: That's right.

M.O'R.: ... how rare they become after -.

G.K.: Back then, those were just tools, and when they wore out, you know, they got rid of them. And my goodness, look at the value of those things today. If I were 40 years old I would have to seriously think today about keeping something and just putting it in storage like you've done with yours.

M.O'R.: It was sort of accidental on my part. I did make a couple of attempts to sell it, and then just didn't, and then by gosh it turns out to be something fairly valuable.

G.K.: Right. Sure.

M.O'R.: Well, so what about your own parents, then? Can you describe your father for me?

G.K.: Yeah. Yeah, he was - like I indicated, he a was fairly short and stocky individual. Hard working. My goodness, even

after he retired he worked really quite hard. And a very stern individual, although very fair. I can recall that I only got one whipping when I was a child, and I can share that story with you if you'd like to hear it. [laughs]

M.O'R.: Sure.

G.K.: But he - both of them were very fair parents, treated all of us kids very fairly and equally. But he was just a hard-working individual, but also very civic-minded. He served several years on the Cornelius school board, and also served, of course, as an officer in the church. He was always interested in politics. Never ran for any office as such, but kept himself current on political affairs and events and was never bashful about sharing his opinion on politics especially, local, state or national. Always very much available to share his views on that.

And I didn't necessarily observe this, but some of the old farmers after my dad passed away made comments to me that my dad was very much like Harry Truman. He wore the same kind of hat, you know, and he kind of looked like him. But they would - they indicated he should have been president. Whether he should or shouldn't, I don't know.

M.O'R.: Well, that's a compliment for your father.

G.K.: Yes, it was. Yeah. He was a very well-respected individual in the community, no doubt about that. Yeah.

M.O'R.: Was he, like Harry Truman, then, a Democrat?

G.K.: Yes. Yes, he was. Yeah. I can recall that in working the fields - our farm was a 90-acre farm, which is not a large farm by any means today, but back then that was a lot of land to take care of, given no tractors, and I can recall in the spring or in

the fall him spending day after day after day behind three horses and a single-bottom plow, plowing those fields and preparing them for seed. He just spent days and days and days at that. And you didn't ride on this machine, you walked behind it, you know. Just a really hard-working guy.

He - but they also enjoyed themselves. They would take off every once in a while when us kids were older and we could take care of the farm - or the cattle - they'd take off for two and three days, and they would go to the coast or they'd go somewhere else in Washington. Never any real long trips until after he truly retired. Then they did some longer trips. And he enjoyed trains. He really educated himself in terms of the train system in the United States and Canada, and they did a number of train trips after they retired so he could see what he always enjoyed when he was unable to do the train tourings.

M.O'R.: The farm probably kept him pretty tied down?

G.K.: Oh, very much so. Very much so, yeah. Yeah, the darn old cows don't milk themselves, you know.

My mother, of course, had four kids, so she had to be mother full-time. But again, very hard-working. Of course, [there was] just no choice; you had to work hard on the farm. Canned just hundreds and hundreds of jars of fruits and vegetables and even canned meat during those years, because you didn't have freezers at that time. So all of the meats had to be processed either in canning it or curing it, and we had a large smokehouse where we would smoke the hams and the bacon and the sausage.

And then attached to the house was what I would call a cooler. It was constructed in such a manner that it would stay cool in

there year 'round. It would never freeze, but it would never get terribly warm, either, and I suspect it was - the walls were filled with sawdust or something, some kind of insulation. And that's where we would store all of this processed meat during the winter and the summer, and that's where our meat supply came from.

M.O'R.: And did it keep pretty well in there?

G.K.: Yes, it did. I can't recall - I'm sure there was some spoilage, but I can't recall that.

We did not have an electric stove or gas. Still don't have gas out in the farm community. All of our heat was wood heat, and all of our cooking facilities was on a wood stove. Our hot water heater operated off of the wood stove. We didn't always get a hot bath, but we always had a bath. It might be a little cool, you know.

So every fall we spent a fair amount of time making wood.

M.O'R.: Yet another chore, huh?

G.K.: Oh, yes. Yet another chore. Right. Cutting trees down and chopping it up into stove-size pieces, and then of course storing that so we could keep it dry.

M.O'R.: Would this be timber on your own farm, then?

G.K.: Primarily timber on our own farm, although we did go to other farms around the area where they wanted some trees cut down, and we would get some wood from those farms also.

Also, if you have cattle, of course, you have fences, and we had many, many miles of fences on this farm, fencing off these various plots. We didn't have metal fence posts in those days. We had to make fence posts. So maybe every five years, maybe a little longer than that, we would load up the kids who could work and my

father, and usually a neighbor would go with us, along with his kids, and we would go up into the Tillamook Forest. And obviously there were no restrictions during those times, and we'd get in there and we'd find some really good cedar trees, and we'd cut these cedar trees down and we'd cut them up. And of course we didn't have power saws, all this is by hand, now. And we'd split these fence posts, and my goodness, we'd make huge numbers of these fence posts, spend a week at it, and haul all of those fence posts home so we could maintain these fences on the farm. That was always fun, because we got to go somewhere, you know, and it was so nice up in the Tillamook Forest at that time. Didn't have motorcycles running around and 4-by-4's, you know.

