

Edwin Peter Schumacher

Narrator

Mary (Cavanaugh) Schumacher

Narrator

Rebecca A. Mavencamp

Greenfield Historical Society

Interviewer

July 22, 2013

At the home of Ed and Mary Schumacher

Greenfield, Minnesota

Ed Schumacher—ES

Mary Schumacher—MS

Rebecca A. Mavencamp—RM

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[unrelated conversation]

RM: so...this is Rebecca Mavencamp on July 22, 2013 interviewing Ed Schumacher and his lovely wife. Could spell your names for me please?

ES: Edwin. E-D-W-I-N is my proper name and P for my middle initial, for Peter, and S Schumacher...S-C-H-U-M-A-C-H-E-R.

MS: I'm his wife Mary, M-A-R-Y same last name, so it's spelled the same way [oven timer beeps, laughter]

RM: You said you had been married how many years?

ES: Fifty-five.

MS: I shouldn't have put those in...[goes to get cookies from oven]

RM: So you said that you met on Lake Sarah? How about we start there for the fun of the story?

ES: It started out kind of innocently, because I had a neighbor of mine who had a date for the following Friday night, and he said, "Ed, will you double date with me?" I didn't have a girlfriend, so I said, "Well, I guess I'll have to find one." [laughs] Well, about that time, Mary came walking ...well, at first he was going find me one, but I guess she had already gone home ...that didn't work out, and Mary came walking by and I said, "Well, how about her?" He didn't know, so I asked her to dance, and asked her for a date for the next Friday night, and after a little persuasion, she agreed. And then I said, "How about I take you home tonight?" So I can find out where she lived. Well, this is where the funniest part comes in, because [laughs] she had a girlfriend along with her. I said, "Well, I'll ride along..."

MS: And I drove!

ES: She was driving, so and I was there with my two buddies, Adrian, who managed a grocery store, and Jerry Klares, who had the Standard Station, and I had a farm. So I rode home with her, and Jerry and Adrian got in our car and followed me down to her place, which was in Plymouth. That didn't go very good that night. I said, "Well, I'm taking her out next Friday night, and that's the last time I'm taking her out!" That's fifty-seven years ago! [laughs] Then she was worried because I had a farm, which I bought when I got home from the service, and Jerry had the Standard Oil business, and Adrian had the grocery store, she thought she was out with three married men, so it was worrisome for her. Luckily her brother knew a person who knew me, and he said I was ok.

RM: You had references?

[all laugh]

MS: you bet! That was a scary night!

RM: Why do you say that?

MS: Well...first of all, he asked last dance of the night. He asked me to go home and I thought, "No, I can't go home with you!" I had driven, so that was really a good excuse, so I said, "No, I can't go home with you."

ES: She said, "I don't even know you!" I said, "Well I don't know you either, so what's the difference?"

MS: I was not taking any bigger chance than he was [laughs] but anyway...I wasn't able to persuade this...person...[laughs] and I thought, well? My girlfriend would be the wedge, and I'll be ok.

ES: She sat between us on the way home.

MS: Yes!

ES: [laughs]

MS: I had never done anything with that friend before or after, so I think there was a reason that we went to the dance that night together, huh? Must have been the reason. That night was scary, but the following one we went out again, and he changed his mind. He asked me for another date

[everyone laughs].

ES: See I was quite a bit older than she is. I was twenty-five and she was eighteen. You meet some eighteen year old girls who are sixteen, too, but she was eighteen and a little more mature at eighteen than a lot of them, so I guess that was a lot of it.

RM: This was at the Lake Sarah dance hall?

MS: Mmmhmmm...and we had gone to dances time and time again, never ever noticed each other. It was funny, because his parents worked behind the bar, but never ever noticed each other. I used to come up there with my older brother John, then after we were going together, his mother, Agnes Schumacher, said, "Oh! I wish Ed would find a girl like Johnny Cavanaugh."

ES: [whispers] It was her!

MS: It was my brother! [laughs] So anyway, the night that we did walk out of the dance hall together, she was like, "Oh my gosh! Oh my gosh! I didn't want him to take her from Johnny Cavanaugh! [all laugh]

RM: You swooped in at the last minute?

MS: Mmmhmmm! yes.

ES: It's what you call divine intervention I think.

MS: Divine intervention and those hazel eyes...huh...that was...that was... I thought...that's what it took! [laughs]

RM: What was your maiden name?

MS: Cavanaugh.

RM: Can you spell that?

MS: C-A-V-A-N-A-U-G-H.

RM: It was his hazel eyes that caught your eye?

