

## **INTERVIEW OF BILL AND MARY KOSTURKO WITH JOSEPH KELESCHENYI**

**By Mildred Allen Beik**

**March 13, 1984**

**Windber, PA**

MB = Millie Beik

BK = William "Bill" E. Kosturko (1917-1985)

MK = Mary S. Kosturko (born in 1923)

JK = Joseph Keleschenyi (1912-1987)

### **Beginning of Tape 1 Side A (March 13, 1984, Track time begins at 17:54)**

MK: Well, my mother and dad- well first my dad went to night school up the high school here in Windber. I don't know how long they had to go, but after he got through high school- and I used to ask him the questions, I said hell, he knew more about the legislature and all the judicial they asked us poor people, he knew more about the country than I did. Then he got his citizen paper, then my mother went and she got her paper, too. And she was telling me they had to go to Somerset. They hired somebody to take them to Somerset, to the courthouse and the judge was there and he was asking them, why do you want to become American citizen- because I like it here, I want to live here. And he said, would you fight for this country – well if I have to, I would. And they said well maybe you'd go back to Europe if the war started? No, we won't go back to Europe, we're going to stay here. Questions like that, the judge was asking them.

MB: It must have been hard on a lot of families in World War I when they had family in Europe though. Really, because parents and sometimes brothers and sisters would be on the other side of the Atlantic during that war and some would be on different sides of the war and everything. I don't know.

MK: Well, Bill's father, when the war broke out – he got out, he came to America.

BK: My father was a citizen.

MK: Oh no he wasn't, when he first came here.

BK: When he first came here he was no citizen, then he got his citizen paper then he went back, mom went back three times to this country, my brother Joe was born in Europe.

MB: Well, I'll ask you about that.

BK: Then pop went back to Czechoslovakia, they said that's too far to go and he said, hey, I'm an American citizen you can't hold me here. So he took Bowser and mom and they went there.

MK: Your dad was staying here at Lashinsky's when your mother came.

BK: He was staying here. He was already married, mom went back.

MB: Yeah, she had Joe and then she came from Europe here to Lashinsky's because that's where your dad was born.

BK: Because pop went back to bring mom over. And Joe was born in Europe, Joe wasn't born here, he was born in Europe- over there.

MK: I know, your mother told me that.

BK: And then when he went back-

JK: Where was Mary born?

BK: Mary was born there, too.

MK: Mary was born there, too. But see, Mary was from a different marriage. His mother was married twice.

BK: She was born in Czechoslovakia, too. She's no citizen now.

MK: Her father died in the hard coals in Scranton. Because her dad worked in the hard coal mines in Scranton. And then he got TB and he died and his Bill's mother came to Windber because her sister was living here. Mrs. Gaylish. And she stayed with her and then she met your father. She got married and then she went back to Europe for some reason, I don't know what your mother was back and forth for.

BK: She had land, property out there.

MB: I see.

BK: When she went back to Europe she wanted to get that thing straightened out with her sisters.

MB: Where was your mother from in Europe Mr. Kosturko? Do you remember the town?

BK: Shariska, that's the name of the town.

MK: No, no- she knows the name of the town where your mother came from.

BK: My mother was from a town on the border of Austria and Czechoslovakia. Right on the border because when she went to school she had to learn Hungarian nationality and German. Two languages they had to learn.

MB: So how old was she when she first came to American Mr. Kosturko? Do you know? You don't know what year she came? Was she a child or was she an adult?

MK: She was a grown up woman already.

BK: Well, my mother was 46, 47 when I was born.

MB: But you don't know when she came. Did she come to stay- did she stay in somewhere in Scranton then? Was she the one in Scranton?

MK: She got married in Europe to this Pete Uha. No, what was her first name?

BK: Damned if I know.

MB: So she was already married in Europe before she ever came.

MK: Yeah, then she came here to America with her daughter Mary and Mary was six years old when her father died. So she was married about seven or eight years.

MB: I see.

MK: Then she married Mr. Kosturko and they were married five years and they didn't have no children and she always tells me she made a novena to have children and she said they came bing, bing, bing, one after another the four of them.

MB: You had 4? In your family, you did?

MK: Yes. His brother Joe, Anne, and then Helen and then Bill was born the last. He was the baby.

MB: And then what about your dad? Was he from Europe then, Mr. Kosturko?

BK: Yeah.

MB: Was he from the same area?

MK: He was from the same town.

BK: One come from Shariska and the other from Plabinistka.

MK: Plabinistka is a town like Windber – Shariska was like Somerset is a county

BK: It was a town like Windber- like if my mother come from Windber and my father come from Scalp.

MB: Oh, so they were close together.

MK: They could have been like that –

BK: That's what it is, my mother was from Windber, my father was from Scalp.

MB: Now, how did he come to America? Was he an adult when he came or was he a child?

MK: The war was breaking out, so he come here.

MB: World War I?

MK: Yes.

BK: Yes. He was younger when he came here.

MK: And he got a job in the mines, too.

MB: Did he not want to serve in the services, would he have been drafted?

MK: I guess.

BK: I guess.

MB: I guess all the young men would have been called to war.

JK: That was 1918, before-

MB: 1914 it starts.

JK: 1914, 1918 it ended.

MB: America gets in it in 1917, but it's going on in 1914, so –

MK: 1914 was when World War I started.

MB: Yeah, all the young men would have been drafted.

BK: Mom was talking about when Kaiser Wilhelm was the ruler over there.

MB: Oh, yeah?

BK: And then this other, what was that guy's name? Took over and before Kaiser said, before I shed blood, I give up and the other, whatever his name was, took over.

MK: I don't remember that.

MB: So he came then, around- the beginning-

MK: I'd say something around 1913. My people did, they came. Right before World War I started.

BK: 1913 or was it 1903?

MK: 1903 then he come earlier than that, see?

MB: Oh, your father came in 1903? Did he go back and forth then?

BK: He went back a second time, that's when my mother went. They was here, my mother come here, they was here.

MK: They were married here.

BK: My mother got pregnant to my father here, then my mother went back to Europe.

MB: I see.

BK: Then Joe was born over there. And pop was working in these mines and I guess pop said I'm gonna be damned if I'm going to be baking in these houses when I got a wife over there. So he went back and got mom and they stayed here and then mom went back again to get rid of the property that she had over there.

MB: I see.

MK: Her mother was living yet, when she went back.

MB: So, there's a lot of traveling back and forth in those days by a lot of people. Did your father come directly to Windber then when he came or did he work somewhere else in another city or town?

BK: He come right to Windber.

MB: Did you have other relatives or something that he would have know to come here?

MK: I don't know how he came to.

BK: We didn't have no relatives here?

MB: Or people from the village? He must have heard of Windber somehow. From somebody.

MK: Well, how did your dad's brother get up to Connecticut then?

BK: Well he come here later. Because George, as soon as he got off the ship, he stayed right there. He didn't want to come to Pennsylvania. Maybe he did, I don't know. He went back, he said, he stayed in New York.

