

Loren Harff

Narrator

Carol (Heidelberger) Harff

Narrator

Rebecca A. Mavencamp

Greenfield Historical Society

Interviewer

July 30, 2013

At the home of Loren and Carol Harff

Greenfield, Minnesota

Loren Harff—LH

Carol Harff—CH

Rebecca A. Mavencamp—RM

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[unrelated conversation]

RM: I'm Rebecca Mavencamp and we're here today with Loren Harff and his wife. It's July 30, 2013. Could you please spell your names for me?

CH: My name is Carol Harff, C-A-R-O-L H-A-R-F-F and I was born and raised in Robinsdale. In 1957 I married Loren, and I moved out here to the farm.

RM: What was your maiden name?

CH: My maiden name was Carol Heidelberger.

RM: Could you spell that?

CH: H-E-I-D-E-L-B-E-R-G-E-R.

LH: I was born here, on this place, and my name is Loren, L-O-R-E-N H-A-R-F-F.

RM: When you say, "this place", where are we?

LH: This farm. Not this house, I was born in the old house. We tore the old house down in 1957? '67?

CH: I think we tore the old house down in 1965. Or no! '67, you're right.

LH: '67 and built this one, rather than remodel something that couldn't be remodeled, We've lived here now for...this is 19...I mean 2013 [laughs].

Both: We've been here a long time!

CH: We had two children, Jeffrey and Renee. Jeffrey never married, Renee is married and had three children--two girls and one boy. Her oldest daughter is married, and she has four children, so we have four great-grandchildren. And I also have a mother that's still living; she's 92 years old.

RM: You farmed this land?

LH: Up until about 2000. My son was living at home and he went and bought a house. I guess when you lose your help, you quit [laughs]. So I quit!

RM: Not hiring any new help?

LH: I rent everything out. I still have enough to do, but not as busy as you would be if you were farming it.

RM: We're between County Roads 10 and 50?

LH: Right off of 10.

RM: Since you were born here, you went to school in Rockford?

LH: No, I went to school down at the little white school house on the corner, through grade school. Rockford couldn't decide where the District lines should be, so one year I went to Buffalo rather than Rockford school. It took quite a few years for them to figure it out.

RM: Did you graduate from high school?

LH: No, I went one year and then my dad needed help and I said, "Well, may as well stay home."

RM: That was pretty common?

LH: Yes, at that time it was. There were a lot of kids around here that never finished high school.

RM: So in your teenage years, you were working on the farm?

LH: Yes

RM: Did you have some time to have some fun?

LH: Not very much. I helped every farmer around here haul hay and do odd jobs. I got to see how other farmers farmed, you know. I worked enough one year to buy her a diamond ring [laughs]

RM: Which year would that be?

LH: Oh, my god...

CH: I think we were engaged in about 1956. We met in about 1955 and I think we were engaged in '56 and then married in '57.

LH: At seventy-five cents an hour, or a dollar an hour, I made enough to buy her a diamond ring.

RM: Hard working guy [all laugh].

LH: Yep!

RM: Where did you buy it?

LH: A jewelry store in Minneapolis.

CH: I don't remember the name of it anymore, but it was in Minneapolis. I remember that.

RM: Where did you meet?

LH: Well, I think really, Lake Sarah. Everybody went to Lake Sarah around here, you know. And as far as that goes, we still go dancing. We went last Sunday to Glencoe. That's the only dance hall around here other than the Medina. That's during the week and we can't go during the week. There's too much going on.

RM: What's your favorite old time music to dance to?

LH: I like a waltz. I mean, two-step, you know. Polka's good too. Gets your blood going [laughs].

RM: Where did you learn to dance?

LH: Lake Sarah. All the young guys around here, they'd stand at the bar and look over the crowd. Of course, everybody's standing there, and this girl came up and asked me to dance, and I said, "I can't dance." "Well, I'll teach you!" [laughs] I don't even know what it was, anymore.

RM: How old were you?

LH: Probably sixteen, seventeen, maybe. Just old enough to have a drivers license and go three miles down the road and come back again.

RM: What were you driving?

LH: 1940 Chevrolet [laughs]

RM: What color?

LH: A gray one [laughs]

RM: With no seatbelts!

LH: No! [all laugh] Then I bought a new one, a 1953. I think we had that until...well, mercy, I don't know.