MS: I guess. If my daughters would do this, I would be very upset. To go home without...! Well anyway I don't know if I thought I was... my friend is really the only reason that happened, because, had I been by myself, I probably wouldn't have decided to do that.

RM: Was it typical for girls to drive?

ES: To a dance? To a point, oh yes. The guys went there to meet girls. That's the only reason you went there. There were three of us...you know, three guys, and she was two in the other car.

RM: The main reason you went to the dance halls was to pick up girls?

ES: Well...well...yes [all laugh]

MS: My dad had, two weeks before that dance, bought a new car. My girlfriend and I were talking after church, and I said, "Well, if I think I can get the car, we'll go to the dance hall." I never expected him to say yes. Never. And he did! And I thought, "You're actually letting ME take our brand new car?" He did .

RM: What kind of a car was it?

MS: Chev.

ES: Fifty-three...

MS: Fifty-three...Chev Bel Aire ...That was with the wings on the back and all that.
[Mary leaves to take care of cookies and returns]

RM: What else did you do on Lake Sarah? You said you went to the dances almost every weekend?

ES: Most every weekend, yes.

MS: Sunday night dances.

RM: Sunday night dances?

ES: Wedding dance was on Saturday night. Just about every Saturday night there was a wedding dance, so it was quite a few dances on a Saturday.

MS: But there was always one on Sunday.

ES: There was always a dance on Sunday during the summer, yes.

MS: It opened on Easter Sunday, and I don't know, closed...

ES: On Labor Day.

MS: Probably Labor Day.

ES: I don't even know.

RM: So you would enjoy the Sunday dances more than the wedding dances?

MS: Depends! If you knew the person getting married...but...they were all fun...

ES: It just varies. Just went there, like I say...to meet the girls...[chuckles] Play ball.

RM: You haven't said anything about drinking beer here, yet.

ES: I did drink some beer, yes...I did consume some of that, yes [chuckles].

RM: I've heard there was a lot of broken bottles and glass along the beach.

ES: That could be, I never did that though. I didn't break any bottles. I just...spent most of my time in the bar...except when I went out to find a girl...

MS: [sings] Watching all the girls go by...

ES: Yes

MS: [still singing] standing in the corner...

ES: See I played baseball also, so we would--

MS: On the Loretto team.

ES: We played baseball in the afternoon and then went home and milked cows and went to the dance. That's about the amount that was life at that time [laughs].

RM: How long did you play ball?

ES: Until we had three kids and Mom says, "I think you'd better quit playing ball because you got some responsibility. If you get hurt, you better..." [laughs]

MS: I don't know how to milk cows...! We didn't have a back up somewhere [laughs]

ES: so I had to quit playing ball. That was uh, thirty...

MS: well, it was...

ES: Got married when I was twenty-seven...

MS: Well what year was that? Sixty-two! I think you played ball till '62, so that's when you quit.

ES: So played ball for about four more years after we got married and then she talked me into quitting. I was...I can understand, you know. You have to take a responsibility sometime! [laughs] I never dawned on me about it until she--

MS: He was responsible always, that was the only part that started to come to me. Somebody gets a broken arm, or they get smacked in the head and I thought, "Well, if that happened, what would we do?" He never thought about that...so that was alright, because he...well, anyway. It never happened to him.

ES: I was a catcher, you know, so you're actually in on the action most of the time, so--

MS: It was a good decision.

RM: The same group of friends that you played ball with went over to the dance halls and the resorts?

ES: Yes.

RM: Who were some more of those people?

ES: The guys I played ball with were Jerry Klares, Lawrence Pettit, Eu Schmitz, Sonny Schmit, Jerome Dickey, Gene Dickey, Jim Schwietzer, Joe Becker, Chuck Bronson

MS: Did Normy play?

ES: Normy Georges? Yes

MS: You're brother?

ES: My brother Liam played after...he's quite a bit younger. By the time he was ready to start playing, I was about done. He's nine years younger than I am.

RM: You said your folks ran the bar as well?

MS: Worked at the bar.

ES: They were good friends with Sid and Laura and they always just always tended bar with them.

MS: Fried hamburgers.

ES: Fried hamburgers, yes. And Betsy made the popcorn. We also went to Shady Beach Resort for dances once in awhile too.

MS: What was this other one up on the highway here? That Mielke? Did you ever go to that one?

ES: No, Independence beach, there was a dance hall over there. We went there once in awhile. Didn't...it was more locally...outside of that...went to a lot of bars, of course, around the country. Went to Hanover and the Transformer Inn up here on the corner.

MS: [County Road] 50 and Greenfield, was the Transformer?

