

INTERVIEWS WITH THADDEUS KUSH
By Mildred Allen Beik

Windber, PA

February 23 and February 29, 1984

TK = Thaddeus Kush (1899-1986)

MB = Millie Beik

Beginning of Interview (February 23, 1984)

Beginning of Tape 1 (February 23, 1984)

MB: Do you mind if I take a couple of notes, so I can ask you a couple of questions.

TK: Sure, I hope I can answer.

MB: Wonderful, Tell me your full name?

TK: Thaddeus Kush

MB: Could you tell me when you were born?

TK: 1899, October the 24th

MB: So that would make you?

TK: 84, I'll be 85 in October

MB: Ok, if you could tell me about your family's background, where was your father born?

TK: In Poland

MB: Do you know any specific village he was born, or place in Poland?

TK: Its Galicia, Krono

MB: Was your mother from there

TK: Yes

MB: So what did they do when they were living in Galicia?

TK: When my mother was young she was a cook for the army officers, my father was a brick layer, from Krakow

MB: And he was a bricklayer?

TK: Yes and Bricklayer and stone mason.

MB: Did you parents ever go to school at all in Galicia?

TK: Yes, but I don't know how many years, not to many years.

MB: What kind of school did they go to?

TK: It was like a government school, ruled over by the government.

MB: Was your family they under a Czar regime, or had they lived under some under government?

TK: They lived under the government of Austro Hungarian. Franz Joseph

MB: Were you born there?

TK: Over there?

MB: In one of the villages?

TK: No in the town of Krakow

MB: So you were born there in 1889, did you have any brothers and sisters that were born there?

TK: 9 of us at least

MB: Did your parents ever talk about their early work experience?, How old were they when they first began working

TK: I really can't remember how old they were when they started working.

MB: How old were you when you came to America?

TK: I was fourteen years old.

MB: Fourteen! So you spent some time there?

TK: Oh yeah, I remember everything about that

MB: Well tell me what was life like there from your childhood and what do you remember?

TK: I went to school there from 6 to 14, I didn't finish High school, because we had to come here, so I didn't receive my diploma from High School.

MB: So what language were you speaking then?

TK: Polish and German

MB: Polish was your parents native Language?

TK: Yes, in Galicia, they called it a small pawn. It was under the ruler Franz Joseph, we were free, unlike Russia and Germany was under control. Then one day they took Poland apart, and Germany got a part of it, Austria got a part of it, and Russia got a part of it, for most of the time it was part of Russia, and Germany it took the richest part of Poland, oil and coal, and big steel mills and everything they had. But that's what it was like in Poland, but they didn't bug us at all. We had to talk German, and the Russians were the same way, we had school one hour a day we had to talk German. We were free people, no government cared as long as they got their taxes

MB: Did your father work as a bricklayer then?

TK: Yes, he was, he built churches and made his own mold, he was shipped from Krakow to build a church. And that's how my parents met and got married.

MB: Did he travel around a lot?

TK: Yes, mostly he was working in a big steel mill, he was a brick layer over there, and he would go there once a week if it wasn't too far, he took a train to get there.

MB: So you didn't get to see him that much when you were a little kid?

TK: Oh no we got to see him, we had a good living, but he didn't miss any.

MB: So did your mother work as a cook from childhood?

TK: She was pretty old when she got started, I think she was 22 when she got married?

MB: Do you know anything about how they got married?

TK: No, I wasn't born then.

MB: No of course not, those stories just have to come from other people, sometimes parents arranged marriage. But did you ever hear any stories about how your parents met? Sometimes aunts and uncles would tell stories about how they met or how they got together to get married. Sometimes parents play the role and sometimes not.

TK: There was a family on my mother's side, brothers they were all shoemakers, they always had a big thing of shoes, they would go to the markets in town, and would drive a cart full of shoes in it

MB: Did you have a big market in your town?

TK: Oh yeah, we had a big one, just as big as any other.

MB: Why don't you tell me something about the town you grew up in?

TK: There was three churches, one was a cathedral, and one was a protestant and one was catholic, they also had a sisters home to care for small children, like a Kinden gardener. They had a bakery's, and a butchers all that and a court house a couple of jails. The city was fortified, there was a 15 feet high stone wall around the city, and we used to climb up the wall, we go to school have a lot of fun, in schools they were punishing the youths, children getting beat about.

