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Narrator

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Greenfield Historical Society

Interviewer

With comments by Pat Rogers

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At the home of Joanne and Pat Rogers

Buffalo, Minnesota

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Pat Rogers--PR

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[Beginning of interview clipped off in recordings]

JR: It was coming out of Rockford we would start it in the winter when it was cold. We would stop at the neighbors there. She was the same age kind of as my older sister, Ruth, and we would warm up and then walk the rest of way to country school [laughs].

RM: So it was a pretty long walk?

JR: Well, it was, you know...I mean in the cold and whatever...there was a time when dad was taking the milk cans into Rockford on a sled and did he use the horses then? Anyway, he would

give us a ride you know, to country school. Then I don't know, there were times if he couldn't, or if the snow was too deep, or what the deal was anymore [laughs] but there were times when it was like, you know we had to dress warm and you know, you keep moving and you don't get cold. You know, too cold [laughs]

RM: Did you mom sew a lot of your clothes?

JR: Oh yea, oh yea

RM: Did she make all the ---

JR: Even out of the ...they used to buy flour and have the bags with print and stuff and she'd make a skirt out of that, or whatever.

RM: So you have all sorts of different printing on your skirt?

JR: Well, the whole thing wasn't printing you know, it was a color or maybe squares or, I don't know, stuff like that. Things were tough back in those days

RM: What year were you born?

JR: '32 and I think we moved there [Lake Sarah] in '36 and I think my dad was still paying for my operation that I had before we moved there. They thought I was going to die and was in the hospital down by in Minneapolis--I forget the name of it, so long ago--my mother stayed with me down there and they told my mother to call my father and bring Ruth, my older sister, in to see me because it might be the last time that she was going to see me. They figured I was going to die. I think it took my dad eight years to pay for that hospital bill. You know, things were tough in those days. The only reason that we ever even moved to Lake Sarah the way we did was we had an Uncle that lived on the other side of the lake and his wife's father gave him the money to buy that place. He gave it to us to buy that place because otherwise we wouldn't have moved out there I suppose.

RM: When did your family decide to create Mielke's resort?

JR: Well, I think it was pretty much right away in the beginning because I mean, we're right, you know...our house...there was a stone wall. You had to walk uphill to the railroad tracks and then the buildings were there on the level and then it wasn't it wasn't too far to the barn. It was kind of off to the one side and the house was on the opposite side with the pump house in between. We had a chicken house up here and we had a chicken house down there and a pig thing and you know and the horse barn and everything down that way. We were there ever since. We just stayed there and my dad built his own boats and the people...if the fishermen that were coming were coming from like the edge of Minneapolis and stuff to rent a boat and go fishing. That's the way it started. Ruth and I, we had to dig angle worms and see to it that they had worms to put on their bait to go fishing [laughs] that was our spending money then. We got to keep that. I don't know if it was...I think we had like 30 or 35 worms in there or something. I don't know if

we charged the quarter or what, I can't remember [laughter] that that money we got to keep. But we better have some!

RM: You had good quality worms, huh?

JR: Well, for one thing I think it was between the horse barn and the chicken coop that there was some kind of a water faucet and there were patches of dirt where the moisture was and the worms were there you know. So and I think we had a garden right behind the house, too, and I think some of that you know probably... we had to get some worms from there too, I'm not sure. I mean, we thought it was fine [laughs].

RM: Well, it's pretty really easy money, right?

JR: Well, it was the *only* money we got [laughs] they didn't give us an allowance or anything.

RM: Did the men come out to fish during the week or on the weekend? Did they stay overnight?