ES: Right up here where the tracks...right across from Greenfield City Hall. The Transformer Inn. Dick Ebert owned it at that time. Knew them pretty well, Dick and Mary, they were nice. Jjust good people. But you know that was just a place to have a beer and then talk with friends and then head off to the Dance Hall from there! Had to get primed up first [laughter].

RM: What other entertainment was around?

ES: Delano movie theater. Really what we did mostly for entertainment was practice baseball twice a week and then Sunday we played ball.

MS: Then you golfed, too.

ES: After awhile we started golfing...not at first though.

MS: Then played a lot of cards. That was big entertainment to have friends over and play cards. You didn't need a babysitter and had a lot of fun.

RM: I heard a lot of people too their kids to the dance halls as well?

ES: We never did...

MS: They might have, years before. Did you go to the dance hall before? You worked there.

ES: I don't think so. Like I say, the earliest I can recall was babysitting with Margie. With Carolyn and Margie.

MS: That's Betsy's younger sisters.

ES: Then I started stamping hands. I was at the dance hall then.

RM: When you say "stamping hands," was that an admission?

ES: Yes. Ben was the guy who took all the tickets, Ben Mitchell. Then I sat there with a stamper and stamped their hand.

RM: How much was admission?

ES: That's a good question. It wasn't too much, I don't know...a couple dollars, probably? Two bucks probably? It wasn't much.

RM: That was for the whole evening?

ES: Yes.

RM: What bands usually brought in the most people?

ES: Whoopee John.

MS: What else was there? They had the they had the Six Fat Dutchmen, too?

ES: Six Fat Dutchmen. A lot of the old time polka.

MS: Trying to think of what they are now.

ES: I was just thinking about Whoopee John all the time, because he was the big draw.

RM: What did people like about his music?

ES: The waltzes.

MS: I think it was lively music, and you could dance to most anything. It was just a nice upbeat band that everybody could just do it... it was the music of the time. We still look for bands that play that kind of music, because sometimes you go to a dance and it's just a bunch of people out there. You don't know whose with who or how to do it [chuckles].

RM: Where did you learn to dance?

ES: Never did...[laughs]

MS: You just went at it.

RM: You just faked it, huh?

ES: Faked it, yes! [laughs]

MS: Yes and then he always tells me now.

ES: We did go to some dance lessons.

MS: We did, but not then.

ES: No. Down in Arizona after we were married for awhile. We went to some dance lessons down there and they told us, "You're suppose to look THIS way, and she's supposed to look THAT way, and you're supposed to..." I said, "This ain't no fun, we can forget about that!" We'll do it our OWN way [laughs].

MS: That's right! Works better. That way we don't have to think when we're dancing

[everyone laughs]

MS: So we've got a lot of, oh, what do you call them...not concerts, but what? You know, in the summer when we went to those halls...those dance halls? Now I can't even think of the names of them.

ES: The Prom Ballroom you mean?

MS: Well, we went there, too, but I mean when we take our camper.

ES: Oh, when we took our camper! To uh...Belle Plaine?

MS: Where's that one you liked and they don't have any more?

ES: New Ulm?

MS: New Ulm? Yep. The old time music and they had the polka and the--

ES: Polka Fest.

MS: Polka Fest, but also the...Oktoberfest.

ES: Oktoberfest, ok.

RM: Do you remember the first song you danced too?

ES: No...[laughs]

MS: That night? No. [all laugh] No. it was a confusing night! [laughter] a very confusing night!

ES: I had one thought in my mind...had to get a date for this Friday night! [laughs]

MS: I'll dance whatever it plays! Most likely it was a slow dance. Probably was, because it was the last dance of the night and the last dance of the night they always played a slow dance. So I don't know what it was [chuckles]

RM: Do you remember who was playing? Who the band was?

ES: No, I don't.

MS: I guess I never kept track of all that. I had so many other things to solve that I just didn't even think about that! Maybe Betsy has some records of what bands were there, when there were, I don't know. A small town was good, you know, everybody knew everybody, and it was just, good.

ES: That was the main thing. Everybody knew everybody else and you went there and visited with these people and that person and the night just went by in a big hurry because you knew everybody.

RM: how did it work with the people that were visiting from the resorts? How did they fit into the local culture?

ES: I guess we didn't bother them and they didn't bother us, I suppose.

MS: I don't think there was the distinction then.

ES: I don't think so.

MS: In fact, sometimes it was good to see new faces, but I don't know.

ES: There was a time later on, there was a group from Robbinsdale that came out caused a little trouble.

MS: With motorcycles and that.

RM: When was that?