M.O'R.: Right. Probably pretty peaceful then?

G.K.: Yes, it was. Very peaceful. We always enjoyed that. I can't say I enjoyed making the fence, though, because all of that, you had to dig the holes by hand, you know, and plant the posts, and that was work. That was hard work.

M.O'R.: Would you do all the fence at one time or would you rotate them around or -?

G.K.: No, it was pretty much a maintenance thing.

M.O'R.: So when the post ...

G.K.: When the posts rotted off, yeah, then you'd have to replace it. Sometimes you'd get maybe a half of mile of fence that the whole thing had to be replaced, and that was work. That was work. Yeah.

And every once in a while a fence would fail and the cows would get out, and of course then you had to run around and gather them up. I can remember those days. Fortunately we always had a

really good cattle dog, usually similar to an Australian shepherd. It was really good with cattle, and the dogs were very valuable in terms of helping maintain order within the cattle.

M.O'R.: So they'd keep an eye on the cows for you, eh?

G.K.: Yeah, right. Oh, gosh, as we keep talking these things keep coming back, you know.

M.O'R.: Well, it's a great picture you're painting of life on the farm.

G.K.: It was a great place to grow up. It truly was.

M.O'R.: I can see that it would be.

G.K.: I even miss the farm today. You know, I wish that I had more access to the farm, although I go out to the farm even today and just mess around, you know. I don't do much. Go fishing now and again. Fortunately I've gotten back to that. I hadn't done that for a number of years, fishing on the home place, but now I'm able to do that again, and that's kind of fun.

M.O'R.: Because you have time to do it?

G.K.: Yes. Right.

M.O'R.: What sort of values did your parents pass down to you?

G.K.: Oh, my.

M.O'R.: Did they have any definite ideas about the way things should be that they tried to pass on to you kids?

G.K.: Honesty, integrity. Very strong, good moral values. To describe them - it's kind of difficult describing them individually, but just being a good person, a good person to not only your family but to your fellow human being. I don't know what to say beyond that.

I've got to tell you if you want to hear about my one whipping that I got from my father.

M.O'R.: I was going to ask you about that. Go ahead.

G.K.: Yes. This enhanced my values greatly, I'm sure.

The farm immediately adjacent, as I indicated, belonged to Al Krahmer, and he had a son - they had a daughter and a son, and his son was my age, just maybe a year older. So he and I played together a lot, and we would stay overnight at each other's place whenever the opportunity allowed us.

So one time he and I were playing, and his father smoked a pipe, and he used this very coarse tobacco in his pipe. So we were at that age where we had to try smoking. So he got a little tobacco from his father's tobacco supply. And my father at that time smoked cigarettes, and he would roll his own cigarettes. So I was able to get a few of these papers that you roll tobacco in.

So then we got together. "Okay, now let's go roll us a cigarette, and we'll try this," you know. So okay, where are we going to do this? Well, he had piled up a large pile of fence posts that he eventually was going to use to improve his fence, and we were able to crawl down inside of this pile of fence posts. So we get down in there where nobody could see us, you know. And it was - the pile of posts was adjacent to their dairy barn.

So we rolled up these cigarettes, and we lit them up, and we were just having a grand time, not realizing that this smoke was going straight out the top of this fence post pile. And pretty soon his father says, "Boys?" Uh-oh. We're in trouble here. "What are you doing?"

So we got caught in our first experience of smoking. And we crawled out of there, and he was very calm. He said, "Do you boys want to try tobacco?"

"Yeah, well ..."

He said, "Fine." So he pulled out his pouch of tobacco, and he said, "Okay. Take some of that and put it in your mouth." Uh-oh. And of course we did, and we got terribly sick, of course. And then he loaded us in his pickup and he hauled me home, and then he proceeded to tell my father what he had found, and that was the one time that my father got a hazel switch and gave me a whipping. But that's the only time.

Oh, gosh. Isn't it interesting what you remember?

M.O'R.: About how old were you then?

G.K.: I was probably 11 or 12. Something like that.

But most all of the farmers out there smoked pipes, although I recall some of them that actually - one of them - two of them that actually bought cigarettes and were smoking commercial prepared cigarettes at that time. Today I don't know that there's any of them that smoke anymore. But that was just a way of life, you know.

My father chewed tobacco as well as smoked for several years. He eventually quit all of that.

M.O'R.: That's one of the ways in which society has changed in recent years.

G.K.: That's right.

Another memory I have when I was fairly young is that of course we raised all of our own dairy cattle, and the cows, of course, they would bear their calves pretty much year 'round,

restocking. But we couldn't have too many, because we only had capacity for a certain number. So usually all of the bull calves would be sold, because we didn't have any ...

[end of tape]