CH: Didn't we have a 1957 too? That we—

LH: No, it was a '60

CH: Oh! A '60.

LH: We had that till '67, no, '65. Then I bought another new one, and that keeps going on. Got to have vehiCHes to get around, unfortunately.

RM: Sid the girls like the guys with the cars?

LH: There were always guys that had theirs all decked out. I never went for decking a car out. It was too expensive, for one thing.

RM: What did they do to them?

LH: They put streamers on them, and these reflectors that you screwed on your license plate. That's a thing of the past, too. They used to put the license plates on with these reflectors and then the kids used to go around through the parking lot and steal the reflectors and the license plates would fall off.

RM: How big were they?

LH: Reflectors? Oh, I suppose probably the size of a quarter or a nickel. Maybe a little bigger than a nickel.

RM: Just two or three of them on a license plate?

LH: Yes. There was fancy stuff that you could put on. Different hub caps, just like nowadays, the kids with the wheels. Now they have these black wheels coming in. I think they're kind of ridiculous [laughs].

CH: They used to hang things over their rear view mirror. They would hang dice or they'd put different streamers on there.

RM: Were they paper streamers?

CH: No, they were like thread. Wound around a couple times, or braided, something like that, they would put on there.

LH: They'd hang mud flaps on. Some guys'd put such big mud flaps on, they'd drag on the road.

RM: All this to impress the girls?

LH: I guess so! [CH laughs] I never did it...

CH: The girls all wore skirts. You didn't wear slacks like you do now. They all had skirts on with crinolines and all this and that.

RM: And high heels?

CH: And high heels, yes! That was another thing, high heels. And the dances always started on Easter Sunday. During the winter there weren't any because there was no heat in the dance hall They started on Easter Sunday. That would be the big thing, oh man!

LH: Sometimes there was snow on the ground, so they'd have to plow the parking lot out and it was all mud. People would get stuck and Mitchell would have to get his tractor out and pull them out.

RM: Who was Mitchell?

LH: He owned the land where the dance hall sat on.

RM: Was that his first name or his last name?

LH: That was his last name. Ben...Sid and Ben. Forgot what her name was. But Sid never had much to do with it. Ben was the entertainment guy, you know. He took tickets, sold tickets, things like that. They had like a turn style, like when you go to Menards? You got this turn style you go in but you can't get back out. Well, they had the same thing. He'd take it off at 11:30 at night, then you could get in for nothing. A lot of kids didn't have a lot of money, so everybody would stand outside [sings a little] look around until 11:30 and then they'd walk in [CH laughs]

RM: What would they do outside, then?

LH: Just talk and act smart...whatever you do! [laughs]

RM: "Act smart"? Sounds like trouble [all laugh].

CH: The tickets were probably twenty-five cents, fifty cents. It depended upon the band. Like when Whoopee John played? It was more. Twenty-five cents more usually than when anyone else played.

RM: He was the popular guy?

CH: He was the popular guy.

LH: He had the most people in the band. I don't know how much he paid them. Who knows? Ten dollars a night?

RM: Each person in the band?

LH: So that would be eighty bucks, you know?

RM: That's a lot of money.

CH: In those days.

LH: These books [pulls them out] tell you how much Whoopee John made in an evening. Here's the Playmore Ballroom in Silver Lake. There was 221 people there, he charged sixty-five cents and made \$111.25.

RM: Is Lake Sarah in there?

LH: Sure it is. If you give me a chance [pages flip] There's Bertha Pavillion, he charged fifty-five cents, there were 240 people there, and he ended up with \$132 that night. I have to look for it, but it's in here...Jordan, St. Paul...what I don't understand is *how*, with the car that he had, from Montivideo, he drove to Waseca. [pages flipping] Litchfield, St. Cloud...Owatonna, Albert Lea...oh here! Rockford! Lake Sarah Pavillion in Rockford, Minnesota. There were 539 people that night. He charged fifty and seventy-five cents. Fifty for kids and seventy-five for adults and he made \$402 that night.

RM: What year was that?

LH: Let's see...Rockford...well, it's 0507.

CH: That must have been May of 07...no.

LH: But it doesn't say the year. I don't know if there's a year in here or not [pages flipping].

CH: Well, how about this? 1944?

LH: Yes, there it is.

CH: 1944.

RM: You said at that point, you were making seventy-five cents an hour?

LH: Hauling hay for the farmers.

RM: What was the typical factory salary, do you know?