ES: After we were married. Probably in the early '60s.

MS: No, I'd say more like the 70s.

ES: The '70s probably?

MS: We got married in '58. It was there probably 10 more years, wasn't it? I'd say probably in the '70s.

ES: In the late '60s, early '70s. They caused a little friction.

MS: That's when there used to be motorcycle gangs...that's how WE interpreted it...I don't know how THEY would interpret it, but it's more the coming in and being challenging to... just challenging ways and stuff. And I don't know if that is the reason, but I always thought that was the reason that they ended up taking the dance hall down is because of that.

ES: It got a reputation for having trouble.

RM: I heard there were a lot of fights.

ES: Yes.

RM: Was that about the time that the fights started?

ES: There's always fights, but they didn't last very long.

MS: Always fights. Even people who knew each other, they would be out there, trying to up one the other.

ES: Had good cops. Albert Leffler was about six foot six and about 250 pounds...you didn't mess with him! [laughs]

RM: Albert did you say was his first name?

ES: Delbert Leffler.

MS: D-E-L-B-E-R-T.

ES: Teddy Reinmer was the next one. He was good, too.

RM: What made them good?

MS: They took care of the crowd, but they didn't come in like--

ES: If you got out of hand, they showed you where the door was.

MS: Yes.

ES: Pretty simple. There was enough backup around there, that if either one of the cops got into trouble, why, they had enough help. They didn't have to worry about it.

RM: People like you who would step in?

ES: Yes. Respect them and take care of it.

MS: when you say "make them a good cop," it didn't mean that they let stuff go.

ES: No.

MS: Not that way good. The good part was that they kept the crowd under control.

ES: Yes.

RM: What would they allow and what wouldn't they allow?

ES: They wouldn't allow...if anybody smashed a bottle on the floor or something, why... if they started jostling around and you were just fooling around back and forth they didn't bother you, but if you started something where other people could get hurt by you throwing people around, then I guess they ushered you out the door, so you were out.

MS: I think that they used to walk through the crowd to make sure that the underagers weren't drinking, you know.

RM: So they were let in, they just couldn't drink?

MS: Oh, yes! Anybody could come, I mean, you didn't have to be of a certain age.

ES: They had what they called the bullpen, which was a fenced-off area with a doorway and then the rest was the dance hall. You couldn't get into the dance bullpen unless you were twenty-one years old.

MS: That wasn't right away then.

ES: No...no...

MS: I wasn't 21 years old when I met you! [both laugh]

RM: That would have been more in the '60s that they started doing that?

ES: Yes, that was later. I don't know what year they put that bull pen in there.

MS: I have no idea, I don't know honey...maybe they did that one when they started having the troubles...I don't know. I don't even remember the bull pen.

ES: Well, I worked there ...I was in the bull pen, I know that. The night I went out...the night I met you! That's where Jim came and got ...that was the fenced off area.

MS: Why were you in there?

ES: Drinking beer, what do you think?

MS: Oh! Because you were twenty-one...alright, oh!

ES: well...I was twenty-five...

MS: No! I just thought [ES laughs]...that's the only place you could drink? Was in that bull pen?

ES: No, the bullpen was the only place you could buy beer. You could take it out into the booths.

MS: Oh! Ok...ok

RM: So there were booth along the outside of the dance hall? Could you describe how it looked inside?

ES: The booths weren't very fancy, but they were wooden booths.

MS: They were good sturdy.

ES: Good, sturdy booths and then the dance band...the dance hall was real nice.

MS: It was a real nice dance floor.

ES: Real nice dance floor.

MS: Hardwood dance floor...how many booths... [murmur]

ES: Being by the lake, they had big windows you could open. Big wooden shutters that would open up and let the lake breezes come in. It was fairly comfortable, pretty nice, yes.

RM: Not too sultry, huh?

ES: Not too sultry...

MS: It was the place to go. Later on, Medina Ballroom came down in Medina, and that was...seemed to be a little more...

ES: Little more ritzy?

MS: Well? A little more formal, maybe? Or I mean just a different type. They were really just a nice place...nice, nice place. They're open all year long, so it kind of flowed down there when Lake Sarah closed. But it was just a little bit, just little bit different. You wouldn't have had a higher class band that Whoopee John, because he's so well known, but just different types of music.

RM: How was it different?

MS: I guess like it is today, where you know, each group that sings or plays, they have their own little style. That's kind of what that was, too. Somedays they'd have just ballroom dancing, and sometimes it was a lot of the mixed music, you know...mixed being polkas and shodishes and all that type of music. But, it was all good! It was all good.