MK: You should have asked your brother, maybe he could have told you more.

BK: My brother knows more about that than I do.

MB: But your parents lived here in Windber? They were married in Windber?

MK: Yes.

MB: You said they were married here?

BK: Yes.

MB: About when would that have been Mr. Kosturko? You can't figure it out from your age and your brothers and sisters and so on? Well, if he was here in 1914.

BK: I could figure, Joe's 72 years old and its 1984 so that would be 1912.

MK: 1912 and they were already married 5 years before Joe was born.

BK: Well, you could figure that.

MB: 1907 then.

MK: 1907.

MB: Were they married in St. John's then, do you Mr. Kosturko? Because at one time that was the only church and then I guess-

BK: I guess they were married in St. John's Polish church. That was the only church in Windber.

MB: Ok, but then after that did they go to a different church later?

BK: Years later.

MK: They build the Slovak church.

MB: Did they go the Slovak one then or the Hungarian?

MK: Slovak.

MB: The Slovak, Cyril and Methodius, then.

MK: People who went from the Polish church to the Hungarian church.

BK: Now, I don't remember when that Slovak church was built, but I remember the cornerstone had a date, year on it.

MB: Are you Mr. Kelly?

MK: Keleschenyi, we call him Kele

MB: I heard you say that. Are you the son of immigrants, then, too then. I mean, everyone in this town seems to be.

JK: Oh, yeah.

MB: Can you tell me about your family then, a little bit?

JK: Well, my parents was all born in Europe.

MB: Where were they born? Do you know?

JK: Hungary

MB: Hungary? Do you know what regions or towns?

JK: My dad was in Almas and then my mother, she was in Bolshameva. And she was married over there to a Paulder and she had 2 sons and a daughter from him and then died in 1910 and she remarried. She married a Keleschenyi.

MK: Was she married here or in Europe?

JK: Here

MK: Your dad?

JK: My dad, here, Keleschenyi. And Paulder and she married him over in Europe. Well, she had me, and 2 daughters.

MB: How did she get to America? Do you know? The story?

MK: Did your mom's first husband die here, Joe?

JK: Yeah, he died here.

MB: He died here?

JK: He died here in America.

MB: So, I see.

MK: They came-

JK: They came to America and then he died here in 1910

MB: I see, so then she could meet your father.

JK: So, then she married Keleschenyi, Dan Keleschenyi.

JB: Did she ever talk about what Europe was like? Where she had been?

JK: She said it was good over there.

MB: Was it an agricultural area? Did they grow crops?

JK: Farms, like here.

BK: You raised your pigs, you had your cows, you had your chickens, a little patch of ground.

JK: Everybody had farms.

MK: Everybody had ducks and geese and mom said that's so

### **End of Tape 1 Side A**

### **Beginning of Tape 1 Side B (March 13, 1984)**

MK: in the back and she said all the ducks knew which gate to go in. They used to cuckold and get them at the gate, she said each goose, pig and everything knew just which gate to go in to go home. She said that was just so nice when she was growing up, she remembered that. So, their houses were in the front and then the stable and everything was connected right in the back and the chickens and all that and I said, how would you do that?

MB: Yours, too?

JK: Uh huh. Straw roofs

MK: Straw roofs all over and the houses, every spring they took all their furniture outside and they'd whitewash all the rooms. They used to stay misalme in Hungarian, they'd white wash all the rooms and then they'd air the house out and bring their beds back in and their cupboard or whatever they had. She said it was nice and fresh for another year. They didn't have stoves, they had a fireplace and everything was cooking in the fireplace then.

MB: Mr. Keleschenyi, did your mother work in Europe before she got married? Did she have a chance to go to school? Do you know?

JK: No, she went to school, I think she said 3 years was all she went and now, my dad, he went I think 2 years, I think. Now, they just learned to read and write. Now, when they became 12 years old, they quit school and they worked on the farms.

MB: I see. Was it a grape growing region?

JK: It was grape and like over here I guess.

MB: Ok, I just wondered. Did your dad then come as an adult or did he come as a child to America? Do you know anything about that?

JK: He was an adult.

MB: Did he come right to Windber? Did he have relatives someplace or did he go work somewhere else? Some people worked in factories or mills or other places?

JK: He had in Pittsburgh, he had relatives over there.

MB: I see. So did he go and live with them for a while?



JK: Well, he was there for a while and then some way he come to Windber. How? I don't know.

MK: Why in the hell would you ever come to Windber?

JK: Just like us, we never thought about that, we was kids. We didn't know things like that.

MB: I know. But there's often a story behind it, if you ask. It's too bad you can't ask people.

BK: It's just like Joe's oldest boy, he's digging down from my dad, to my dad's dad to his dad, he's digging down. To find the Kosturko family way back.

MK: The family tree.

MB: Yeah, the family tree roots.

BK: He's digging down.

MB: Well, that's nice.

MK: I said, why didn't you ask your grandpa more quick. He said you never ask your dad nothing.

BK: They don't ask things like that, that don't come to you. They don't pay attention.

MK: I'll tell you why, when we were growing up, my dad went to work in the mines early in the morning about 5:00 he had to walk to Mine 30 where he worked. He'd come home, we were already in bed. Mom would put us to bed. They used to work such long hours at the mine.

BK: 12 or 14 hours a day.

MK: The only time we saw our dad was Saturday and Sunday when he wasn't working, we'd see our dad. That was a hard life.

BK: I remember that time, pop come over, Sunday was the only day we'd see him, he's coming in and I said, hey mom, who's that man? That's your father!

MK: Yeah, they used to work such long hours at the mines, we were kids, I know it was real dark in the morning when he left and when he came home it was dark. We already had our supper and mom used to send us to bed. And he'd come home from the mines.

MB: And that's even a little later when you were growing up and that still like that I guess.

MK: In the '20s. 1920s. I was born in '23 and about '25, '26 I was still a young girl, but I still remember my dad working such long hours till John L. Lewis come in and then he helped the coal miners.

MB: Do you remember much about those early days? I don't know what your background- I'm sorry, was your father a miner then, Mr. Keleschenyi?

JK: Mine? Yeah

MB: Do you when, how long? When he worked in the mines, about when?

JK: Until his wife died.

MB: About what years? Before 1910 then?

JK: Yeah. I'd say about 1908.

MK: 40 years.

MB: He worked 1908, all his working life. How many years?

JK: Because he was here. My mother's first husband died in 1910 and my dad was here. My dad come here, I think it was 1899.

MB: Oh, he did, 1899.

MK: The way your mother told me, didn't your dad boarded at her place. She had boarders.

JK: Yeah, that's right.

MK: He was a boarder at her house and then when her husband died he felt sorry for her, she was a widow with the 2 kids so he married her.

MB: Did he come to Windber in 1899 do you know?

JK: No, I think he went to Pittsburgh first.