JR: Well a lot of them would drive out and park the car there and fish, and when they were done, then they would leave. We had a dog--I think it was some kind of a terrier or something--at one time. That was kind of a pant leg of one of the Fishermen [laughs] well we always had a dog. For one thing, it chased the cows when they got out of the barn. They could go down the hill and they could go into the lake to drink water. Then we started putting them in a pasture cross the railroad tracks, too, so we had a dog that would learn how to, or that did learn how to, chase the cows so that they would keep going and not maybe start off down to the tracks, or go up the hill, or whatever, you know. It was pasture back there you know, for them and some swampy area, too. But down, when you wanted to bring them home for milking you know, of course then you have to reverse the situation and they would come up to the gate. They would usually realize that it was time to get this bag of feed [laughs] and you know, they would be standing there at the gate on the other side of the tracks. We would let them out, and they'd chase them across the tracks and get them up there where they belong [laughs] yes, it was quite a life.

RM: You did the milking by hand?

JR: Yes, they--my older sister learned--I never did milk. Sometimes when they were making hay or something on... what machine did they? My dad's... my mother's brother and I think his wife's father had the machine that would make silage. They would go from farm to farm and help each other haul this stuff and whatever and do that and then it was like we had to see to it that the cows go milked. My older sister, I think she learned how to milk but I never did.

RM: Did you sell the milk or did you give it to people?

JR: We hauled it into the into Rockford where they would take it and what do you call the place where they take milk?

RM: A creamery?

JR: Yes. The money that we would get for it, a lot of times, okay, that went ...oh and another thing was the eggs from the hens. You take that in, we had a place that paid for them, you know, as many eggs whatever...we had a square one I forget how many dozen that held...thirty some dozen or something. It was about this high [gestures] I guess and you'd buy groceries with that. You'd get your money and buy coffee and sugar probably. Maybe flour or something and that was it.

RM: Which grocery store did you sell them at?

JR: I'm trying to think...I'm trying to think of the name of that one that was right along on the highway.

RM: There's Winking right here [points to map]

JR: [table cloth rustles] That...see I think I used to live when we moved to Rockford after I was married we had a house kind behind this was like on Main Street.

RM: The meat market?

JR: In one corner, yes and the road, this road, went back this way and what store was it? I could... my kids could stand in the window. They were so small yet in the winter and stuff I mean, you didn't want to drag them out to go to the store. They would stand in the window and watch me walk to the store and I would buy milk or whatever I needed and I could look when I was coming back then, I could see them standing there at the window watching for me. I knew that they weren't getting into trouble or anything.

RM: You said you also went back at that point to help your mom clean the cabins?

JR: Oh, yes.

RM: After you were married?

JR: Yes, because I was the only one that lived so close. It was a big job. My dad bought houses that... I think they were making a highway or something by Minneapolis or you know, someplace in that area and it was like getting rid of the houses. He moved, what two houses...was it only two? It was part of our property. That was all close up to the property line on...on whose resort would be next? I think those houses were they across from Hillcrest resort? And my sister lived in one for a while and I'm trying to think, did...there was another one there...if my brother lived in one for a while?

RM: So those weren't the cabins that people rented?

JR: No, no. The cabins we had...we had a pavilion, or something like that, you know. With a pond on the cement. There was a sidewalk. I couldn't have walked into it. There was cement things like that. He had a cabin on the front side of it and then there was a space between it and another cement thing and back and on the sides. I think there was another one in front that he put

a house on there and those two were down there and then at one time he had one just down the steps on toward the barn side and on that hill where it started up. Well, it wasn't on the hill anymore but it was after it got passed you know, down on the levels and he had one there that was a pretty big one, too.

RM: What did they look like?

JR: Well? They were just you know, pretty plain. They were light colored the way I remember it, I don't know if they were cream-colored or if some of them were white. They had a kitchen in them. They had a divider in them, like two bedrooms toward the back of it and then there'd be a...say you sit here eating. Well, that the rest of it would be like you could eat in your kitchen and we had stoves in there.

RM: What kind of stoves?

JR: Some of them had the plates, like electric you know, with the two burners on it I think. For a while anyway. I'm thinking he got a few stoves later on. Not right away in the beginning, but like at an auction or something. Or somebody was selling and moving out and I think there were a few of them that had stoves in them [cookoo clock sounds]

RM: They didn't always run on wood? They were electric after awhile?