RM: So most people started having their wedding party dances at Medina then because of the central heat...it was open year round...or...it was fancier?

MS: It was open year-round, most of the locals had their dances at Lake Sarah.

ES: When they closed down--

MS: Yes. Then you had to go somewhere else.

ES: You had to go somewhere else, and they went all over the place.

MS: Waverly and St. Michael.

ES: Yes.

MS: Montrose, Monticello...there was dance halls in all the towns. A lot of them did go to Medina.

RM: How many people could the building hold?

ES: I don't know what the capacity was...probably five hundred at Lake Sarah?

MS: I don't know Ed. I don't have any concept of that. It was a big, built like a barn, too. It was just a really big, nice, nice building.

ES: Room for a couple hundred, anyway, I'm sure of that. I wouldn't know. I guess there was no capacity at that time that were enforced.

MS: Well, and half the people were outside.

ES: If they could get in...there was room for them! [laughs]

MS: Half the people were outside.

ES: Yes, a lot of them would spend a lot of time outside, too, yes.

RM: Doing more of the socializing outside?

ES: Yes, or else fighting and rolling down the hill, one of the two [laughs]

RM: Into the lake?

ES: nope! The dance hall was here and the lake was back here and there was a hill along this side, so a lot of the time they were rolling them down the hill down to the lower level down there, before they got to the lake [laughter]

RM: Was there any late night swimming?

ES: Late night swimming, huh? [laughs]

MS: [laughing] I never did...I don't know! I didn't know how to swim, so...did you swim there?

ES: No, not in Lake Sarah...Lake Independence, we used to go out to Independence Beach and go swimming out there. We got chased out of there one time because we went out there at midnight, and you're not supposed to be out there at midnight.

MS: [breathes out and gives ES a look]

ES: The Cop came along and said, "Out! Get out of here!" [laughs]

RM: It sounds like there was actually more police then than there is now.

ES: Probably. But I knew them all and they all knew me.

MS: The population was much less, so you didn't have as much. They could probably case the area better, you know. Now with the population growing and drugs and all that...I actually think drugs was part of that group that came out. Started with the gangs and the drinking and the drugs. I think that's pretty much why it closed...but you could ask Betsy, because it might be a whole different reason. That's all I remember about it. It was a sad thing because after that, kids didn't really have a place to go and gather and just have fun.

RM: What difference do you see between your childhood and the current childhood? You've got grandkids and great-grandkids.

ES: They really don't have a place to gather. It doesn't seem like they have the closeness that we had, you know? Our grandkids played ball and stuff, you know, but everything is...

MS: I think the difference, too, is there were so many farmers out here, your kids had entertainment without having to run to this place, that place, the other place...there was entertainment at home. They were more imaginative and they could use their creation. There weren't all the drugs, and that's a huge, big difference, the drugs.

ES: When we played ball, we played in Loretto ball field, which was a cow pasture when I started out [laughs]

RM: Had to be careful where you stepped?

ES: Had to chase the cows out of there when you played ball and be careful where you slid, yes, you're right! [all laugh]. We played ball in that cow pasture and we went over to

Corcoran and played in Eddie Gleason's pasture over there, so we played in one cow pasture here and one cow pasture over there.

RM: You got time off from the farm to do that?

ES: Oh yes. Game time on Sunday was two o'clock, so you had plenty of time to get done and then have a beer and go back home and milk cows and stuff like that, take care of stuff.

MS: You didn't let anything come between you and going to church in the morning on Sunday .

ES: No...no...

MS: That was something that never was even a thought... hey! I'll just not go to church.

ES: You got up in the morning and milked your cows and headed out to church. You got back home and got some breakfast and played ball and came back home, milked your cows and went to the dance hall [laughs].

MS: At least you had a plan.

ES: Yes! [all laugh]

RM: Have you always farmed?

ES: Yes I did. I took two years off in the service. I went in the service in '52, came home in '54.

RM: Which branch of the service?

ES: I was in the Army.

RM: Where did you go?

ES: Korea. I don't want to go back. I shouldn't say a good experience, but I did a lot of growing up in those two years. Coming fresh off the farm, you know, just arrogant, that was about it, then heading off to meet a lot of different people and see a lot of things.

MS: Responsible for yourself because you're the only one there.

ES: Well, there were four of us who went in the service the same day...Candy Johnson, Joe Gleason, myself, who was the fourth one? Can't think of it. We all went four different directions. Four different areas. I went to Fort Bliss, some of them went to Fort

Sill...Fort Leonard Wood...we all went into different directions, so when I got there...nobody. I didn't know anybody and you have to learn to sort things out. It was a growing experience. Probably even a good experience for me. I did a lot of growing up.