MB: Because Windber was just founded in 1897 and that's real early but people were starting to come already because they were trying to get people to come to work the mines.

JK: They got off, when they got off of the boat, they got off in New York, the Statue of Liberty.

MK: Ellis Island, there.

JK: They didn't know English, they couldn't talk, so what they did, they come off boat and put markers on them, their name, they marked with a piece of chalk.

MK: If they was Slovak or Hungarian, they marked their clothes they had interpreters.

JK: To talk to them. Where they wanted to go. Well, my dad he went to Pittsburgh, so that's it. My mother, I don't know. Well, she come over here, I don't know, that was before, that was about 1898.

MB: Really go way back.

JK: With her husband.

MK: We should have thought about asking more questions when we were kids.

MB: You take it for granted when you're a kid.

MK: Well, I said I learned more after I grew up and got married from my dad than whenever we were growing up because they were always working and you hardly ever saw your dad. Except on Sundays.

MB: Well you think about those early days in Windber then, by 1908 he's in Windber already, your dad, so they really go back almost to the beginning of the town. Does anybody remember any of the stories about the 1907 strike, I don't know, when were you born Mr. Keleschenyi, how old are you?

JK: 1906. When I was born?

MB: You were born in 1906?

JK: 1912.

MB: You were born in 1912. I'm sorry. I'm just getting all 3 of you confused, keeping the dates straight of when you were all born.

JK: 1912.

MB: Where were you born?

JK: Windber, well hole 34.

MB: And where were you born Mr. Kosturko?

BK: 1917

MK: He was born down on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

MB: Do you remember, I know you weren't alive yet, but did you ever hear your parents or anything talk about 1906? Did you ever hear anything about that? What did you hear about that growing up?

JK: Well, how the people were.

MB: There was a strike of some sort- no you weren't born, but you heard?

BK: Well we heard at that time, too there's guys, now they call them scabs, not a word, they had a revolution here among the miners.

JK: Well, they did, that was in 1922. That was in 1922. I remember that.

MB: Well, let's talk about that, maybe you remember that. You were in Windber then, Mr. Keleschenyi

JK: Yeah, I was in Windber then.

MB: What do you remember about 1922? I guess that was a big event.

JK: Well, that's when they were on strike, the coal miners.

BK: They brought the union in in 1922. After the fight.

JK: And they tried do.

MB: Tried to, yeah.

BK: The union.

MB: They tried to, but they lost the strike.

JK: They lost that.

MB: But what do you remember about that Mr. Keleschenyi?

JK: Well, I remember they had pussyfoots, what they called the police, the bosses had the police they called them pussyfoots.

MK: They came on horseback.

JK: Horseback. Heck yeah.

MB: You remember that, too?

MK: Well, I remember my father talking about it. And whoever wanted to go to work, the police escorted them.

JK: Yeah, they took them.

MK: And they called those guys scabs. So one family would have a husband that wanted to work, the next house didn't want to work so they would be fighting against each other. Now when these policemen came on the horseback I remember your mother telling me they used to throw pepper and everything in their eyes so they'd get the hell out of the street.

JK: They were shooting.

MK: They were shooting at them and everything. It was terrible. She said she was afraid to come out. She said everybody stood inside their gate, they wouldn't pass that gate because the guy on the horse would tramp you down. He didn't care. It was terrible. They were trying to get a union then for the miners.

JK: Nobody had nothing to eat. Then the union they came out a little bit, cornmeal and sugar little bit of flour.

MK: They didn't have the company store yet, then.

JK: They had the stores then, yeah.

MB: You couldn't go there.

MK: They were afraid to go down the street.

BK: And then they got these company stores, you raised pigs, you raised chickens, you raise cattle like that, the company store wanted it, they'd buy it off you. If you sold it to them at their price. They wanted to do that to my father. He had a lot of cows and pigs, raising cows and pigs, they come over and say we want these pigs and my father said, you take one pig, but you'll never take it back to the store. And they said well you we are and my father pulled out a .38 and said go ahead take it. That's mine, this is my property, get the hell out of here. I don't have to deal from your store. I raise my own.

MK: I remember when we were kids, if you had a company store book they took every damn cent off of you, they left you 2 bucks. And that was maybe just enough to pay insurance for your family. Because they had policies, 25 cents for each kid or something like that. I don't know, they wouldn't leave you enough money so my people wouldn't take the company store book after they pulled this bologna a couple times, they said they paid their book off and they said no more because they didn't have enough money to buy anything else or pay the electric or insurance or anything. If you got coal, they charged it to the mines. You had to get it from the mine. If you got your food, everything you bought they'd charge on that book, mark it off, so they didn't have no money left. So my people stayed away from the company store.

JK: Well, like the companies, they didn't want you out of the hole, they wanted you in the hole, you know.

MK: But then a lot of people screwed up the companies whenever the mines closed, they owed thousands to the store, 2,000. I heard that some people and they picked themselves up and moved to Chicago or Detroit or someplace to get a better job and they stuck the Eureka store.

MB: That's a lot of years later than this earlier period though. When they closed in '62, 1962. Somewhere around there.

BK: Something like that.

MB: Yeah, but this period back in 1922. What else do you remember Mr. Keleschenyi? Way back. You must have been about 10 years old. Where were you living? In a company house?

JK: No, we was living over here.

MB: Ok, because some people in company houses-

JK: I remember when the company police was running around, you know, that's all.

MB: I understand that some people, some of the people in company houses were evicted.

JK: Oh yeah.

MB: In 1922.

MK: Well, if you wasn't working for the company, they threw you out.

MB: Because they owned the houses.

JK: If you was on strike they told you to get out, they threw your furniture out. Just like Mr. Faye here and Mrs. Faye, you remember them, they stayed with us.

MB: You had people come live with you when-

MK: Sure, because he didn't want to be a scab and go in the mines. He wanted to wait so the miners could get some kind of union or something. For that they threw them out of the company houses.

MB: Well, maybe the two of you, you both worked in the mines, right? Tell me what your mining background are so I have that- so I know that. When did you go in the mines Mr. Kosturko?

BK: 1937 I started.

MB: How old were you when you went in the mines?

BK: 19

MB: Did you go in with your father?

BK: No. My dad wanted to take me, but if he took me he had to lose his company job. So McFeely said ok, you come in here and you be a floater. What do you mean a floater? Well when one guy come out and they don't got nobody going in- it's well and good.

MK: They have another name for that, what do they call that?

JK: That's a floater.

MB: So you went in 1936. When did you go in the mines?

JK: '27

MB: So you went in a little earlier.

JK: 16 years old.

MB: Did you go in with your dad?

JK: Yeah

MB: Because I know that was fairly common.

MK: Where was the mine that you went in?

JK: 31

MK: Where was that at?

MB: Where was that?

BK: 10th St. Hill.

JK: 10<sup>th</sup> St Hill.

MK: 10<sup>th</sup> Street

BK: Under Weaver's Farm

MK: Is that where 31 mine was?