JR: Trying to think if he got electric in all of them or not? Because it took a while before we get electric in the house they ran the poles across the middle of fields from the highway.

RM: That's helpful.

JR: They went passed.

RM: Gets in the way things doesn't it? So you can remember them installing the electric?

JR: Trying to remember like what year that was. We probably had them when I was still home...I don't know. On second thought, I wonder if I wasn't living in Rockford already.

RM: What year were you married?

JR: [laughs]

RM: How old were you? How about that?

JR: I was 70...71? I was born 32.

RM: Did you get married right out of high school?

JR: I think it was a couple of years later come to think about it.

RM: So maybe about 20?

JR: Yea...or 19. I've been married for 62 years.

RM: That's a couple lifetimes for some people [laughs]

JR: Yes! It is and like I say, I've got a lot of this stuff written down and I wrote it in pencil and now I can't hardly read it or it's worn off or something. It's kind of like I said, my computer's full up here [taps head] I can't remember anymore... I can't...Don't tell me something that I'm supposed to remember now because the fact is I'm getting too old! I haven't got room in my computer! [laughter]

RM: You said that you had followed the trains and pick up the coal that they dropped?

JR: Well, we wouldn't follow them, but they lost some. We knew what time...we weren't that stupid that we were going to be on the track when the train is coming [laughter] after we would go down our driveway and out that way. It would be there...what do you want to call it...think you had to walk on it. There was a creek underneath it.

RM: Oh! The tressle?

JR: Yes!

RM: Okay.

JR: Yes. So you had to be careful that you didn't fall all the way down [laughs]

RM: You certainly didn't want to be up there when the train came.

JR: Well, that's another one. Yes exactly, exactly because I think if Pat [her husband] ... we were looking at this map yesterday and he says, "I think that's where the where the Creek went by." Oh, and then they had a dam at the end so all the fish couldn't get out into the into the Creek and I don't know if that got destroyed after we were gone from there or what it was, but we used to walk the... they used to call it the old right-of-way just on the side of the railroad tracks and you could walk out there. In fact there was a time when the cows even went out there and there was a little pasture. There was a house along the road and I think they weren't living there anymore or something. It was empty, anyway, and the cows would go in there and we'd have to walk along the old right-of-way and go get the cows home! They didn't always come home on time [laughs]

RM: Sounds like you spent a lot of time chasing cows around!

JR: We...lets put it this way... we worked at it [laughter] that was a working farm. My sister was driving the horses when we were making hay on one of our fields and she would turn the corner... it was raked into wind rows and she was supposed to be going up the elevator whatever you call the thing. Into the ...wagon! Well, she missed the curve. She went too short or whatever, you know, she didn't, she wasn't ... so I had to walk behind and I then I had to take

that hay that she missed and get it in the next windrow so she could get it [laughter] and I've a headache since I was eleven years old.

RM: oh no

JR: So this is the kind of childhood I had [laughs] and I've still got my headache and they've never been able to find out or do anything.

RM: Well, you have a good spirit despite it.

JR: Well, what are you doing to do? Sit and cry?

RM: Is that something that you learned from your parents?

JR: What?

RM: That kind of determination?

JR: Well, you didn't have a choice. I mean...you know, they had they had to work. They did what they could. Times were tough. Money was short you know. It wasn't a good time.

RM: What kind of people were they? Could you describe them to me?

JR: Well, my mother was a Becker and came from down by New Germany. That's where we were living before we moved up there. We were in somebody's house I think before we went into that other house, but we had to pay so much. My mothers parents only lived like a hop and a skip down the road from where we moved to. Of course, I think we had to pay rent or something. We had paid to live in that house, too. Then the lightning struck that house just above the bedroom windows that my parents were sleeping in. Then it started raining and I remember my sister and I, we were sleeping upstairs and it was like they got us downstairs and they carried furniture outside because they figured the whole house...how are you going to stop this? This is at night and I don't know if a fire...I don't know...anyway I can remember we carried the dining room table outside and it got rained on and it got cracks in it or something. I don't know, whatever you call those things [reaches under table cloth] as I see this...look at the table.