MB: Were there a lot of nationalities, were there different languages being spoken?

TK: All Polish, some Germans were working in refineries, you see there were some oil fields outside the city a couple of miles away, they had refinery which had a lot of German Engineers and Jewish engineers. I don't remember any different languages, I remember nationality. But the

Russians, they called them White Russians, what kills me is that it takes 17 meters to make one European mile,

We had this bus going from the city to Czechoslovakia. And that was a lot of miles, we used to jump of the back and the driver he would see us you know he had a big whip.

MB: Was there a big city near you? What was the closest bug city that people talk about?

TK: On the Ukraine border there was Krakow

MB: Did your parents go to the city much?

TK: Not much we produced everything we needed, but Hungary was a young California, they got the fruits underneath their trees, and we got nothing, they was coming over and selling it. They got into fights and everything.

MB: Peddler's, were they Peddlers?

TK: Yes, they would go from city from city and go around fighting

MB: What kind of house did you live in?

TK: Well we were living in Uncles house it was a brick house , when I was a kid right across the river I had a little bench and it had a banister, we used to slid on that, one day my friends pushed me to hard and I fell on my head, I was un-conscious for 3 or 4 days. The second time in 1912-13, there was a flood, and this continued until they put in the cement bridge. And there was a wooden house, we lived in that for a while, when the bridge was going across, so they ripped the house up. The government built up another house belonging to all orphans. So that was biggest flood I ever knew, we had other ones but that was the biggest flood I ever knew. But the houses on the foundation, the houses were about that high, we tied our house to the neighbor's fence, and we jumped in the water. And I forget I think it was Sunday after they changed, the people would go down to the bridge and watch, my first cousin was in the army, and he was an engineer

in the army and he knew how to go about the water, and he took his mother, she was just an small woman and chunky and he couldn't do nothing with her, he got her and she jumped in the water there, before she jumped in, she had to count to ten and he couldn't handle that cause the water was too thick. My mother and my sister, they weren't with me, so I was by myself when I jumped in. And I started going all over the place

And my father he was making harnesses for horses, things that, and he had a raw hide and he put it in the creek, cause the creek was only across the street, he had cable , he took the raw hide. I jumped in the water I started swimming across and then boom, you see another bridge falling, and I went under water, and finally I got out.

MB: So that's a vivid memory you have, quite an experience.

TK: Yeah I had two big accidents over there, I got into a coma.

MB: I'll get to that, Where did you go to church?

TK: The cathedral

MB: The catholic cathedral?

TK: Yes I was Catholic and the Jews had a synagogue, then there was a textile school

MB: A Textile school?

TK: Yes, they had a big factory, I don't know whatever the hell you would call it. they were dry goods, and the school it was all fancy they were making tablecloths and stuff like that and there were quite a few Russians coming for that school, from Czechoslovakia and Hungary, but 3 or 4 times a year, the priest got the Pope to come and have mass for the Russians. He liked hold confessions mostly for the White Russians. White Russians, they were regular Russians they hardly could understand themselves. So that's how it was, it was a factory there, they were making dry goods

MB: So were there any special events held in your community?

TK: A lot of villages used to hold all kinds of events.

MB: Did you work in Galicia?

TK: Yes I worked building the courthouse, my job was to retrieve the cement, and I was 14 years old.

MB: Did you get paid for that job

TK: Oh yeah, I got paid, but I don't remember how much

MB: Did you give the money to your parents?

TK: Yes

MB: Were your Parents strict?

TK: Yes they were strict that's for sure, I used to get my licking,

See my neighbor he was the butcher and I would always seek up on him. He was gone on a wagon and would drive his cattle, pigs, cows, or sheep to the slaughter house, from there to the high school and he be sitting on the back there and I could be hidden. So used to seek in his slaughterhouse stay there and come to work. "Um", implies he ate some meat while he was there. There dad was waiting in my bed the next morning, and told me to come to the bedroom, And he saw that I came in late, and he had to moan me.

MB: He had to moan you!

TK: That's how strict they was.

MB: Well did you work very long?

TK: No, we didn't have much time to, we had from school to dinner time, but there was enough time for swimming and fishing.