BK: Yeah

MK: I didn't know that there was a mine there.

JK: 30 was there and then 31 was below mine 30 was below 31

MB: Could you tell me, since you went in a little earlier than he did, what were the working conditions like? How was it?

JK: It was bad.

MB: Tell me about that, some detail, what can you tell me about that?

JK: Well-

MB: Did you load coal basically?

JK: We loaded coal, yeah. Pick coal, we didn't have machined coal. See, a machine used to cut the coal. And we used to shot it, but we were hand picking. They undermined the coal and then we shoot it out with cars.

MB: And at that time, did you get any pay for dead work or anything at all?

JK: No, not too much. I think 14 cents is all we got. 14 cents for a yard of dirt or if you cleaned up a space, all that boney and all that stuff, they'd give you 15, 20 cents that was it.

MB: They didn't have any checkweighmen? I guess those were issues in 1922.

JK: No

MK: That was later on

JK: Later on when the union come in. It was in '36. When did that come it?

MB: In the '30s with FDR when Roosevelt said it was legal.

JK: Roosevelt

BK: In the '30s

MK: John L. Lewis was the first person.

JK: Well, Lewis was the president and then when Roosevelt got elected then he said – the men should be organized and then that gave the unions a better chance to organize because they wasn't afraid.

MB: Do you think that it would have been possible to have unions if Roosevelt, FDR hadn't done that? Do you think Windber would have had a union mine?

BK: I don't think.

JK: Well, see Roosevelt give them privilege to organize the people. So that's what happened.

MB: So what was it like when you went in the mines Mr. Kosturko, then? I was just thinking, he starts in '27 and he works, did you work –

BK: We had machined coal.

MB: Did you have machines by the? Ok, so there was a change in those 9 years.

MK: They already had jack hammers

BK: That's what they had when I went in, jackhammers.

JK: That turned in the '30s.



BK: Yeah, in the '30s. '31, because when I went in in '36 they had them.

MK: Well, my dad used to say that his arms hurt so bad from pulling that jackhammer and that vibrating and digging coal with a jackhammer instead of a pick.

MB: Did your father, Mr. Keleschenyi, teach you about safety and things?

JK: Oh, yeah

BK: Oh, where did I have that safety rule book?

MB: Oh, you had a safety book?

BK: Oh, yeah, I don't know, as long as nobody moved them.

JK: Oh, hell I didn't know, I didn't know nothing about coal mining, you know. And you had mine cars to load and well, he showed how to set a post, we called them props. He'd tell you sent one here and he'd show you how to drill a hole in the coal to shoot it and tamp it. You had newspapers and a broomstick and we used to make our powder, black powder, put it the newspaper and the push it in the hole. Then we'd put a string to the end of it and we'd shoot the coal. He learned us all that.

MB: Were you afraid when you first went it?

JK: Oh yeah. The coal was that high.

MK: You had to crawl on your hands and knees.

JK: On Hands and knees.

BK: Berwind White Rules for Employment

MB: Oh, can I see that? That's interesting. I'd like to see your booklet.

BK: Pennsylvania Agreement 1941 and the Somerset Agreement from 1939.

MB: I wonder if I could borrow these and copy these and return them to you. I'd take them up to UPJ to the copy machine. If I could, I would return them to you before I leave.

BK: If it does you any good, there it is.

MB: Well, that's nice. Thank you.

BK: That's your rule book.

MK: Safety rule book.

BK: You had to learn that, then you had to go up to Somerset to pass the exam. If you pass the exam, then ok, you got your miner's papers, you went to work, if you didn't pass-

MB: Did you have to do that?

JK: No.

MB: Was that a union thing, maybe?

BK: No, it was the company. The company did it.

MB: The Company didn't have the rules when you went to work, but by the time you went to work in '36 they had these new rules.

BK: I had to go and see Tom Williams the state inspector. He's the one that asked me all the questions, and I had to pass before I could go in the mine.

MB: So Mr. Kosturko, you had four in your family? Did you have other brothers, did they go in the mines?

BK: Yeah.

MK: Just one brother.

MB: Just one brother and he went in the mines, too.

MK: He didn't load coal, he worked always on the main line going into the mine, they timbered it and set tracks and everything like that.

MB: How old was he when he went into the mines?

MK: He was young, too when he went in the mine.

BK: Yeah, he was young. He was about, I guess, when you're 16 you're going in.

MB: So how much school did you get to go to? How long did you get to go to school?

MK: They all went to 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

MB: To 8<sup>th</sup> grade, I see.

MK: Did you go to 8<sup>th</sup> grade, too, Joe?

JK: No, 7<sup>th</sup>.

MK: Did you quit?

JK: I didn't want to go to school, I wanted to go to work.

MK: It was always better to make some money.

MB: Your father worked with you, so he must have wanted you to go in to the mines.

JK: Well, I had to go with him because you couldn't go with anybody else.

MK: Nobody wanted to be responsible for you.

MB: I see. And there really weren't any other jobs that you could go to when you finished school, were there? There's really nothing else that you could do.

MK: Well, there was they could have gone to the brick yard here because the brick plant was working full blast then.

MB: That was the only other kind of thing there was.

JK: And then Johnstown steel mills, but you had to take the trolley.

MK: Take the trolley to Johnstown to take a steel mill job. Of course, there were some men from Windber who used to go down on the trolley.

JK: Oh, yeah, lots of them.

MK: They went down.

MB: Well, what was it like working in The Depression then? The '30s, well '29, '30, '31. Do you have any memory of that? Did the mines work very much?

JK: No, that was bad, we worked 2 days a week. That was 2 days a week at that time

MK: In the '30s. I remember my mother saying in 1935 my sister was born, she was the youngest in the family, that my father worked 2 days a week- he had a \$12 pay. And she had to borrow money from Ted's aunt to pay the hospital bill because it was \$25 to have a delivery in the Windber hospital and that was the first delivery- all the rest of us were born at home. You always had either a midwife come to the house or the doctor came. Dr. Benchoff, Dr. Brennan, Dr. Burkheimer, they'd come and deliver babies, but now this, I was already 13 years old and my mother had like a change of life baby and figured well, instead of being in the house with all these kids, she's going to go to the hospital to have this baby. So my sister was the first one born from our family in the Windber hospital. The rest of us were all born at home.

MB: Were you born at home?

BK: I was born at home.

MB: And you, too, I suppose?

JK: Oh, yeah.

MB: Everyone I suppose.

BK: We'd have to go and get the midwife. That's what was on my birth certificate. You know, I wasn't even registered in Harrisburg?

MB: I understand that was fairly common.

MK: A lot of people weren't.

BK: Because you don't know if they turned it in or not, but when I was old enough to get Social Security, I go down, and I've been going by William all of my life, my baptism was Valant.

MK: Valant is William in Slovak. But she couldn't make them understand that.

BK: So I'm registered at Valant in Harrisburg and William here, but like they told me, in case I go to Europe, I might as well put Valant.