RM: Is this the same table?

JR: I really...no, I don't think. I did this table. I redid this table. We were living in Sleepy Eye when I did this down in the basement and varnished it, sanded it all off. We got these chairs from a neighbor across the street that she had them for sale. Had them outside for anybody...take them if you want them and so I took them and I redid... I did all of the varnishing...I redid all this...put this on, put this on...[pointing at furniture and cushions]

RM: They're beautiful.

JR: We bought these [indicating]

RM: Is that skill something that you were taught by your mom?

JR: I don't know! [laughs] It was something that I...you know... I suppose I mean, in a way. Well, when we were living in Sleepy Eye, she ...I'm trying to remember. She died when she was 57 years old from a blood clot in her leg and I was living in Rockford and my sister... I think my sister was there with her. Somebody called me, anyway, and I got in the car and I drove down there and he had called the doctor and the doctor didn't...well didn't get there in time. When I got there she was dead. That was it. That was at the lake.

RM: At Lake Sarah?

JR: Mm hmm. Yep, that was at the lake. Yea, that was quite a shock. Then he lived there alone for a while and he ended up... well, they had dances some place not too far away toward the city I think. He had said something to us, he says, "There's something about sitting there in that house alone, it's like... there's nothing worse." I guess we went out there several times and he was he was going to... I think it was right on the edge of the city someplace where they'd had these dances. So he started going to the those and it ended up that he married somebody and lived close to where that was. We had been to where he was after he remarried. But we couldn't...unless you're going to say, "Well, come live with me," you know, I mean that wasn't working. I had three kids and its...well he probably wouldn't want to do that even if he could.

RM: Were they still operating the resort when your mom died?

JR: I suppose...unless my brother had it already at that time.

RM: But it was still in the family?

JR: Right.

RM: What kind of people would come and stay at the resorts?

JR: Well... one of them was a relative somehow to my mother I think [laughs] and she... Millie... and I know when I'd go out there and help her butcher chickens and stuff them up on the picnic table out on the lawn, Millie would come from the cabin. She was in the cabin we had, one kind of right behind the kitty corner off of our house up on that same level. She would come and talk to us and she would buy us a beer. My dad had a cooler on the screened in porch? Anyway, connected to the house. There he had a cooler that the beer truck would come in every so often. He had to have beer in there. So she bought us a beer. She used to drink when they were in the cabin and I don't know if it was her...one of them... but there was another couple there too, with her sister or brother or something. Sometimes it was like they were running up way up to the hill on the road, it was like, "He's after me!" [laughs] nothing bad ever happened but it was like, what? Is he drunk? Is he ...you know. What's going on here? So I mean, it was an interesting life [laughs] but she would go have to buy it, buy us a beer. She would go into the cooler and she'd get the beer and she'd take the cap off...it was one of those things right on the cooler [bottle opener]... and she'd bring it [the beer] and put it on the picnic table where we were sitting. Well, I'm drawing guts out of the chickens [laughs]. I pretend... maybe if she does she'd

stand there and talk to us and stuff, too and I probably pretended I took the sip or something. Anyway I would pretend, “Oh, I got to go to the bathroom.” So I take my bottle of beer with me and I’d...the kitchen sink was right inside the corner of the...after you get off the porch then you go through the doorway there was a kitchen sink and then the kitchen was a whole length of the of the house in the stairway to go upstairs you turn the corner you know, go upstairs and so I would take this bottle of beer and I would maybe dump at least half of it into the sink [laughter] I was never a beer drinker!

RM: And she never figured it out, huh?

JR: No, but I wasn't going to say, “oh, no, don't buy me any.” I mean, my dad needs the money! [laughter]

RM: now, did your dad cut ice as well?