RM: Did you notice a difference in all the guys when they came home?

ES: [takes deep breath] ...not really...I don't think that we had...you know I don't understand this trauma they go through now, it's hard to understand. I was over there during the war. I never was shot at, but I was there and saw the things that happened. In fact, the thing that really sticks in my mind is the last day of the war, I think it was July 26 or something like that, I can't think of the exact date, but anyway, we...the artillery was behind us, you know, and we were firing artillery into the hill over there. You could see across this valley...we were on the Kum Wa Valley...see the shells landing over there, you know...we weren't going any place. And it came, I think it was six o'clock at night, and all of a sudden it was like "boom" and "boom" and "boom" and all of a sudden...nothing. Quiet. Nothing.

MS: The war was over.

ES: So at that time, I don't know if they just wanted to get rid of their shells or what they were doing, because there was nothing going on. The DMZ was set up, we couldn't go past this line and they couldn't go past this line, we couldn't go over there, so we weren't accomplishing anything. It was kind of a raw experience, I guess.

MS: I don't think there's much being accomplished today either, but they keep on.

ES: No...[mutters, has an emotional moment]

RM: It changes people, when they come home. You managed...everyone around here, this area, managed to come back pretty much to what it was?

ES: I didn't know what I was going to do when I came home from the service, no, I didn't, but I came home in '54. The next spring, the neighbor across the street, Frank Weiseman, came over and he said, "I've got a chance to sell my farm and if you want to buy it, you can buy it. You've got first choice." I don't have any money [laughs]. My Dad loaned me \$5,000 and I put \$5,000 on a farm. Seventeen years later, I owned the farm. I wasn't married, you know, so I was a bachelor farmer for three years. Then I got married and found you had to buy your own groceries! [all laugh] that was a rude awakening. See all the trouble you caused?

MS: Uh huh! I told you...! You'd be a rich man if I hadn't come along [laughter]

ES: No, I'm a rich man now, on account of you [clears throat] But that's sort of my life history, I guess. I've just been very fortunate. The good Lord has taken care of me and found me a good wife, I've got a wonderful family and still enjoy the neighborhood. Not as much as before because we're not as close as before.

MS: A lot of them are passed on.

ES: Yes...lot have passed on.

MS: But you still just enjoy what's there and its fun to go to weddings and stuff you know. Even, not *fun* to go to a funeral, but that's where you see a lot of friends you haven't seen for a long time, and so that's good.

RM: You were commenting about how your growing up with the dance halls and things is very different from how your grandkids growing up. How do you think your parents and your grandparents would have viewed your going to the dance halls in comparison to their childhood?

ES: I don't know...My mother and Dad worked at the dance halls, so they wouldn't have objected to me being there. I'm sure they watched over me, made sure I was behaving myself. I'm sure of that [laughs]

MS: I remember my Dad always talking about the dance halls, like down by Medicine Lake. I think that's what they did, years ago, they went to the dance halls too. I think that was kind of a passage that stuck around.

ES: My Dad didn't have to go very far to find his wife. He lived on the farm here, and a she lived on a farm a quarter of a mile up the road. They didn't go very far [laughs]

MS: The horse didn't have far to take them [all laugh]

RM: Often times, brothers married sisters.

ES: My grandfather and his brother married two sisters. My grandmother, Henriette Schumacher, married a Bokusky and Adam Schumacher married and Bokusky

RM: What descent are those names? What ancestry?

ES: Schumacher is German. Bokusky is Polish...Polish and German mix or something.

RM: you had a Polish and German marry each other?

ES: Yes

RM: I didn't know that was legal [all laugh]

MS: Maybe not the best choice, but... it was legal, I guess! [laughter continues] it was mainly more if you had a different faith than a different heritage.

ES: Grandpa and Grandma Schumacher were married sixty years before he died, but he was 93 when he passed away. He was kind of my mentor. That's the advantage I had because we lived in a two family house. My mother and Dad lived on one side and my Grandpa and Grandma lived on the other side of the house. We had a hallway in between, so they were separated. There were stairways for the bedrooms, all the bedrooms were upstairs, but if I didn't like what Mom had for dinner when I was younger, I just walked over to Grandmas and she fed me [laughs].

RM: Not spoiled at all!

ES: A little bit spoiled, little bit spoiled, yes. In fact, at one time Grandma, "Well, you know you're getting kinda tall, you maybe can't sit in my lap too much longer." I pushed back.

MS: She said till your feet touch the floor [everyone laughs].