MK: Valant William.

JK: Will they call you Valant?

MK: Well, that's William in Slovak.

BK: Valant in Slovak and William in English.

JK: So then what's Yilly?

BK: Oh, that's a nickname.

MK: A nickname. That was just a nickname.

JK: Because Joe calls you Yilly.

MK: That's just a nickname he had when he was a kid.

JK: Oh.

MK: Like my brother Stephen has a nickname Bud, everyone calls him Bud.

JK: And Janche, that's John.

MK: Well, these were in Hungarian. See.

JK: Yeah. Stefan, or Pishta

MK: Pishta

MB: So what was Windber like when you were growing up? Tell me like, how you would describe Windber when you were growing up? What kind of a town was it?

JK: Well, it was a boom town.

MB: Was it?

JK: Coal.

BK: Windber White was a scouting

MK: They had 3 Jewish stores, 2 or 3 little Italian stores

JK: Everybody had little grocery stores.

MK: There was one family in Windber that was colored.

MB: Oh really, I had never heard of that.

MK: That was, what was their name?

BK: I don't know last name, I know Tom.

MK: West- oh no, there were 2 families because 1 lived on the corner and one lived –

JK: Jasper West and then there was John Holmes and Tommy that had that restaurant.

MK: Well, that was later on, Tommy came from New York or something.

BK: They had restaurant.

MK: Right next to the Opera House there was a little colored guy had a restaurant.

MB: I didn't know what. I didn't realize that there were any blacks in Windber at all.

JK: Dinah- he used to live on top of old Wally Ford's garage.

MK: Yeah, he died there, too. They found dead. They all died out, moved out and there was no more colored people, there still isn't no colored people in Windber.

BK: I think I see one here in the church. I don't know where she comes from.

MK: I don't know where she comes from.

MB: Well, what about Jewish people? I understand that at one time there were at least a few Jewish families.

MK: Oh, there are lots of Jewish people. The Brickers in Windber. Harry Bricker, Saul Bricker, Philingers were Jewish.

BK: Nelson's were Jewish.

MB: But they never had a synagogue or a temple of their own?

MK: No. They had to go Johnstown.

BK: Nelson's were Jewish.

MK: No they were not. They were Swedish people.

BK: Sheeney Nelson the junk man?

MK: Oh, that Nelson. Yeah. The other Nelson was in the high school.

BK: And the one that run the slaughterhouse. His name was Ike something. He used to run the slaughterhouse down by 9<sup>th</sup> Street someplace?

JK: Oh, that was Ott.

BK: That was a rabbi

JK: Ott.

BK: Oh, I don't know.

MK: Oh, that's Brethren Ott.

BK: He was a rabbi. People would bring their chickens there and he'd have a long knife and he'd – ok them them home

MB: What about Swedish people? I guess there was a Swedish group in Windber at one time.

JK: Swedes?

MB: Yeah, do you remember anything?

BK: Yeah, quite a few farmers here.

MK: Dalberts were Swedes.

BK: Dalberts were Swedes

JK: Brumbaugh were, Butterbaugh

MK: Butterbaugh were Swedes.

MB: I guess Stolkhom Avenue was named –

MK: No, Stolkhom Avenue was mixed people. There was Italians, a lot

BK: There were Swedes that lived on Stolkhom Avenue in the house next to Babich- they lived here and

MB: So do you think that some like nationalities picked out like places to live with their nationalities – like Hungarians?

BK: Yeah, Hungarians lived in one place

MK: [Mines] 35, 36

BK: [Mines] 35, 36, 42, that was mostly Hungarians and then you had – take down here in Windber that was mostly Italians.

MB: Where did most of the Polish people live?

BK: The Polish lived –

MK: They lived mixed in with the Hungarians.

BK: That was mixed.

MK: Mine 40 was a lot of Polish, Mine 36 there's Polish people. 35- they called them hunky people who lived up there.

MB: Do you think that people who were sort of like of English descent whose relatives had been born in America, generations before, how did they see these people from Eastern Europe?

MK: They hated us when we were kids. We called them Johnny Bulls and they called us hunkies.

MB: Did they?

MK: Yeah and if you was Johnny Bull you cliqued in with those kids and if you were hunky, they didn't want to play with you at the school. I remember that when I went to school. They were like that.

JK: Italians they called them Dagos.

MK: Calling the Italian kids Dagos

MB: What about jobs, were there differences like if you were American born or English could you get a better job with the company than you could- or not?

BK: No, that didn't make no difference.

MB: No?

JK: At the coal mines.

BK: No.

JK: As long as you had a strong back and a weak mind, you had a job.

MK: That's the way that worked.

MB: Did you have

### **End of Tape 1 Side B**

### **Beginning of Tape 2 Side A (March 13, 1984)**

MB: Did they go in?

BK: One half-sister and two regular sisters. Of course they're all dead now. I'm the only one left.

MB: Oh are you? Did your step-brothers go in the mines, too?

BK: No, one he was in the store business, he worked at Eureka stores here in Windber

MB: Ok, I see.

BK: The oldest one and then the youngest one he was in Detroit. He was a floater.

MK: Odd jobs, whatever came around.

MB: So what do you remember about your schools? What were your teachers like, what were your schools like?

JK: We had good teachers and we had bad teachers. The good ones they wouldn't like you, but the bad ones, they would. We got it with a strap. Well, no, you wouldn't remember that.

MK: They paddled when I went to school.

JK: We had paddles.

MK: But they didn't use the hose.

JK: They used the hose and then they had a strap like a razor strap.

MB: My father had one of those.

JK: They wouldn't get you a good hurting lick.

MK: But they got you that it stung. Mostly our teachers over the fingers with the ruler.

JK: Well, the way we got it-



MK: If you didn't write-

JK: We'd put our fingers like that and then she'd come with the rule, give you a couple cracks.

MK: If you didn't write nice.

MB: Well did you all know English before you went to school?

MK: Oh yeah.

MB: Well, because some didn't because when their parents spoke their language at home.

BK: Well, when I went to school, I went to parochial school.

MK: Slovak school.

BK: Slovak school. I went there 4 years and then I was getting disgusted going way over here and then way over there. They said we could go to public school. So finally I decided, my mom didn't even know what I was going to do. I quit. A couple days I just walked up to the school and then I'd come back and then I started in the public school.

MB: Did you speak Slovak at home Mr. Kosturko?

BK: That's the first thing you learned, the Slovak you speak your language and then you speak English.

MB: But at home, with your parents, did you speak Slovak?

MK: It was always in Slovak. His mother and father didn't talk in English language.

MB: What about your parents, what did you speak at home?

MK: We talked in Hungarian all the time at home, too. But my father could talk broken English pretty good.

MB: So you didn't have a problem adjusting when you went to school?

MK: No, no, I could talk.

BK: She can talk better Slovak than me and she's Hungarian.

MB: What about you Mr. Keleschenyi?

JK: Well, we talked Hungarian at home because that's all the old people knew. They spoke English, but broken.