MB: How did you parents decide to come to America?

TK: Well my Dad had been out first, so we had some ground there, and my Aunts and Uncles they got a piece of ground there from my grandmother. So we had a piece of ground there and we got that figured, we were able to come here and make a little money and then we would go home.

MB: Had anyone else come here from your family or village?

TK: Well no one else from my family, but lots of people came over from villages.

MB: So they had heard about America from somewhere?

TK: Yeah, they all knew, I had a lot of friends that came over here from Europe.

MB: Do you remember when you were living in Galicia and talking about America before?

TK: Yes, my dad used to send me stamps and newspapers from over here, I really couldn't read anything on them.

MB: Do you remember when it first came over, did he come once or more than once?

TK: 1914, I was fourteen years old at the time

MB: But he came first and worked and sent things back?

TK: Yes he worked here six years

MB: Six years

TK: He didn't want us to come

MB: Why?

TK: He didn't want us to have to work in the coal mines, he wanted us to get a trade, me I went for the butcher. My blood uncle he was a mechanic in an oil wells. So I went over there to get a job as a mechanic, my mom she didn't even say nothing about it. To pay for our trip she borrowed money over there in order to come

MB: So why did he come the first time, if he had a trade wasn't he able to get work?

TK: I don't really know

MB: But when he was back in Galicia he was a bricklayer?

TK: Yes he worked all summers as a Bricklayer, he worked all summer, but in the winter they didn't have much work.

MB: Was it harder to make a living then

TK: We had a good living. See he wanted to make money and then go back home.

MB: So you were old enough to remember the trip over?

TK: We had to stay in ocean for one day and one night it was so rough.

MB: What port did you leave from?

TK: From Rotterdam?

MB: How did you get there from your town? Train?

TK: We went on a train

MB: Who all came?

TK: 2 sisters and my mother and brother, he's dead now, it was a nice trip, we were afraid when passing that station where they examined ya before you come. And that day or the day before my brother ran out of the house and stepped on a glass bottle or something and he cut his foot pretty badly right across, so we had a rough time finding a doctor to fix him up over there.

MB: Did your parents have to get special papers to come in.

MB: Tell me more about coming over?

TK: We missed our regular boat

MB: Oh you did?

TK: On account of my brother cutting his foot, we had to wait for another one

MB: Do your remember the name of the boat you came in on

TK: Northern, Northern Hemisphere, Northern boat

MB: Do you remember what season of the year, was it fall or spring?

TK: It was October, it wasn't bad, but months like that on the Ocean it usually gets bad, storms all over.

MB: Did you get sick?

TK: No, everybody was sick, I didn't get sick, but when we reached shore I got sick. I had to lay down for three days.

MB: How long did the trip take?

TK: I think it took 12 days I think, I'm not sure

MB: Where did you land, New York or Philadelphia?

TK: We landed in New York, but they said it was Baltimore, but where the train comes from it could be Baltimore I don't know for sure.

MB: Did you speak any English when you came

TK: No

MB: Did you or your parents speak any English?

TK: No

MB: Was that a real problem

TK: We had trouble me and my sister, especially when we went to school. My dad wanted us to go to public school, I said what the hell they couldn't teach my sister, how could they teach me?

So I went to public school and I didn't understand, and there was a Russian girl, and she could speak good Polish, we worked together.

MB: Was that in Windber St Johns?

TK: No, it was Clymer

MB: Clymer, was that where your family was originally from?

TK: I moved right here when got married in 1927

MB: Oh I see

TK: That's about 55 or 56 years now

MB: Did you live from the time you arrived to 1914 in Clymer?

TK: Yes I lived here the entire time

MB: And your parents lived there?

TK: Yes, we built a home

MB: Did your father or anybody else work in the mines?

TK: No I worked in the mines, in 1916, when the mills went on strike

MB: Had you been working in the mill?

TK: Yeah

MB: In Johnstown?

TK: Yeah, I was working in cars at the time, Strike came on I made a lot of signs for the Union, I had the stickers, I was working in the car shop making poppers so I had the stickers of where the strike was going on, and I was pasting them everywhere. Eventually people came looking for me

MB: Who was looking for you?

TK: The cops, they was looking for whoever put those stickers up.