JR: Oh, yes...oh yes. We had an ice house with a lot of sawdust in it. We had icebox boxes. You didn't have refrigerators. We didn't have electric then, I suppose. And you know, I remember we had we had our own icebox for the house and he made himself a rig and put the saw on it and he'd lower it when ice was so thick [indicated with her hands]. I mean sometimes the ice got too thick and he had to take out... I want to say a Cleaver or something with a big long pole on it...and you know, finish what the saw wouldn't cut completely through the ice so the bottom of it was loose. Then usually if it wasn't very good you could take your...whatever you call the thing...and kind of shave it smooth. If there were hunks on it. When you piled them into the sawdust you knew you didn't want big gaps in it between the blocks. Like I say, we did have sawdust that way we covered them up with it, but then of course you didn't want them to freeze together because you had to take one hunk out at a time and take them to the ice boxes. We had a cart with great big wheels on it that we used to get the hunks out of the ice house and put on a cart to wheel it to wherever you needed the ice--the cabin or the house or whatever because that's all we had, too. So that means we didn't have electric!

RM: There you go! [laughter] so you had to pack them in tight enough, with a little bit of sawdust in between so that they wouldn't freeze together?

JR: Yes...well you only had so much room, and I mean you didn't want them sky-high, in too many layers I mean. I don't know if the place would have been, say much bigger than the size of this kitchen ...up to the cupboards, there or something. It wasn't a real big ...at least not the way I remember it. But it worked and when you think back on those times its like... I would say my the dad had a lot of ingenuity. I don't think he was brought up in that kind of a situation. He had a father that was ...I want to say mean. The way I remember it hearing it. Never saw it of course [chuckles]

RM: What else can you tell me about your dad? His name was Herman?

JR: Mm hmm

RM: What kind of a person was he?

JR: Well? I don't...I couldn't complain. I mean, my mother used to get kind of mad at him sometimes because when we had horses, if they weren't, you know...we had two horses, and if they weren't...say one was trying to bite the other one or something when they were harnessed and they were supposed to be walking straight, he would get, I don't know if he would hit at them, on their neck or what it was, but my mother used to get mad at him, she's say, "Don't expect me to drive those horses after you do that to them!" Other than that, I can't say that I remember...I mean, he never spanked us kids or disciplined us kids or...we were so good he didn't have to! [laughs]

RM: Of course! [laughter] was he a big man?

JR: No...not really. Not ah...no. In fact, I don't think...you know...he was just...wasn't too tall, let alone big. Wasn't fat. Wasn't you know, I mean, that I think of him that way at all. I'm trying...picture...[leaves the room and returns with a photo] There's my dad and mother.

RM: Would you mind if I got a copy of it? Would that be okay?

JR: I was trying to remember the names of the people that are with them.

RM: This looks like it was in the 1920s?

JR: Oh yea! It was um...see this is this is my mother's sister, Berna, and I was trying to figure out who those two men were. I think one is Uncle Ted, who was a brother to ...mother? And uncle George was her husband... and I think that dad is related to this one [taps glass]

RM: They look pretty similar.

JR: Yes...yes...and this is Lydia I think...aunt Lydia...yes. Down in Lester Prairie, they moved...just came to me. I think I'm right. It's hell to get old! Your memory! [laughter]

RM: I've heard! I've heard that more than once doing these interviews, actually [laughter]

JR: Oh! I'm glad I'm not the only one!

RM: No! Not at all! [laughter] not at all. Did the family come over for Christmas and Thanksgiving to Lake Sarah?

JR: No...um...because like back in those days, in the first place, the roads weren't always the best and it was quite a...trying to think how long it took? The roads...for Christmas especially, you know, the roads aren't always good at Christmastime. You maybe can't even get out of your own driveway sometimes! [laughter] So no, that was never...I mean, we used to get to get together I think more so for...well, what? Birthdays. I mean, I don't remember going down there very often because we were the only ones that were so far away and moved away like that. The rest of them are stayed put there for awhile [laughs] and we...I know we went to Lester Prairie a couple different times and it might have been because one of them died or something, I don't I don't know.