MK: I'll always remember about Bill's mother, she talked broken English and she'd meet anybody and they say, hi Mrs. How are you and she'd say I pretty good. How's you? How's you? All the time. Grandma would say, I pretty good, how's you?

MB: So, then you didn't really have to go to a special school to learn your languages then?

MK: No.

MB: You really just learned them from being around.

MK: We started first grade and then we were already-

MB: Well tell me about getting married, like between the nationalities. Would there be a problem like a Slovak marrying a Hungarian?

MK: As long as we married Catholic, that was ok with the family. But if we went to marry a Protestant, oh my God the house roof would have come off.

MB: What about a Greek Catholic? Was there a problem?

MK: Well, Joe he married a Greek Catholic. Anna is Greek Catholic and he's Hungarian Reformed.

MB: Oh, Mr. Kosturko you're Reformed.

MK: But Joe he just went along with that. He went to her church and they were married.

MB: I guess there was fairly large Reformed community here in Windber.

BK: Yes, it was a big one.

MK: Sure, there were a lot of Hungarian Reformed.

MB: What can you tell me about that. I don't really know much about that because it doesn't really exist anymore.

MK: The church burned down.

BK: We had a church on 4<sup>th</sup> Street. I went to school there, Hungarian school, you know, during the summer months. I think we went two months.

JK: It was catechism.

BK: It was like catechism and then the Bible.

MK: Well that's the Bible, catechism.

BK: Well Catholic.

MK: But then they taught you to write in Hungarian, too. I went to a little bit of Hungarian school, too at the church.

MB: Did you go to the Reformed Church?

MK: No, I went to the Hungarian, St. Mary's. Father Chree was there.

BK: There was a big church in Johnstown. Protestant church. Reformed.

MK: That was Protestant.

BK: Reformed, Protestant.

MB: So that's interesting. I don't really know much about it, I don't know what to ask you.

BK: Well, the old people died off. The old reformed people, they all died and then the younger generation give it up.

MK: They didn't give it up, they joined, some of them joined the Lutheran church and some joined the Methodist church because lately, I see that if some Hungarian Reformed dies they bury them from the Methodist church here.

MB: Oh, I see.

BK: Then the church burned down and that's it.

MK: They never did rebuild the church after that.

BK: No, they tore everything down.

MK: It was on the street where the hospital is.

MB: Yeah. I remember that when I lived here. That's interesting, so.

MK: I remember going there for Hungarian suppers, it was my people at the Hungarian church and their people would come to St. Mary's when they had suppers.

MB: There wasn't any conflict there even though one was Protestant and the other Catholic.

MK: No, they got along nice.

MB: The 2 Hungarian groups got along ok.

MK: Oh, yeah. They didn't have no trouble there. Only thing I remember is I remember growing up is if they were Dago or Johnny Bull or we were Hunkies. That I remember in school all the time. You're a hunky or you're a Johnny Bull.

MB: Do you remember many dances or things like that.

MK: At the church?

MB: Yeah, or at a hall or something.

BK: Yeah, yeah.

MK: We went to the church dances, they had great dances.

BK: Great dances, I went to great dances.

MB: Did you?

BK: Of course, we were just small then. 14, 13 years old.

MB: Were they fun?

MK: They'd have bazaars and they'd have nice cakes and they'd chance these cakes off and there was Mr. Mulnar from 37, he was a Hungarian man, he was going around with a goose on his neck. Trying to sell chances for a liba, they called that in Hungarian. Liba. I says I remember little things like that. And these grapes hanging from all the ceilings. And if you stole a grape and they caught you, they took you to the beto- that was the judge, and you had to pay a fine for the grapes.

MB: That sounds like a very vivid dance. They did that every fall at harvest time?

MK: Every fall. In the fall they had it. And then every year, like now, before Lent they'd have a big kielbasa supper. They used to kill, slaughter pigs and they made kielbasa and hulka and then in the, around, before Christmas they'd always make big barrels of sauerkraut for the church. They'd cut the sauerkraut and tamp it into barrels and then when they had this hulka supper they'd have mashed potatoes, and this Hungarian hulka, kielbasa, and they'd fry this cabbage, it wasn't exactly real sour, but it was already getting to the point and it was real tasty. A little big sweet and soury like, you know? It was really tasty.

JK: And where are you from?

MB: I'm from, originally I'm from Windber. I lived in Mine 40.

JK: 40?

MB: Uh, huh. My father was a miner for many years and I'm studying, writing a dissertation. That's what this is about.

JK: I worked at Mine 40 for about 40 some years.

MB: My father is John Allen.

JK: Allen?

MK: Yelenick

MB: Do you remember much about elections? Does anybody remember much about elections in the area? Or early elections. In Windber or Presidential. I guess when FDR that was a big thing.

BK: I remember him. When he come in Johnstown and Scalp.

MK: Roosevelt came through Scalp.

MB: Did he? When did he do that?

BK: When he was first getting elected.

MB: Did he? I didn't know that. I didn't know he had ever been there.

JK: He started at Johnstown

MK: He got the Johnstown River project, built all the banks up on the rivers.

MB: Do you remember hearing much about elections and voting, though? I understand that until the '30s this was a Republican area and that the Berwind people often encouraged people to vote Republican. Do you know any stories?

JK, MK, BK: Yeah

JK: My father was a Democrat. If he wouldn't have changed his party, he wouldn't have had his job.

MK: That's right.

MB: How did they try – I don't understand, how did they get this through to people? How did they tell?

BK: Well when they were up working in the mines, they'd come by and say I want you to vote straight Republican

JK: And then they see, they know, they look in the registers and they see who is a Republican and who is a Democrat.

MB: I see, so for the primaries, but for the general.

BK: I say put me down as a Republican so when he goes down to vote, Democrat.

MB: So when FDR came in and then they voted Democrat.

MK: They felt more free, they were afraid, the people. Because they were threatened for their jobs.

BK: They lost their jobs.

JK: But when Roosevelt came in, he changed that. You vote, you register what you wanted, not go by somebody else.

MB: So then people weren't so afraid anymore, they could do what they wanted to. The whole picture that I get of Windber before the '30s was that it was so tightly controlled.

BK: It was controlled by the Berwinds, that's right.

MB: And then, it seemed to loosen up more.

MK: Like I said before, you had company store books and you had to buy from the company store and you didn't have no money left over so my people went away from the book, they said no, no, no, I'll not use the company store book because I'll never have another dollar.

JK: You had to take a book. You had to buy so much and then if you got over the limit, like you bought too much, then they stopped you.

MK: They stopped you, then you couldn't buy nothing.

JK: You had to find out from the clerk's office how much you had made. If you had \$10 made, they gave you \$10 worth of food. On the book.

MK: It was terrible. Did that start to change in the '30s?

JK: Well, that's when Roosevelt got it. That all-

MK: They got a little more freedom.