LH: Buck, buck and a quarter, maybe. That's about all. Not much. But I think the people probably were happier then than they are now, making all the money, you know. I mean, you had a place like this to go, you didn't have to spend very much. Lot of guys would stand around, drink beer all night long.

RM: How much were the beers?

LH: Twenty-five cents.

RM: For a bottle? Were the bottles the same size as we have now?

LH: Yes [still flipping pages].

RM: What kind of beer was the going favorite?

LH: Grainbelt! [laughter] Grainbelt and Hamms. Glick was around, too, at that time.

RM: Schells?

LH: That's New Ulm. Here's another one...1945...390 people, fifty and sevety-five cents, \$464 he made that night.

CH: He usually had about the same number of people every time he came, you know.

LH: This is 1945. This was in September...797 people. That's a lot of people!

RM: How big of a building was the Pavilion?

LH: I don't know the exact measurements, but it was a good sized building.

RM: Would seven hundred or five hundred people be comfortable today, fitting into a building of that size?

LH: This was only in the summer time and everybody didn't go in the building. There were probably as many people standing outside because it was SO hot in the building. There was no air-conditioning! Open up all the windows, and if the air went through, ok, and if it didn't, why...?

RM: What kind of windows?

LH: Pull a rope and the flap'd go up. It was CHosed off during the week and then you'd pull a rope on top and give the window a push. They would go up and you'd tie the rope off to the side to hold up the flap up there. There was no screens so when you pull that up, the mosquitoes went from this side to that side [laughs].

RM: That's why everybody danced! They were swatting mosquitoes [all laugh]

CH: They had to keep moving! [laughs]

LH: It was so hot in there that you'd go and stand outside because it was cool. Not in the building. It was just hotter than blazes in the building. It was CHosed up for a whole week before the dance.

RM: It sounds kind of miserable.

CH: When it rained! Oh...there was mud. All. Over [laughs].

RM: Since the parking lot wasn't tarred?

LH: Oh, god, no. Barely had gravel on it. Well, it sat on a hill. You had to walk up the hill to get up to the dance hall. Most people that would park up by the dance hall, since the hill was so steep, they'd start spinning.

RM: It was safer to park down the side?

LH: We usually parked down below.

RM: What were the restrictions on driving after drinking?

LH: There was no such thing [laughs]

CH: Not a thing!

RM: How many times did people bump each other in the parking lot?

LH: You mean cars? Oh, occasionally somebody'd have too much to drink and they'd run into another guy. Fender bender and things like that. Mitchell would leave—he had lights strung back and forth in the parking lot with a twenty-five watt bulb up there--and when it got to be too late, he'd shut all the lights off. Well, then you were out there in the dark if you wanted to stand and talk to somebody or something...usually that was two o'CHock in the morning. And all the dances were on Sunday night. There was no Friday night or Saturday night to give you an extra day to recuperate before you went back to work. It was on *Sunday* night. Occasionally there'd be a wedding dance during the week, but not too often. Then on Saturday night there'd be a wedding dance.

CH: Usually Saturday nights were a wedding dance. Then it was free, you didn't have to pay, because the person giving the wedding dance had to pay to rent the hall. We had our wedding dance there, and didn't we have to have a cop? We had to hire a cop. He wasn't like the Hennepin County Sherriff or the Rockford police, he was just a guy who put a suit on, put a little badge on, and he was the cop [laughs]

RM: Do you remember his name?

LH: Delbert Leffler used to cop for awhile.

CH: Vernon Daluge

LH:Vernon Daluge...Conzet. Glen Conzet. There was a guy from Minneapolis, he was the last one. Things started getting more...see Vern Gognea used to come out there, and then there was fights.

CH: If he saw that some kids were getting too drunk or were starting to argue or something, he was just there more or less just to break this all up, so that you wouldn't have these fights.

RM: You said things got a little rough after a little while?

LH: Well, yes...as time went on later in the evening. It would get to be 11:30, 12 o'CHock, most guys had too much to drink at 10:30. You know, a cop told me once that a beer is nothing but a pair of boxing gloves? The later it got in the evening the tougher they thought they were.

RM: I'd heard there were a lot of fights out there. Did anybody ever get seriously hurt?

LH: No. Bloody nose, and that's about all, yes.

RM: What usually started the fights?