RM: You said there was a lot of snow. How did you move the snow?

JR: Trying to think if dad had, what ...if he had something, anything that was close to like a plow? I know he had some kind of a wooden box or something that he'd drag along for maybe the sand or you know, something on those, but I don't think he did it for the snow. Maybe he did? With the horses? I know we shoveled a lot! [laughter]

RM: Sounds like it would be a lot of shoveling! [laughter] So you said you were standing by a snowbank one time? Reaching up to show how high it was?

JR: Yes. That would have been impossible to shovel through [laughter] yea I'm pretty sure that was the time that they got the highway going--the big road going past our house. Or passed the end of our driveway. I think they were doing that and I don't know if we had to ask or they just could see that our driveway...back where they were was so bad that they came in without being asked. I don't even know how we would've got out of there otherwise. I don't know if a person could've called or...I don't remember how that worked. I just worked. Because otherwise.. I mean...well? We used to have a milk man, too, that would come in to pick up our milk cans at one time and...well? How is he supposed to get in? Right? And I mean, I suppose they [unclear] when the highway is that bad or when they're out doing that, I suppose they realize that and probably...what the heck, you know? We're going right passed it, why not? Why not make friends with them? [laughter] Yes, I had this picture in a drawer for so long and I was kind of rearranging some stuff and I was like, "ah! Why don't I get this picture out!" [laughs] It's such a pretty frame, I think

RM: it is, it's beautiful, they're a good looking couple

JR: well? They were good parents.

RM: What did you do as a family for fun?

JR: We had fun [laughs] I mean it was going...if somebody got married and had a wedding dance, like down by New Germany, we'd know about it or they'd notify us and we'd go. We'd drive and it was a...sometimes it was quite a drive, sometimes it... usually if the roads were too bad, of course you just didn't go, but, and they probably didn't bother to call either, I don't know [laughter] but we'd we used to go to dances down there. I remember one, I don't even remember whose it was, if it was a wedding dance or what it was, but my folks wanted to go home and I was dancing with this kid, I mean, I was a kid, too, but he was old enough to drive, and they wanted me come and said, you know that we've got to go home. I told him that and he says, "Tell them I'll take you home."

RM: that's quite a drive

JR: and he did! [laughs]

RM: Does Pat know about him?

JR: That's before Pat [laughter] but you know, living next to the Pavilion, I learned to dance already by that time, when my older sister got married.

RM: So you went to dances at the Pavilion at Lake Sarah, too?

JR: Yes.

RM: Ok...can you tell me more about those?

JR: Well, she would take me along, you know and then of course, I'm trying to think who ...like who I danced with, or anyway some of these guys...I knew who, kinda, I knew their name or whatever, they knew they figured out, or they knew who I was, evidently, or saw me dancing and they're like, "Ah, wow! Is she ever a good dancer! I want to dance with her!" [laughter] so I had a couple, at least three boyfriends in one night that...they dance with me! [laughter] and well, my older sister, like I say, she had her she had her wedding dance there. Well, then that one, he wanted he wanted to ...how was it? He wanted to take me home or something and I says, "I've got to go home at midnight." I guess it was or something. We had a tent set up on our lawn at the resort and um food and you know, like the feast to feed everybody

RM: at midnight?

JR: The relatives or something...yes. And I says, "Well, I've got to go home" "well, I'll take you!" well, then he found out where I lived [laughter]

RM: Short drive

JR: and that husband of mine was one of them [laughter]

RM: oh? So you actually met him out at Lake Sarah? Can you tell me about that?

JR: [laughs] well, I just told you...that was it!

RM: That was it, huh?

JR: It was the beginning.

RM: So he spent the evening helping you set the food out?