MB: Oh for the Union?

TK: Yeah, and they finally caught who was doing it, and they got me

MB: What did they do to you when they got you?

TK: Well, they told me to say whatever I was going to say, two of and bought me to a big office, and they had a pink slip waiting for me.

MB: Had you heard about Unions in Europe at all? , maybe in Galicia?

TK: No

MB: So you first heard about them when you came over to America?

TK: Yes but they didn't except Poles, so I had to give them another name, and the name I picked was James Gush.

MB: So you had to lie about you name? They had a blacklist?

TK: Yeah, I had to think of three or four different names.

MB: They had a black list of your name so they wouldn't hire you?

TK: Yes, I continued working at the car shop, my Dad he was working at the coke plants, so I was there for a while, I didn't like it to much all the gasoline and smoke, so I quit and I ended up working as a coal miner with my dad until 1927.

MB: What was the name of the company you worked for?

TK: Bethlehem Steel

MB: How did your father first get a job there? Did he know anybody?

TK: Well they were hiring a lot of countrymen from up around the villages.

MB: Did you have any relatives here?

TK: Not that I know of.

MB: So you were the first of your family to come?

TK: Yeah, when I got married I came to work here, I worked here to 1962.

MB: Oh really, in Railroad mines until 1927

TK: Well 3 or 4 different mines but the same company, they just switched, but I worked in Bethlehem steel over there, and I got in an accident over there, rocks fell on me and broke my leg that was in 1924. During the strike I went to central city and got a job in the mines over there.

I extra cautions, I go over to the car and select a train, I was going up the hill, I could only take 14 cars, I was up there and I see the switch going through a lope was open so I jump up, I was sitting on the side of the car, I jumped up and ran up, cause I knew they were going to wreck, fire started, electric, so I ran and told them, and they said you off the track and they knew I was off the track. I said the carts are off the track to watch my signal, they had oil lamps this time, so I told them to watch my signal so that we could get the carts under control. This was where I had my big accident.

MB: Where were you at for the 1922 strike?

TK: In central city, then I went back to Windber and I got a job in the coal mine.

MB: What were some of the working conditions like in the mine when you started working?

TK: Well, not to good

MB: Tell me about what they were like?

TK: It's dangerous, all about how you do it, sometimes you fall and get hurt, sometimes guys, these men in Indiana will tell you how they get burned up with gas, and are exposed to a lot of smoke in the mines on account of how gassy it was in there, and often times you would have to be signaled out before too much smoke could result in a major explosion. See nobody knew how to stop it.

MB: When somebody had an accident did you get any help from anyone?

TK: No you didn't need it, everybody was up and full, everybody had money, but was still hard work in the mine. One day a buddy of mines who I was working directly next to had a piece of slate fell directly on his head I was on both knees digging and he was far away from me, I was on both knees and never heard anything. My buddy he wasn't knocked out or anything, just injured,

so I picked up and took him outside and we went to the hospital. I myself was pretty bang up too, both my legs were broken and I was out for at least from April to July.

MB: Which hospital was that?

TK: It was a company hospital owned by Bethlehem steel

MB: What year was that?

TK: 1924

MB: Who paid the hospital bill?

TK: The Company, it was the company that took care of you.

And I worked there until 1927, and I got married and I got another job, because now that I was married I would definitely need a job. So I got another Job over at the newer company thanks to my mother in law who knew this fella who was very big in the company, so he went and saw the manager of the mine and he got me work there.

MB: Which mines did you work in?

TK: I worked 40 mine, I worked 37, 42 and 35, 4 mines

MB: From 1947?

TK to 1962

MB: That's a long time

TK: It was

MB: You must have seen lots of things, if I could return for a minute back to the strike of 1922, because that was such a big one, you were in central city then?

TK: Yeah

MB: What were some of the grievances of miners?

TK: Better pay and better safety, you now, how many citations does a company get before they ask how did this happen? Most of it falls on the men to, they don't report and if they do report the company ignores.

MB: How were the miners paid?

TK: Well until they got the machines in order, how much coal you make and how many times you weighed it, that was however much you get paid, I worked here before 1922, and I got 25 cent a ton, I starved before I could make that. I had the conveyor at that time, but now they got better machines.