LH: Oh, stupid stuff, like, "My car'll go faster than your car." You know, stuff like that. Or else, there'd probably be a girl involved somewhere along the line. Vern Gonyea, he was the biggest boozier you ever saw in your life. He had beer in his hand all the time. I can't ever say that he created a fight out there, I think he was pretty well mannered person. But he drank beer just like everybody else.

RM: What about your girl? Tell me about the night you and she met [all laugh]

LH: Oh, I don't know...we had...I think we went home, didn't we?

CH: I didn't have any brothers or sisters. I had an unCHe that was only two years older than me and they lived in Corcoran. He used to take me with him to the dance. I think some friends just introduced us and well, first of all, I started going with our neighbor up here, Harvey Biegert. Loren always had two jobs--he was a farmer plus he always had another job. He was a truck driver, hauling milk. He would haul cans of milk into CHover Leaf Creamery in mid Minneapolis. Harvey would want to take me out, but Harvey didn't want to call me long distance, because at that time it was long distance from here to Robbinsdale. Harvey didn't want to call me long distance, so he would say to Loren, "Well, when you're down at the creamery, you call Carol and ask if she will go out with me Friday night." So this happened a couple of times and I just made up my mind, "Hey, if he calls again, I'm not going to do this...this is it." So he called, and he said, "Do you want to go out with Harvey on Friday night?" and I said, "No, I'm not going to do this anymore." He said, "Well, would you like to go out with *me* on Friday?" I said, "YES!" [all laugh] That's what really started it, but we had meet previously at Lake Sarah and I was with Harvey at that time and with some other people. So then we started going out and I think we went out on Saturday night and we went to Lake Sarah on Sunday night, and I think he even broke a date that he had with someone else [chuckles]

CH: Stood her up. So we started going out and that was it! [laughs]

RM: What was it about each other that you liked?

LH: I don't know [laughter]

CH: We just had fun together, I guess. I always thought, "Oh, it's going to be fun." I grew up in Robbinsdale and my grandparents lived on a farm by Corcoran, so I used to visit them. I always thought that was fun! So I thought, "Oh, boy, it's going to be great if I could ever marry a farmer, this is going to be wonderful!" Little did I know after we were married...a year later...oh brother! Here I was, pregnant. We had chickens, and I had to crawl underneath the roost to pick up the eggs and everything? Oh, boy. And then our first wedding anniversary was spent having a baby. We had our first daughter on our first wedding anniversary [laughs]

RM: You said you had your wedding dance at the dance hall at Lake Sarah?

CH: Who played yet? Jerry Knop?

LH: Jerry Knop from Delano. I think I paid him sixty-five dollars and he had a six piece band?

CH: The place was just crowded. I mean, *everyone* was there. You didn't need an invitation to come to the dance, so we had a whole crowd of people. Normally, the bride and groom would go home at intermission time? When the band took an intermission? They would usually leave? Well, guess what? We stayed till the end! [laughs]

RM: What time was intermission, usually?

CH: 11:30? Then they usually played until 1.

RM: So you wore out the band?

CH: We did! I think that the band would have played till *three* we would have probably stayed [laughs]

RM: You danced the whole time!

CH: Oh yes, danced with everybody. Everybody wanted to dance with the bride and groom, you know, and you changed off all the time.

RM: Still doing the waltzes?

Both: Ooooh...yes!

CH: I wasn't as good a dancer as he was, because I didn't learn as early as he did. He learned when he was very young, because his parents used to go to the dances there when *his* parents were alive, they always went up there and took the kids *with*. You didn't get a babysitter. *He* grew up with dancing and I didn't because in Robbinsdale... my parents never went to dances. I didn't know how to dance really, until after I met him. Then I really could dance...or what you would call dancing.

RM: So he taught you?

CH: Yes! Yes, he did [laughs]

RM: That's when you knew it would work out [all laugh]

LH: Yes

RM: Did you bring your kids along to the dance hall?

LH: Shortly after we were married...well, you didn't have the money. Like I used to smoke? I quit smoking when cigarettes were twenty-five cents a pack. They were talking about raising to twenty-eight cents a pack? And I thought, "Geez, that's a lot of money." So I quit. It's probably the best thing I ever did in my life was quit smoking.

CH: When our children were growing up, we didn't go to the dances. Unless it was a wedding dance, and then we did take them along, because you didn't get babysitters. Or else you take them to my parents in Robbinsdale and they would stay there, if it was something special. Otherwise we didn't do that much. Our socializing was you played softball [points at LH] for Hanover.