ES: So I just edged back a little bit further so my feet weren't quite so close to the floor [all laugh]

RM: Did you have siblings?

ES: I had one brother and two sisters, yes. They're still going. Well, except my one sister passed away, she died when she was sixty-five. She drew one social security check and then died. But partly from her own fault, she got into a little drinking problem. That was sad but otherwise, my older sister, who took care of me when I was young, she's two years older than I am. She's eighty-four? Eighty-two or is she eighty-four? We were just at a wedding with them. Her and her husband have been married for sixty-five years now.

ES: My brother, Liam, has been married for 50 years. They just celebrated his fiftieth year this...

MS: June.

ES: June, yes. Quite a month. A lot of married years.

RM: You have some good genes in the family.

MS: A lot of blessings.

ES: Yes, we been very fortunate.

RM: What kind of a legacy is there about the Lake Sarah area and the resorts?

ES: About the most fishing I did would be on Lake Sarah. I would go with my grandfather and Lizzie Altendorf, who never was married. Grandpa and her were friends. Well, Grandpa and Grandma were both friends with Lizzie and Mike, they were brother and sister who lived together. We'd go out on Lake Sarah and go fishing with Grandpa quite a bit.

RM: What did you catch?

ES: Sunfish and crappies.

RM: Big ones? [mimes size]

ES: Some pretty good size...but no, they don't get that big. That's only when you're telling a fish story [laughter].

MS: When you came to eat it, you needed quite a few of those, didn't you? [more laughter]

RM: How many could you catch at one time?

ES: Thirty was the limit. In later years I went fishing with some friends of mine, but Mary doesn't go to the lake very much, so we don't go fishing.

MS: How come?

ES: You're afraid of water.

MS: Ed doesn't go fishing very often [laughter]

ES: You're afraid of water, that's why.

MS: Yes, but I go on a boat...

ES: Yes

MS: That's ok though.

RM: That just means you don't have to clean the fish.

MS: Nope. We don't. We learned how to do that too. I didn't mind that, but I don't have any to clean.

ES: We have friends who bring them here cleaned and everything! [laughs]

RM: Mary, was moving to a farm different for you or did you grow up on a farm as well?

MS: I grew up on a farm too. It was kind of interesting because when I was going with Ed...well, my mom died when I was 9. My Dad raised us. But one of the interesting questions he asked Ed, when we were going together for a little bit, was, "Do you own your own barn? Your own farm?" They farmed back and forth together, and he said, yes, he did...Dad said, "Oh, ok...then it'll work out." If you have your own barn and you have your own land, you can work together all you want. It'll be yours...you're still in control of this here, and they're in control of that, and then you make your own decisions. I wasn't going with him very long when I said something about, "Well, what do you think of Ed?" and he said, "He's really a fine man." That's all it took! I knew who my husband would be, because Dad was good at evaluating people. I should have known that if he didn't like Ed, I wouldn't have been going out with him.

RM: Had that happened in the past?

MS: Yes. I had gone out with my friend and they had a friend that I double dated with and came home and we were talking and Dad asked me something and I said, "I have a date next Friday night." He said, "Well, I don't know how you're going to handle it, but you're not going." I said, "Really? Well can't I just go out with him one time and tell him?" He says, "You're not going out with him again." He said, "Handle it the way you want, but that's how it is." Well?! I didn't go out with him again...[laughs] I guess I just, at that time, I thought, "Oh my gosh, what am I going to do?" But when you look back, you think, yes, he saw something that I didn't see, and he just said, "No, you're not going, no." He seemed like a nice guy when I went out with him. So when Dad said that about Ed, he really liked him.

ES: You had a nice family too.

MS: I thought, "Well, then he's seeing stuff that I guess, I'm glad he's seeing!" [laughs] That was not too hard to decide. When we had gone out long enough and he asked me to marry him, it wasn't too hard to decide then.

RM: It's pretty difficult to give in to your father at that age.

MS: Uh huh. But, you know, and it's true, excepting that I think, without having a mom around, you needed to hang on to something. He wasn't a harsh man. He was not that at all. But you knew when he said something, he really meant it. He was a happy, jolly, fun person.

ES: He raised seven kids.

MS: After my mother died, I think my sister was about twenty. She was out working, so then she stayed home the last couple weeks that Mom was living and took care of her. Then after she told Dad, "I'll just quit my job and I'll stay home and take care of the family." And he said, "Uh uh...you're not doing that." He said, "You've got just as much right to go out and find out what you're supposed to be doing as the rest of us." He said, "Ok kids...we're all in it together! Make sure you take you part." And he didn't say, you gotta do this, you gotta do that, you do something else. It was just if you come home, there's dirty dishes on the table left from breakfast? Get them off the table! If you're in the house, you start supper. And we'll eat what you make, and no one will complain. And you just had enough to think about what WERE you responsible for? Now, if we had stepped out of line? Oh, we would know it, right now. But. He didn't make those hard, driven lines that. You had a learning curve.