MB: Did you feel you were treated fairly, did they weigh the tonnage right?

TK: Yes, I was on the check weigh men.

MB: Oh you were a check weigh men yourself?

TK: The two of us, Hawke and me, he watch the scale tonnage and I would watch the scale tonnage to see if he would call it right, he call the tonnage for me then he check it to see of it was right.

MB: When was check weigh men developed?

TK: When the Unions came into play

MB: So in the 1920s, after the strike they didn't have Union Weigh men, what about dead work?

TK: Well dead work, it was hard, the boss came and said I'll give you this much and that much for this amount of work, that's when we really struggled. Dead work you could hardly do anything, some of them had to do anything. Like buy shoes for their bosses, do house work anything.

MB: Were there differences in the nationalities when it came to specific work? For example did the company Berwind White favor certain Nationalities over others?

TK: No it didn't make a difference worked with anybody.

MB: Were some of the bosses certain nationalities.

TK: Well there were different bosses, but some were still crooked. One guy who would work he would go in the morning wouldn't come out until dinner, there was no work. Sam you had to be going to the mine

MB: Were the Polish and Hungarians given some of the lower jobs?

TK: No, there was no specific group given one job, I worked with Italians, Hungarians, and Pollock's, Russians.

MB: Back in the strike of 1922, did the different nationalities work together or were they pulled apart.

TK: No, one mine, you had to be willing to work with anybody, that's when I took my Dad to work. No one was there to teach my dad how to mine coal the safe way.

MB: So you had to teach your Dad?

TK: Yeah

MB: Was that common? That fathers and sons worked together in the mines?

TK: Yes, but soon they put a stop to that, because quite a few got killed because a rock fell on them. In the 40 mine there was a good friend of mine whose son was killed. So they made it a rule for family not to work together.

MB: So was that a law?

TK: I don't think, it was unwritten law adopted by the company.

Now it's a lot of work running machines, sometimes men lost their lives thanks to machines. The heat and that dust and smoke coming out on you, it burns 15 gallons of oil per shift that's around 8 hours.

MB: When did they start to get all this machinery?

TK: That was about 1952 when they started getting machines then

MB: So most of the time when you were in the mines there wasn't much machinery?

TK: Well, I didn't work at all on the machinery, I was on a belt on the conveyor.

MB: Tell me about that and what you did?

TK: Well I was checking the coal, they would shoot it, and after you shoot it down, then you dump it in a chain conveyor, it goes this way and that way then it dumps in a cart, then conveyor was at least 20 to 30 feet wide. On the conveyor I would check the weight. But there was some crooked weighing going on the check weighing, they weigh it and not report it, it's a lot of crooked work, I tell you today no guy is going to push their figures on me. I was there for about 12 years until they discontinued the old machines. Some mines today use all machines.

MB: What did your father do then? What different jobs did he have?

TK: Well after he started in coal mining he liked it, he didn't want to go, after the strike I rode to Johnstown and car shuffled for a while, and my dad was still living in central city. He didn't want to go anywhere else he was a coal miner he likes the coal mine. I don't know how many miles. When we moved to Johnstown to Kalawao, my dad and mom had a cow, my mother sold the cow. He walked that cow from Central city to Galicia, it took about a week to walk. Stop sideways on the road to sleep.

MB: So your father continued to work in the mines?

TK: Yeah, he worked in the mine until he resigned or quit, he was pretty old then.

MB: How long did he live then?

TK: Well I think he was 72 years old then when he died, sometime in the 1970s, they moved out of there, my sister was working in New York, so my sister said we have a big home in Park hill,

two ferry home. So my mother sold everything up and we went to New York, I got two sisters buried there and a brother buried there.

MB: What year did your father die in?

TK: I don't remember

MB: Did your mother do any work outside the house?

TK: No way, we were all the work, but my parents worked hard all their lives.

MB: Did your mother take any borders?

TK: My mother had borders, my dad had borders before we even came here, and they were from the same village.

MB: They were from the same village you came from?

TK: They came about from the same town about two miles from us.

End of Tape 1

End of the Recording (February 23, 1984)

Beginning of the Interview (February 29, 1984)

Beginning of Tape 1 (February 29, 1984)

MB: Did you have any childhood memories from Galicia?