LH: In the summer.

CH: Other than that, when we were raising our kids, we were mostly home, working. He was farming and he had another job besides. I always had a garden during the summer.

LH: I think in the late sixties, they tore the place down.

CH: Yes, the dance hall.

LH: Sid and Ben were getting pretty old and they didn't want to do it anymore. They didn't want to sell it, because the only way to the dance hall...the dance hall was [draws on table with finger] back here and [Highway] 55 was up here, and their house was here and the barn was there. To get from *here* to *there*, you had to drive through their yard. They didn't want all this traffic going through their yard continuously. So they decided just to tear...I don't know who...somebody tore it down. I don't know who it was, but had a good maple floor in it. Good dancing floor, excellent. It's like the old Maple Lake...that is now an antique shop now, or something?

RM: There's a creamery that's an antique shop out there. How did they clean the floor?

LH: I have no idea, couldn't tell you, I don't know. You'd have to ask Betsy. She could probably tell you. I don't know how they cleaned that floor. I don't know.

CH: Did they put corn meal down on the floor to make is slippery so your feet would slide? You would come home and your feet were juuuust awful. Your shoes were all white and your feet were white and everything else [laughs].

LH: I think in the later years they probably graduated to dance wax because at a wedding dance, the little kids would take a run and see how far they could slide on the floor at intermission.

RM: I think they still do that!

Both: Yes, I think so [laughs]

RM: What about the other resorts around Lake Sarah?

LH: I never really had too much to do with the resorts. We never went to them, because we lived so close that if we wanted to go...we used to go fishing. Me and my brother would go fishing every night and we'd go down here to Hafften's lake and fish right off of shore. I mean, we had fish to eat all the time!

RM: What kind?

LH: Sunfish. If we were rented a boat, Gust Ghreeling owned boats and my brother would say, "Gus, how much you want for a pair of oars?" We didn't have an outboard motor, you rowed the boat out, or else you didn't rent a boat. Well... "Gus, how much you want for a pair of oars?" "Oh, give me twenty-five cents."

RM: I suppose that was at Lake Sarah still?

LH: This was at Hafften's lake.

LH: Then he'd grab a pair, "Aw, don't them. Take those over there, they're better." All he wanted was a little beer money you know, that's all he cared about [laughter].

RM: If you lived on any of the lakes around here and you had an extra boat, people could rent it?

LH: You didn't live on the lake. The lakes weren't built up like they are now. Like Hafften's lake, there was two people on it. The Bursch brothers and Gust. Well, I guess Rails, but Rails never rented any boats out. They had land touching the lake. Bursch's rented boats and Gus Greehling rented boats. There were no cabins, only if you wanted to rent a boat for twenty-five cents or fifty cents for the day.

RM: Many people in the area went fishing for fun? Ice fishing, too?

LH: Yes, pretty much. If they didn't do that, they'd go up to John's, by the Transformer. There was a little beer joint up there. You get a big cone of ice cream for a nickel.

RM: Where was this?

LH: The Transformer, up here [points out the window]

CH: On [County Road] 50 and Greenfield Road [laughs]

LH: I figure everybody knows where it is! [laughter] A glass of beer was five cents.

CH: And hamburgers. She made the best, juiciest...ah!

LH: Fifty cents and you could get a hamburger like that [hold up hands]

RM: Who was this?

LH: John Hoenstien used to run it, and then he sold out to Dick Ebert, and then Dick Ebert sold out to...what was his name? That German from Hamburg. Bill Luick! All of a sudden the thing burnt down.

RM: What year was that?

LH: I suppose it was in the early 60s?

RM: So close to the same time the dance hall closed down.

LH: I think there's still some cement up there that you can see There was kind of a one room basement under the place. I was down in there once and all the beer was downstairs.

CH: It wasn't big of a place. Probably fifty people would you say?

LH: Oh, god...it'd be wall to wall people!

CH: Ok...less than fifty people then. It wasn't that big [laughs]

LH: I think he had two or three tables.

CH: I think it was three. A little bit of a bar.

LH: There was either two or three tables, with like four chairs around them and then the bar was, oh, I suppose from there to that wall over there, that's about all. It wasn't very big. But all the locals went there, you know.

RM: Mostly for the hamburgers?