JR: No...we, there were relatives or something that...it was all done when we left the dance. All we had to do was go there and eat. Then we sat on the bench. We had steps going down to the lake and a bench on either side of it and he was sitting on the bench with me and he said something about... I don't know...a boat ride or something and I rowed [laughs]

RM: wait a second...

JR: I wasn't going to have him tipping this boat over! [laughter]

RM: So you actually took him for a boat ride?

JR: Right [laughs] I knew he couldn't swim [laughter] I knew he had to behave. How about that for memories?

RM: I love it. What was it about him that you liked?

JR: Well? He was...persuasive [laughter]

RM: Clearly

JR: He kept coming back.

RM: Persistent too.

JR: Over the years there were a lot of dances in some of the halls. I mean some of them were quite a few miles away and some of them were ... we went to dance and we used to go to a lot of other dances for awhile. Well, and then after we were married [laughter] Still do, if ...now, well now we can't, I mean, his knee, and they wanted to operate on his back and he wouldn't let them. Not always good for him...so we ah...it's pretty hard to do the polka when [demonstrates]

RM: It's a pretty bouncy dance.

JR: But he saw me dancing and with one of his friends. I was doing the polka. Thaaaat started it.

RM: Did he cut in?

JR: Ah...trying to think if he asked. I think he did. I think that was really the first time...I wonder if, wonder if that was... [Quiet] instead of letting me go home... [Laughter] and her husband

RM: Do you remember what band was playing?

JR: No. Can't remember all those things. I'll have to ask [laughs]

RM: So it was quite a...quite the life being right on the lake in and amongst all those resorts and dance halls.

JR: Then some of them [the guests] they had children with and the kids...they wanted us to play with them and go swimming with them and I mean, we did, sometimes, of course, we were...we didn't have to work that hard that we couldn't ...I mean, I went swimming a lot. I knew how to swim. That was another thing-- sometimes those kids, if they're not used to the lake, making sure that they don't go out too deep and drowned or whatever. There were safety measures, you know. We watched them and whatever too, so we didn't have to ...I never had to milk cows but [laughs] we didn't have work to do or something, I mean we could go swimming.

RM: So was there a beach on your property then?

JR: Well? It was...the lake bottom and stuff was good enough ...it wasn't really deep to start with, you know. You could walk in up to your hips if you wanted to and swim. Yes, it was just a piece of using your brains and don't go out over...don't go walking until you're...you know! [Demonstrates flailing then laughs] Help! Yes, I had a bikini in those days...but after having three kids, I don't have a bikini to wear anymore [laughs].

RM: Did you ever go fishing?

JR: Oh, yes. Yes, lot of times. Most people that came it was, "go fishing with them so they get some fish" you know. Couldn't get out of that. Most of the time... trying to think who it was sometimes, but it was relatives or people that you knew...you didn't have to go with the strangers [laughs] and I'm trying to think...even like the ones that ...some of them stayed in the cabins for months.

RM: oh really?

JR: Oh yes, and if I ever went fishing with them or they didn't even go fishing, I don't know. I had work to do. We had chickens and eggs and things too... it wasn't all fun and relaxation living there [laughs] or you had to, when somebody moved out of the cabin... alright, we furnished all the sheets and you cleaned up the cabins so if somebody comes and wants one it's clean and I think we even washed the sheets. I don't remember if we'd put them back on the bed right away or if we'd wait until they did get rented out, but probably did put them back on after because... oh! And then there was always somebody that was close by the phone. The phone was close to the kitchen door where...we'd leave it open onto the porch so that if somebody was calling for a reservation, that, "I want so and so cabin" or a week, or who knows what or if they'd even call for a boat or something. We'd answer the phone calls, see to it that we got the phone, answered the phone call. So I don't know if we'd answer or "Mom! Where are you! The phones ringing!" [Laughter] yes...it's a great life if you don't weaken. That was kind of weak [laughter]

RM: Sounds like you did pretty good.