ES: That's why I say she was more mature as an eighteen year old than a lot of eighteen year olds were.

MS: It was good. All of my family...his big guideline to us was: whatever you do, you get along. No matter what, there's nothing important enough that you should never get along. Those were some good words, and we do. We still do all get along and look out for each other. We're very grateful because we've relayed that message to our kids, and they do get along...they do. They have a lot of fun together. They'll have their own family, and all them different, you know.

ES: When they get together, they're goofy.

MS: Oh, they just have more fun! [laughter]

RM: I wonder where they got that from...?

MS: I don't know! [laughter] I don't know! But that's not about Lake Sarah, at all. We're getting off the subject here. It was, like you say. It was hard to have your Dad tell you that when you're that age, however, at least for my part, I'll speak for me...I learned to really rely on a lot. I think I must have just seen a lot, and my brother and I were the youngest. We went with Dad everywhere. He never liked to go places alone, but he was very faithful to any neighbor or friend who had passed away. He always went to their wake. So we might be doing homework or something and he had to say, "You know, I'm going to run over to Joe's wake, you want to ride along?" Well...? No, I really DON'T want to ride along, but I really knew what he was saying...you don't want to go alone. And so? I met more people in their casket than ...? That's where it was at! And so, I can see some things that maybe I wouldn't have saw otherwise. When dad was happy with Ed, it was a very comforting thought.

ES: You want to know something really weird about our family? After we were married for two years, he married my mother's twin sister. She lost her husband shortly before we were married [laughter]. All of a sudden he just asked if he could...

MS: well, of course...

ES: He asked you first.

MS: My sister and I would go home once a week and clean the house and make supper for Dad and the boys. One night we were doing dishes and he said, "I gotta ask you something," He said, "What would you think if I took out Marie Shaar?" I said...I mean, he shocked me, so...I said, "Well, it would be wonderful!" So he asked all of us. If anybody would have had a reason they didn't want Dad to be going out with someone else, he wouldn't have done it. He would not have. He said, "You know? You kids already know that you come first in my life..." Well, I guess we always did.

ES: It was seven years...no. How many?

MS: I think eight.

ES: Eight years together before he passed away.

RM: It sure simplifies Christmas.

MS: It does! It really does! [laughter] and she didn't have any children. She was a very, very dear lady. She said, "You know? You don't need to change anything in the house, I'm not here to take your mother's place, I'm just here to take my place."

ES: They did a lot of dancing and stuff like that.

MS: They went on some trips.

ES: They really enjoyed life.

MS: He was only fifty something when Mom died and he had seven kids. His goal was--

ES: Made sure he raised all the kids first before he got married again, before he ever dated anyone.

RM: It sounds like there was a great level of respect for everybody.

ES: He was quite a guy, yes.

MS: I guess now when I look back and think eighteen year olds...what do they want their Dad to tell them? It looks way different to me than when I was eighteen. At that time it was a great stability and being he didn't let me go out again with that other fellow? And he says that he really liked Ed? Then that was kind of ok. You're letting me know what you're seeing.

ES: I didn't have to bribe him or nothing!

MS: You didn't, no!But he thanked you.

RM: No dowry...?

MS: No! He thanked you! [laughter]

ES: Yes [laughs]

MS: Yes! Get her outta here! [laughs] don't brag about her!

RM: She can buy your groceries, now, right?

MS: Yes! [laughs]

ES: Although you did go home, every, what? Every two weeks or every week?

MS: Week.

ES: She cleaned the house for him every week. That was understood that she'd be going over to her Dad's and cleaning house. I'd usually get done with chores and come down, too.

MS: We only had one vehicle, so you'd take me and whoever was the baby down in the morning and then come after chores. And "down" was Plymouth, which was twelve miles...but then it was a long way.

RM: Well that's neat. Well, how about we wrap up the official interview?

MS: I think that might be good! [laughs] we're doing a lot of chit chatting on the side.

RM: I like it...I like it! So thank you very, very, much for--

ES: I don't know if you got much information.

RM: Oh, no...it was wonderful, thank you so much for agreeing to do the interview.

ES: You're welcome.

MS: It was fun. Fun to meet you and fun to know that the Greenfield area is important.

RM: It is. It is very important.