CH: mm hmm

LH: Hamburgers...and beer was a nickel. There were a lot of guys who would go up after chores on a hot night and they'd have two, three beers and go back home again.

RM: Did you play any cards up there?

LH: Oh, yes.

CH: There were some people that would go off... like the retired people then? They didn't have much to do during the day, so they would go up there and there'd be four or five guys playing cards, yes. They'd play euchre and what else? Five hundred.

RM: Checkers?

Both: No...I don't think so.

CH: Not that I ever saw.

RM: Dice?

CH: Oh, yes! Shake dice [laughs]

LH: They all had a dice cup.

CH: Shake dice to see who was going to buy the next beer! [all laugh]

RM: What else was there in the Greenfield area for--

LH: I mentioned that Brookside Tavern?

RM: Where was that?

LH: When you're coming from Delano and you make that 90 degree turn to go up the hill? It was right straight ahead [laughs]

RM: So he had all sorts of cars in his front yard!

LH: Oh, god, yes, there was. Actually, the parking was on the road. You have to remember, in those days, top speed was about thirty miles an hour, you know. Thirty-five at the most. But nowadays, seventy is slow, or even 65 on this road. It's stupid, but done.

RM: What was special about Brookside?

LH: That was the same as Sipe's Tavern up here, or the Transformer Inn, you know. They were all about the same. Little. And then there were farmers around Lake Rebecca who would come

over to the Brookside and have a couple beers and go back home again. That place burnt down, too. Sipes...I think, they moved that. The Transformer Inn burnt down. Now the only taverns are the ones in town, like the Red Vest and that other place burnt down.

RM: The Rockford House?

LH: Rockford House...and then that one just burnt down here a couple years ago.

RM: Cowboys?

LH: There you go. That burnt down, so there's...well, Billy's and Red Vest in Rockford right now, that's all there is. Rockford used to have, oh my god, there was one, two...fffff...three, four...about four or five taverns in Rockford. Hanover had three. Four of them! There was Russ and Ell's and the Corner Bar...

CH: Hilltop.

LH: Hilltop, and then later on there was another one they opened up in the hardware store. They had four of them. Then Russ and Ell's burnt down. The other three are still there yet, but for a little town like that, that's a lot of beer joints around.

RM: How far were people willing to drive to go out to eat?

LH: They never went out to eat. You ate right here [taps table] [CH laughs]

RM: So hamburgers at the joint don't count? [all laugh]

LH: Very seldom. Maybe in the evening, if you had an early supper, maybe. You have to remember things were different those days than they are now. Nowadays you go out to eat because you have the money. You never went out to eat because you didn't have the money. Besides, there were very few restaurants around. There was one in Rockford, the Bridge Street, that's an old one, but that's the only one, really.

CH: There was the one by the river, just as you cross the river. Ah, Elsie? Elsie Mutterer.

LH: yea! She and Albert Lange used to run it.

CH: That was a good little place, but that's gone, too. The Rockford House was the other side of the river, the Rockford side of the river.

LH: the Rockford House was up on the hill. Where Billy's is.

RM: What is the place that you're saying Elsie Mutterer--

Both: Down below.

LH: Where Hanson's garage is? [CH: Where the auto is down there?] Just between his place and the river, there was a little restaurant in there. It probably held maybe one, two, three, four... maybe four or five booths? Then the counter wasn't from here to that wall [points].

CH: Yes, maybe only held about five people...five, six people at the counter.

LH: But hamburgers, as far as hamburgers up here [the Transformer] they never really sold that many unless you'd want a hamburger before you went home at night. As far as going out to eat, mmm mmm [shakes head] You ate all [taps table].

CH: Everybody had a lot of work to do, so when you got done doing the field work, you were exhausted. All you wanted to do was get cleaned up and go to bed. Get the little ones in bed so you'd have a few minutes of peace and quiet [laughs]

LH: We used to go to bed when the sun was shining. Had nothing else to do, might as well go to bed! [laughs]

RM: You were getting up a little earlier, too.

CH: Ohhh! Yes. You milked cows at about 4:30, 5 o'clock in the morning and then 4:30, 5 o'clock again in the evening. Lot of work [laughs]

RM: When the kids got a little older is that when you started being a little bit more social with—

Both: Oh, yes!