JR: Yes, the worst part was that headache. And they changed my glasses so many times and they...you know it wasn't like they didn't try, I mean, I don't know what it is. Then I got cataracts when I got older. This one. Can't see your face now. And I don't know what's happening with the other one now, it's not ...I think it's ...last time I went to an eye doctor he said something about, "well, when you get older..." the back of your, the way I understood him to explain it, the back of your eye ball, the cover or something, it gets...it changes.

RM: It just gets old.

JR: You know that it affects your eyesight because like here. Ok now, I know that this says, ok, I can read this...a lot of times I ...I mean I've got laying around here all over the place so if I want

to read something that I [goes to get magnifying glass] some of the directions on some of the cooking things. Cooking...and it's...ok! [Demonstrates] That's what I have to do now!

RM: Time to call "Inspector Joanne!" [Laughter]

JR: So that's the way it goes. But when you're ...what am I now? 81 years old? It's like...I tell him [Pat], "I want to die before you do" [laughs]

RM: I'm sure that warms his heart.

JR: Well? I mean, he's got the pain and stuff. I've been...my latest problem is now, it must be my heart, my blood, I think. If I bend over a lot and sometimes it's just like walking up the steps. I just feel nauseous in my stomach. Sometimes I forget, ok? I have to bend over to put this ...or throw this away [quiet] can over the sink. Or I have to bend over to carry the garbage out...alright...don't fall over...bend your knees! [laughs]

RM: We should get you a corset, that way you don't have to worry about bending over.

JR: There was a time when I did wear those. I think it was after I had my kids [laughs].

RM: Oh! You didn't have to wear them when you were a teenager?

JR: I'm trying to think, well? I was pretty young. I don't remember if I ...well, for one thing, some of those things, they had garters on and I was wearing stockings because I think I've been cold all my life. I need some layers. I need to be ...and I mean, we used to go dancing and stuff and I ...that's what I did ...I wore nylons. And skirts. So I guess I'm just thankful I didn't die when I was six years old. I've showed people my scars and ah! [laughs] I got two places where they had the ... what did they do? Go in to take out the poison or whatever, and then of course I got the...about this long [indicates] stitches on both sides and yes...so cute. Would really look good in a bikini! [laughter]

RM: I suppose that's something, too, if you got sick out on the farm...Rockford had a doctor?

JR: I'm trying to think where it was that they called...my mother, I think my sister...I think my sister was there with her or somebody was...and they called the doctor...and it was one of the towns, you know, off to the side and he didn't get there in time. She was dead before he got there and they called me and I came from Rockford. I drove from Rockford and got there before she died...or was it too late? That the doctor...yes. The doctor hadn't gotten there yet. My sister told me she was dead.

RM: I'm sure home didn't seem the same without her there.

JR: Oh, that's for sure, that's for sure. Yes, and then we used to go out there once in awhile, I don't know, just to see dad, you know? He just said there's nothing worse or more horrible than sitting here by yourself. He started going dancing. I think when he decided to remarry that he talked to us about that. He asked and I said... how can you say no? Don't you do that!

RM: and Pat makes a guest appearance here

PR: What's the purpose of all this?

RM: We're interviewing for the Greenfield Historical Society so that we have these stories on record and I think we were just wrapping up, actually. Is there anything else that you wanted to add?

JR: No, I don't know.

[conversation about brother Art and other people to talk to]

Pat: Best thing out of Greenfield? That...right there! [points to Joanne]

RM: That's so sweet! He seems like a keeper.

JR: 60 years!

RM: They don't make them like that anymore.

JR: That's right! I don't know where I'd find a replacement [laughter] nobody would want me now.

RM: Since you can't do that polka!

JR: Yes, right! [laughter]

RM: Well, I thank you so much for doing the interview, I really do appreciate it. It was wonderful to sit and talk with you.

JR: Yes, I think Ruth said to me when she called to talk to me over the telephone, I said something about "I've got a map of it" and she says, "Yes, I've got one too, but I can't find mine!" she says [laughter]

RM: Things get tucked away.

JR: Well, I should show you my books...[walks into hallway]