TK: About what?

MB: From when you were growing up in Galicia?

TK: No not really, just school years

MB: So was your father, he was here 6 years and your mother came soon after, was he planning on staying in Galicia, instead of staying in American or the other way?

TK: He figured he didn't want to build up his stay over in America. And if he could make that kind of money over there at the time. Then after we moved out there my family forgot all about moving back to Poland.

MB: So when your family got settled you guys decided to stay?

TK: We had trouble with our land, we had different people getting hold of our land of the land, and they didn't want to give it to my Cousin, we was all in a ring, and they stole it and I think somebody else got that land

MB: Did your father want to farm when he went back, because he was a bricklayer?

TK: No, he didn't have the available land, plus he was a bricklayer.

MB: But he wanted to build a house there?

TK: Yea just a little house

MB: Ok I see, that wasn't clear to me before, I just had a question, you talk about being in central city for the strike of 1922, did you leave then to go to Gallitzin because of the strike or some other reason?

TK: It was because of the strike in Central City, then they all sign up for they strike, then I left and I went [Carnaiood], and I started working in a car shop. I didn't like I went into the mind, and my parents moved to Gallitzin

MB: Why did they move then?

TK: The strike wasn't over yet, and there was a Union mine in Galicia.

MB: How did your family, particularly your father feel about Unions?

TK: He was a Union man, all of us, my brother Murphy he was an organizer for the United Mine workers.

MB: Can you tell more about that, the struggle to get the UMW established?

TK: First my brother was an organizer for the United mine workers, then the Bethlehem Steel went on strike and they pulled him off from the United Mine office to MNCIO

MB: In the 1930s?

TK: Yes, he was in Johnstown there

MB: For the steel strike in 37?

TK: For the steel strike, he was with the Union, you see they took him from United, because he was a politician, and he was a great speaker, boy was he a lot,

MB: This was Murphy you're talking about?]

TK: Murphy, yea he was there behind Mikey Baldwin and the judges when they had some kind of election, he was the main speaker at most of them, then if he was on the street and started talking to people about the union, the cops would come pull him over.

MB: Was it hard to get the Union going?

TK: Well they was against the Union, back then you wasn't allowed to organize no one on the streets like that. So they put him up in jail.

MB: Do you remember the Coal and Iron police?

TK: The mayor in Johnstown was name Murphy

MB: Are you talking about the 1937 strike?

TK: Yes, Murphy, come over there and would go around looking for trouble, and he would stay, "What the hell is going on over here"? He said, "get those dam cobblers threw me of the street. That's what killed my brother politics, politics killed him. He was a Union man, he was a secretary I think, he was a member of the Union over in Edinsburg, he was running for governor too I think. After the election they went into the office, his friends who were big in the politics, when Murphy came home they were waiting for him and he come in there, and one of the guys who Murphy put on the job for WPA, after he put him to work they come to Murphy and killed him, he said "What's going to happen to our people" and he dropped dead.

MB: So he was a real active Union man?

TK: Yes he was so hard for labor people, he fought for them

MB: Did you take part in organizing Union activities?

TK: Well I'm still a Union man, but I wasn't that smart

MB: Was Murphy older than you?

TK: No, he was younger, when he go assaulted he was 30 years old, oh he was smart.

MB: So the Union finally came in through Roosevelt?

TK: Whenever I went back, I got a moving Karlovac, from my parents, I went back to central city, I said come on let's move here, by that time mines were back up, and miners were starting to go back to work then. But then they moved from Glycine to blitzing, so we got to Karlovac, my dad he didn't want to go to the mills anymore, he wanted to work the mines. They didn't know nothing about it at the time. But silicosis, he was working from all his life to then, he was working in the coal companies and all that gas, and then they didn't know or they didn't want to admit what it was, Miners Asthma

MB: Is that what they used to say?

TK: Yes, Just a miner's asthma, when he quit, we were living in a Karlovac for a while, while my sisters moved to New York

MB: How did your sisters get to New York?

TK: Well they had friends who were giving them property?

MB: Were they very old when they went?

TK: Yes, my sister was married already

MB: Were the able to find a school there? Had they gone to school in the area?