LH: Times got better. My dad always said in '34, it wasn't just the weather, the dryness that killed the farmer, it was the depression. People sent cattle to south St. Paul and they figured they'd get couple dollars. Well, they owed the trucker for hauling it down there and they didn't get anything for it. That's what killed the farmers.

RM: Do you remember—

LH: Nope. I was born in '35. They tell me '36 was dry, too. We got a little rain, so at least they got a crop, but '34...they didn't get a crop and people that had cattle would cut branches off of Basswood trees. A Basswood tree is sweet? They would cut branches off to feed the cows because there was nothing to eat. Then they'd haul swamp grass from Motley down here, which most farmers said it was all brush. Just to feed the cows, you know. But my dad always said it wasn't just the dry weather. He said depression...everything you sold you didn't get anything for it.

RM: Yet the resorts managed to hold in through all of that?

LH: Those resorts I don't think started until after that. Like Lake Sarah. There were no resorts on Hafften's Lake. There was Epple's on Lake Sarah, and Mielke's, and I think George's had a resort on there.

CH: Wasn't that Shady Beach?

LH: Yes. Meilke's resort...I think they had two or three cabins? I don't really know. I never went there. I picked up his milk. One time I was standing out by the barn, talking to Herman [Mielke], this was in the fall of the year, and Lake Sarah had just froze over completely that night. Rueben Biegert came driving in the driveway with an old rickety truck, and Herman said, "I hope he doesn't drive on that lake." And he drove right across the ice. We're standing there waiting for the dang thing to break through and it never broke through. Geez, I tell you! [laughs]

RM: They cut ice out there every winter, didn't they?

Both: Yes.

LH: They used to start before Christmas sometimes, sometimes after Christmas, depending upon how cold it was. They had it all rigged up...a great big blade that they'd put in and cut along and float the ice over to this elevator thing. They'd float it up on there and the elevator would elevate it up on the truck and they'd put the ice in the ice house and pack sawdust around it. If there was a crack in the wall where the sawdust could leak out, the warm air would get in there and would hollow out a greeaaat big patch in there in the summertime.

RM: You had to be really careful how you packed it.

LH: You had to make sure that there was sawdust packed all the way around it, you know. It was a lot of work. I bet you there were six, eight guys working at that ice, putting ice in the ice house. And he supplied Mitchell's for their beer, you know, and then if you had a graduation or something at your house and you had a keg of beer? If you wanted some ice, you just went over to Herman and said, "Chop me off..." He'd give you a chunk like this [holds up hands] for a buck, you know.

RM: Then you'd chop it up some more?

LH: Yes, put it around the keg, you know.

LH: Nowadays you go to grocery store and you buy this bag of ice for four bucks or whatever it is.

RM: It's a little easier.

CH: Yes [laughs]

RM: When did you get a refrigerator?

LH: I would say we got a refrigerator after we got electricity in the '40s. We got electricity in I think '40 or '41, I think. And then after that we got a refrigerator. Our first refrigerator was a Coronado. Never forget that one!

RM: Why is that?

LH: It was smaller. This thing is big and boxy [points to his refrigerator] that thing was smaller and probably used twice as much electricity. There wasn't as much room as inside this one, but there were a lot of people after that who still kept their milk in the well pit, where it was cool [laughs]

RM: Can you describe those for me?

LH: A well pit? Usually there was water down in them, at least the ones I have seen, they always had a little water in them because the water seeped through the ground and would put some water on the floor. You had cement steps to go down. You opened the doors up and you go down into it. It was cool down there. I'm sure it wasn't like the refrigerators of today, though.

RM: A little bit warmer in there?

LH: Quite a bit warmer, I think. Never froze. Hardly froze down there in the winter time. They'd bank it all up with hay and straw and sawdust, you know. So it hardly ever froze down in there in the wintertime.

RM: Would the restaurants around here use the same system to keep their food cool?

LH: There were no restaurants, that I know of.

CH: Just up at the Transformer. They had electricity. Didn't they have coolers? They had regular...

LH: Well, later on, yes. At first, I don't know how they kept their stuff cold.

RM: Do you remember them more with electric?

LH: Yea, like I said, we got electric in '30... '40' or '41, one of those three years. I remember the electrician would come here and do the wiring you know. He wired all the buildings and strung the wire around. It was so nice to walk over and turn the switch on! Didn't have that thing sitting in the middle of the...you couldn't see nothing...uhhh! [laughter]

RM: Magic!

LH: Yes! No kidding.