BK: That changed when Roosevelt got it. Because I went down to buy myself a pair of ice skates, shoes, first thing, you go down to the clerk's office and they said check number? 432 to see how much coal I had loaded.

JK: Yes.

BK: Ok, we'll give you \$9 due bill. So that's all it was \$9 due bill.

MK: And I remember when I was a little girl in the Eureka store they didn't have cash register, they had these little tracks all along the store and they put a little box and the little box went up on the electric track-

JK: Back to the office

MK: Upstairs there was an office and then they'd give you the change and the receipt and this little box would come down to where the clerk was and she'd give you the change.

MB: So they never handled any money.

MK: No, they didn't have the money. They had certain people who handled the money who were smart and went through high school.

MB: I see, goodness.

MK: Boy, that was something. They didn't have the cash registers when I was little, I remember that. Then, later on, they got them.

MB: So did you have any heroes, like when you were growing up in Windber.

MK: Sure, Johnny Weissmuller

BK: Johnny Weissmuller

MB: Johnny Weissmuller. Everybody like him.

MK: Everybody knew Johnny Weissmuller was from Windber.

JK: And then Hagan boys. All baseball players.

MB: Oh, I didn't know them.

JK: Hagan.

MB: Oh, tell me about sports. Did you have like-

JK: Baseball, football

MB: Were these town teams or were these ethnic teams.

MK: Dago teams or hunky teams or what?

JK: Town teams, we had a baseball team. They were called the Windber Sluggers.

MK: Windber Sluggers?

JK: Yeah

MB: I've seen the Mujars, too.

JK: Yeah, the Mujars, too

MB: I've seen pictures.

JK: Then they had the Ashtolla, what did they call that ball team up there?

BK: Oh, I don't know.

JK: My brother in law played in it. Ashtolla something. I just forget now. Then Scalp had a baseball team.

MB: They had their own then?

MK: Did they have the William Penn baseball team?

JK: Yeah, that's it. The William Penn baseball team.

MK: William Penn baseball team.

JK: Then the Windber High School football.

MB: So, at one time there seemed to be a lot of people living in Scalp, too I guess, compared to now, maybe.

JK: Yeah.

MB: So did people pretty much stay in Windber or did they go to Johnstown and other places very much when you were growing up.

JK: No, we all stayed.

MK: Unless they went to visit. Like, we had –

JK: We had nowhere to go.

MK: We had friends up in 42 and then we'd catch the train for the library. And my mother and father and us kids would catch the train for Mine 42 or else we called a Taxi and Plymic had the taxi in Windber. And we got in a taxi and went to 42 and we told them we were going to stay til 5:00 and he'd come back for us.

MB: What did you do in 42 when you got there?

MK: Well, we had relatives there, we'd stay for the afternoon.

MB: But you didn't go to Johnstown very much.

MK: Oh, yes, on the streetcar. I remember my brothers' Godmother lived in down in Moraleville and we had to take the street car and my brothers, they never wanted to go. So before we got in the street car, they got a whipping. They didn't want to ride the street car. So we'd ride the street car and go down Jefferson Avenue, down through Scalp, down along the creek, way down into Johnstown. That was a treat when we got to go on the street car. And I remember my mother going to Glossers on the street car. And every time she went to Glossers I got a new dress, that's why I remember, when I was a little girl and when they lived above Carver's Park, I wasn't born yet, then, mom used to tell me she used to walk down that big hill to Carver's Park. From Paint



Creek they called it, down over the hill into Mine 30 and then she'd catch the street car then and then she'd go to Glosser's. But she said she used to buy groceries, and just like the old hunky people she always took a sack, knapsack made out of oil cloth and also a table cloth and she'd pack all her stuff in that table cloth and fold it, 4 corners and on her back and up the hill she'd go. She says my dad usually knew what time she'd be coming back and he'd coming down the road to meet her to help her carry this stuff. She said they had only one little old company store up there and they could buy food and stuff, but when it came to buying shoes or dresses or underwear they already went down into Glossers to buy.

MB: They were living in Mine 30 then?

MK: No, Wissinger. And she had to come down that big hill and she said she'd bring a tablecloth and when she got on the street car with all of her stuff, she'd put it in there and she said even the street car driver would help her pack that on her back and she'd carry that over the bridge and up the hill to Carter's and then from there she had to go further on up the Jessie Hill.

JK: That's where I was going up to 37 from the street car and go up the hill.

MK: Get off the street car line up below 37 and walk up through the woods up to the houses.

MB: So there was a lot more transportation then than there is now.

MK: And then she said my dad was working everyday so he decided he was going to buy a brand new car, he bought a Ford and I have a picture of that someplace. That was a Model A or a Model T.

BK: Model T Ford.

JK: Model T. I remember that.

MK: And the top came down like a convertible. So then she said it was easier because my dad took her shopping every Saturday they went to Glossers or they came either to Windber and then they'd go back up the hill and she said those ruts in the road were so bad there was no paved roads, you used to bounce that your head would hit the top of the car. So then my dad was teaching her to drive. She said she was doing real nice and then she said – he was showing her how to back up and when she tried to backup she pushed the picket fence gate and all down in their year and she said she got so scared and she would never drive after that. So then when I was learning to drive back in '56 I think I got my license, I was scared, I said oh I'm afraid. She used to tell me how- (In Hungarian) She'd say go my daughter, how good it's going to be for you. She said you're going to be old with no one to take you anywhere and you can drive yourself. Boy I thank the day she told me that. That and the oil furnace where you just turn the thermostat, you don't have to fire coal.

MB: Right, all those coal stoves.

MK: I said, boy, that was the best thing I ever got, my driver's license. Believe me. Then later on, we started to get things better. I said I had my second child before I had a refrigerator. I had an icebox. They used to bring, Tony the iceman used to bring ice then after that, things got a little better for us.

MB: I guess, were there any periods when the mines worked really well?

MK: Mine 40 was working good when my dad was working.

JK: 43 worked pretty good. During the war.

MB: Oh during the war?

MK: They even asked you if you wanted to work on Saturdays.

JK: I worked a lot of Saturdays and Sundays.

MK: You better believe it.

JK: I worked Christmas Day over there at 40.

MB: During the war?

MK: During the war, yeah.

MB: Was that the main time you can remember the mines really working well like that, lots of work?

MK: They were good whenever we were wee, wee little kids, but they didn't get paid. Like I said, my dad went early in the morning, come home it was dark, we could barely see my dad. It was time for us to go to bed. But they didn't get paid like during the wartime. During the wartime everybody was working and money was coming in nice then.

MB: So what do you men think of John L. Lewis?

MK: Oh, God bless him, he did a lot.

JK: Yeah, I thought a lot of him. The miners did.

MK: He did lots for the poor man.

BK: Worked for the poor man.

MK: So did Roosevelt do lots for the poor man.

JK: Roosevelt was another one.

MK: Oh, did he do a lot.

JK: Of course Roosevelt was the one that started everything.