TK: Yes, my sisters had gone to school in [Conemaugh] and they went to New York, they got a job

MB: Was there a big ethnic community of Polish people in [Conemaugh]?

TK: Yes

MB: Were there any other nationalities there?

TK: Most of them was Slavish, Polish, Russians and Serbians.

MB: Is that very different from Windber

TK: No it was different, bigger than Windber

MB: Were the Nationalities the same? Were there any fights had out between the nationalities?

TK: Not really but if still, no one group ever had a particularly problem with the other one. In 1916, that was the [Carnegie] steel, they went on strike, Bethlehem steel got a hold of it and they want to cut everything down, and we didn't have any neighbors in [Conemaugh], Franklin was only a registered midwife, that's the only com native people we had, in 1916 they started to shift all these people from the south, America was nice. There were plenty of white people because that's the way it was in the south. You look over at the sidewalk, if a nigger was there he would have to walk on the other side of the street. Then the company would go to Pittsburgh, New York and Chicago in order to get niggers to work there, there way of breaking the strike. That's the time that trouble start, the KKK, oh the KKK was against those niggers, they used to burn a cross on top of the hill, you never seen them on the street.

MB: I thought the KKK didn't like foreigners, or Catholics, did you ever have any trouble with them?

TK: No they didn't come after us, they didn't care about that, they was against the niggers in [Conemaugh]

MB: So last time you told me about having borders in your home, how many did you keep?

TK: Two, friends from the village, my dad got the house, he sent two guys to come pick us up at the station. I get there my old man was on his knees scrubbing the floor. He looked at me and said he couldn't take us, he wanted me to stay in Europe.

MB: Oh he didn't want you to be a miner

TK: No he didn't want me to go to the mills, he wanted me to learn some kind of trade.

MB: When did you first leave your parents' home to be on your own, when you were first married?

TK: It was in 1927. I was just about a year or two hurt from my accident, I went to my Cousin's in Lorraine, he had a girl, while he was working there he got married and quit. He didn't have no help there so I tell him I can help you. And he didn't know I knew a lot.

MB: So until you got married did you give the money you earned to your parent or did you keep it?

TK: Well I would give the money to my mother, I'm a mamma's boy

MB: Did you get keep some?

TK: Well she knows when I got paid, when my brother murphy was working he didn't give my mother any money. My father would slip me three dollars, and he was broke

MB: So did your brothers go to work at an early age?

TK: My brother Murphy started at coal mining, I took him to the coal mine

MB: Oh you took him

TK: Yes

MB: How old were you both?

TK: I can't remember, all the places we went and worked, well I don't remember those places.

MB: Well sure that's understandable. Did you other brothers go into the mine?

TK: No my other brother, he's in Jersey, he worked in the mills when he was young.

MB: What about your sisters? Did they get married before they went to work?

TK: Well they was single when they went to work,

MB: Where did they start working?

TK: Mostly they was waitresses when they went to work.

MB: In Windber or [Conemaugh]?

TK: No in New York.

MB: Oh I see

TK: Over here there was no work for them, it's just like now, young people looking for work, and they ain't got no jobs.

MB: When your parents when they were raising you, what did they stress most? Was it hard work, religion, or education?

TK: Well, they didn't go after anything like that.

MB: Did you have any hero's growing up

TK: My brother Murphy, when elections came up he was a guy who was a main speaker

MB: Did he ever hold any offices?

TK: Well he was a Union Organizer.

MB: And you admired him, that's interesting, Can you tell where and how you meant your wife.

TK: We known each other for 70 years, I was living in Central city, that's the time when we meant.

MB: Do you remember how you meant?

TK: At a dance in Windber

MB: Oh a club, was it a Polish club or something similar?

TK: Yea a Polish club here, and there was a dance every Tuesday and Saturday, and my sister she was taking lessons on sowing, and she sewed me a pink shirt, and I come here, and she says "Who's the guy with the pink shirt?", and she got a hold of me.

MB: So you had dances regularly every week then?

TK: A bottle or two, and ya grab a friend, it was a good time

MB: So you would work hard all week and relax on the weekend?

TK: Yea

MB: Did every ethnic group have a club?

TK: Yup

MB: In the 20s, like in 1927 when you first came to Windber did all the every ethnic group have clubs

TK: Oh yea

MB: Was there a Hungarian club, and a Russian Club?