RM: You would have been younger than 10 at that point?

LH: I was born in '35, so I was...six years old.

RM: That had to have just been magic [CH laughs]

LH: Yes, it was! [laughs] yep!

RM: Was there anything else that you'd like to contribute to the project right now?

LH: What did I write out here?

RM: I think we've covered most of it.

CH: I think so [paper rustles] Johns...Sipe's Bar, Brookside Tavern, Lake Sarah Pavilion. Uh...photos? [gets up] I've got a photo here of uh that little Methodist Church up here?

LH: They tore that down. I have got a...a sheet of paper with all the names on there.

RM: Could we get a copy of that?

Both: Yes, if we can find it! [laughter]

LH: There are quite a few people in there that I could point out. This is Chester Koecker, he lived up the road here. This is Arland, he still lives on the road up here. This little one here? that's my sister-in-law. I can go through here and tell you all kinds of people that...there's Eddie

Sipe, Walter Channing...there's Freddie Sipe. Billy Sipe should be on here too. This was taken the summer of 1943.

RM: It would be wonderful if we could get a copy and a list of the names.

LH: When my son moved out of the bedroom, we kind of made that into a junk room [laughter]

CH: Storage, not junk. Well...it depends. To me it's junk, to him it's storage [laughs]

LH: So somewhere in that room...

CH: We have it.

LH: This was the old church. Is that sign up? No, there's a stone there now.

CH: There is some type of a s—

LH: Stone, yes.

RM: Where was this church?

CH: On County Road 10, as you're going towards Burschville? It's just on the Greenfield, Corcoran line.

LH: It's the last thing in Greenfield.

CH: There is a little cemetery there, on the left hand side as you're going toward Burschville. Probably about a mile down the road from here?

LH: About two.

CH: Two?

LH: It's by my daughter's. They live there and it's two miles from here over to their place.

CH: The parsonage is still standing there. People are living in the parsonage. They've remodeled that several times, but the church actually is gone. The cemetery of course, is still there.

LH: I wish these old guys were still around here, they were good bands. Big Wagner, Roman Rezac, Jolly Lumber Jacks, Elmer Scheid.

RM: You can find this music online now.

LH: Can you? I've got some tapes here...Jolly Lumberjacks, they were excellent. Clem Brau, they were from Redwood Falls. He used to...what did they say? He used to run the choir. He's the choir director in the church? And then he also had his own band. He was good.

RM: Which church?

LH: In Redwood Falls. He quit playing simply because, well, the older you get, the harder it is to play all night long and then drive home. I still wonder how Whoopee John ever did it...or John Wilfahrt. How he ever did it. He had an old Clunker of a car that his Johnny Hilgert [looks

through book] there's the Jolly Lumberjacks right there, 1949, Redwood Falls, which is...oh! Here! This was Clem Brau. That guy right there.

RM: I'll have to get copies of these pictures or find another one of these books.

LH: There's Six Fat Dutchmen...Whoopie John, there was two, four, six, eight, ten, there was eleven people in his band in 1954.

RM: That's a lot of people.

CH: That's a lot of people.

LH: Yes, that's why, he had a good...here's Erwin Suess, he just passed away not too long ago...last year? [papers rustle] this is his wife, Monica? She's still living. She still played with him the last few years when he did play.

RM: She'd be a fun person to talk to.

LH: Ray Dorschner, he's still around, he's from Wisconsin...um, Ivan Kahle, that was another good one. His son--

CH: Jerry, isn't it?

LH: Yes, his son Jerry Kahle, that's him. He, he still plays with bands around here, and he's a—

CH: He used to be a teacher, wasn't he a music teacher?

LH: Yes

CH: Was it Hutch[inson] or Glencoe or one of those places? He taught music. Now he goes around to different bands if they need another person to play. If one of their normal people can't play for some reason, then they call Jerry and he substitutes.

LH: The one here is from New Ulm. That's almost the complete band right there, they're all still alive.

CH: Well, except Peter.

LH: Except Peter. That guy. He died of cancer here three years ago?

CH: Yes.

RM: These are a little bit more recent pictures.

LH: This was '92. Marv Nissel, he's still around.

RM: I really appreciate your time with this interview. If we have any other questions or we think of anything else, can we set up another time?

Both: Oh sure, sure.

RM: It'd be great, thank you! Thank you, I really appreciate it.

LH: I've got some old maps of Greenfield...