BK: That one time we went on strike in '37, that's when John L. Lewis went against Roosevelt. Roosevelt said well, I'll get the miners, I'll get the Marines and the Army to work in the mine, there shall be a flag, ok, well they hoist the flag up but we're still on strike. Well, we went back to work, they said, well, the government will back it— first paycheck comes, Berwind White— well where in the hell was the government on there? And go on another strike. Didn't go back in until they got what they wanted. But John L. Lewis told Roosevelt go to hell, boy- you're not going to tell me what to do with my men.

MK: That was always there's a slogan: No contract, no work." For the miners.

BK: John L. Lewis, he come out straight, boy, he told you what he thought of you.

MB: So what do you think of the changes since his lifetime now in the union and stuff?

JK: I don't think much of it today. It ain't gone right. There's something wrong with the unions.

BK: Ain't gone right.

JK: Something wrong.

MB: Do you think it's the leadership?

MK: They don't have a strong leader.

JK: It could be the leadership.

MB: Or is it something else? I guess there are some fights and struggles going on with Bennett, too. What about benefits now, is it hard to get black lung benefits now?

MK: Yes, now it is.

BK: Yeah

JK: Yes.

MB: Is it?

MK: Very hard to get your black lung.

MB: Yeah, someone was telling me that it was easier before and now it's getting harder.

MK: Same as it is to get social security disability. Before, if you had problems, if you had arthritis, you went to the doctor and he filled your paper out, it was easier to get it. Now I worked for 20 years at the Windber hospital and I used to pity those men, how I knew they had the black lung, they had silicosis and the doctor would write still able to work, still able to work. And I

always used to say as long as a man can roll over in his bed, he's not disabled- the Social Security. That's how they made it look.

MB: When did it change like that?

MK: In the '60.

MB: That late.

MK: Before the '60s you could get Social Security better. After the '60s then it was real hard to get Social Security and now it's even worse to get disability. You have to be half dead and then, like I said, if you can roll over in your bed, they'll say that you're able.

MB: I was curious, because I haven't met anyone who met the Berwinds. The Berwind family who owned the mines. Did anyone ever meet them?

MK: No, but I'll tell you one thing, the Berwinds was awful dirty. That's the dirtiest people I'll ever meet. They sold the Windber hospital to the Memorial for a dollar transaction. Then our doctors bought it back for I think 3 million. All the doctors chipped in to buy back the hospital. Now, if they were going to close up the mines, Eureka stores, couldn't he have donated this to the Windber people? In memory of the Berwind family? Or either to Dr. Wheeling because he was here for years and years and years, so then they gave the hospital over to memorial and then our doctors bought it back from memorial and now Dr. George was on the committee to buy the hospital back so they call it the Windber Hospital, Wheeling Clinic. Because it was Dr. George who wanted it back for the people. I thought that was dirty, the Berwind's to do that. They could have left it here in memory of the Berwind family.

BK: Because you ain't got nothing here in Windber that the Berwinds ever done. The Berwinds never put up a school or never put up a clinic or nothing.

JK: They didn't do nothing.

BK: I look at Hershey, Pennsylvania, Mr. Hershey, look what he did.

MB: I haven't been there, so I don't know.

BK: He built a hospital in there in Hershey, he built schools in Hershey when they didn't have any.

MK: But Berwind didn't.

MB: Well they never lived here. They were living in Philadelphia.

MK: Yeah, they were in Philadelphia. But Berwind left a big hospital here.

BK: He could have left that hospital here for the people. In memorial for Berwind. Nothing.

MB: I didn't realize. I had never heard that story. That's interesting.

BK: That's because they were talking about it, when the mine shut down in Windber, it's going to be a ghost town.

MK: It is!

BK: But it ain't like you see other coal miners or other coal towns, I mean completely dead.

MK: Well, you might as well say it's dead it wasn't for the firehall and the Windber Hotel and the Palace Hotel, what is there?

BK: Well it's dying out.

MK: And there's one clothing store. Jovey's and the reason that is is because that guy is from Windber. He's a Windber fellow.

BK: One furniture store, Consolos

MB: And the young people, they have to go someplace else to get jobs.

MK: As soon as they get out of high school they have to go someplace else, summer belts, out west where there's work because there's nothing around here.

BK: Anything you go there are the old timers, the old time people. Pensioners.

JK: Well, they're tearing Windber down now. Opera House is gone.

MK: The Arcadia has some kind of office upstairs.

JK: Yeah, they say they're going to tear that down, too.

BK: Yeah, that's going to go down.

MK: And that was such a beautiful theater. I always felt like such a big shot when we went to the Arcadia because it cost more money. You went to the poorer show that was the Opera House you could go for a nickel, you brought your brother or sister for a penny more and they went to a dime or 11 cents if two of you went. I said we went there every Saturday afternoon, but when we had money to go to the Arcadia, that was 15 cents, then I felt like I was a big shot. I really did.

BK: Every Christmas we used to get a pass to go to the Arcadia.

MK: From the school we'd get a pass to go. And when you waked in there they had a rug that went all the way down through the theater, boy, and the mirrors on the wall. You said, wow, I'm in a rich place. I felt like a big shot then. And now that place, the flood hit it so bad.

MB: I guess there was a lot of damage.

MK: They sort of cleaned it all up, but then they started having some-

BK: sinning and sick shows

MK: They started some stage shows. Then they got another flood.

BK: Then they had a filthy movie in there. And then they shut it down.

MK: They said it was it smelled, it was so moldy in there, the plaster falling off the ceiling. It broke my heart to go in there after the flood to see how nice theater that was. It was a beautiful theater, The Arcadia, it really was.

MB: That's a shame. So you can really see the changes over the years having lived here for so long.

MK: Now compared to the Opera House, now that was a rat infested place. You would go up stairs. Every Tuesday we would have BINGO night.

BK: Peanut heaven.

MK: Peanut heaven we called it. In the balcony. The rats would be running around in there.

MB: Oh, dear.

MK: That one woman, she started screaming and tapping and she killed the rat and kicked it out in the middle of the aisle. Those were the days, I tell you.

MB: Do you hope for anything in the future for here at all? See anything.

MK: I don't see nothing coming back to Windber.

JK: I don't see nothing.

MK: No more.

MB: Such a beautiful area.

JK: Look at Johnstown, Johnstown is finished, you might as well say it's finished.

MK: All the stores went into the malls. Because they couldn't make a go downtown. Some of the merchants still have little stores in Johnstown downtown, but most of them they quit and went to the mall.

JK: But I mean about the works, Johnstown. Look what they're doing with that plant, that's closing down. Bethlehem Steel is going to close they say in the next 5 to 10 years it's done. They're not remodeling nothing.

MK: I see today in today's paper, it says in US news that steel will not change their mind. They had an excuse that they wanted to pull out and they just gave them- this is it, take it or leave it. Is there any chance that the workers could buy?

**End of Tape 2 Side A**

**End of the Interview (March 13, 1984)**