TK: it was on 8th street, The Night of Columbus, it was a Hungarian club

MB: Yea the Canaanites club

TK: The Russians they got on the dead street, they had it before, then they switched the Russians through orthodox, to regular, they built an Orthodox Church up on 9th street. Between 9th street and 8th street was a Greek Catholic Church it's still down there.

MB: They had a church split up?

TK: They split, they had trouble by themselves, and because the trouble was that they didn't like each other.

MB: Do you know why they split like that?

TK: They didn't like each other, first when they started they ignored each other

MB: Did you go to the Polish Church at all?

TK: Well not here, my wife she belonged to Slavic Church.

MB: So your wife was a Polish background?

TK: Yes, so I come here, it was the same religion at the time, so I join the Slovak Church and I'm still there it's the same religion just a different language.

MB: Did you have trouble understanding Slavic because you were polish?

TK: No I could talk some before I got married, because in central city, they was Slovak's in [Conemaugh] I was with them all the time

MB: Where did you get married?

TK: Here

MB: Oh here in Windber?

TK: Yes, in the Hungarian club

MB: Did you have a big wedding?

TK: Went on for two days.

MB: Were there customs that went on before the day of the wedding?

TK: No, we didn't have nothing like that, some days were special and some days wasn't. About a week before the wedding they picked the flower boys.

MB: What was the day itself like?

TK: Oh it wasn't bad, they had this bridle bag full of silver coins, Bridle things, they had the ceremony right before the wedding, where the bride would sit on the chair, and would break a plate. That was a very fun day, and the next day the flower boys would be at the wedding. I was a Flower boy also

MB: What was your job as flower boy then?

TK: At that particular wedding, our job as flower boys was to catch the bride and we got the bride then we meant the buyer, then the next day he would have to give us whisky and beers, at all the weddings I was an instigator, when would start dancing, I be the main one to say let's dance. Then we talked to her, she was sitting there and she got up and everybody sat down. And I didn't let her go, there was a pool table in the dance hall, and my mother had an elephant's sight, you know there ladies and she was sitting by the bride. So I went and sat down, she was sitting there, and my mother tells me "oh why don't you go over there and dance, what's the matter with you?"

The next day on Sunday, this guy and this girl who was working at this house, and she was working for these people, and the next day we had a meeting there, we got the groom and we asked him ok what are you going to give us. And everybody started jumping against them, because this was customary to give out gifts to the flower boys for the wedding.

And he said nothing, ok in the meantime I sneak out upstairs in my room, I went in the room, I took the brides ring and veil and everything, and I come back, as I leave to go through the hall, she goes upstairs and she comes back crying, "Oh somebody stole everything". And I sit there,

she couldn't tell it was me. Finally I took everything back before anyone realized. And she went upstairs again and came back down so happy.

TK: A wedding was a week over there, it started from the Sunday when they picked the girls and boys, for flower boys and girls, and they started pulling their hair out.

MB: And here it wasn't as long as it was there as it was in [Conemaugh]?

TK: Well the wedding in Windber lasted two days.

MB: That's still long.

TK: Even if it was we wasn't mad, as long as they kept serving beer.

MB: So you had a good time, was there lots of dancing?

TK: Not too much

MB: So was there any problem with someone Polish being next to someone that is Slovak?

TK: No, no problems like that at all.

MB: Were there any nationalities that were looked down upon?

TK: There wasn't nothing like that, regular neighborhood we found one nationality to be almost the same. So not trouble at all.

MB: Did you have many kids Mr. Kush

TK: Not I, my wife had kids, two boys and two girls

MB: So did you want your sons to go into the mines?

TK: No

MB: Did they go into mines?

TK: Just one, he's in Delaware now, he was working in the mills, but then he got laid off, he had a friend over in Newark, Delaware and he went to him, put the applications in and he went to school, he got a job at a electricity company, and finally he got called to DuPont, he either killed a man and he got in there, after that he died on a pension, and they called him in had him take an examination and he controls the papers it's a good job now

MB: Did your other son go into the mines?

TK: No, he went to school he went to college, and became a teacher

MB: Was that hard to do, just to get that money together to send him to college?

TK: Yes it was

MB: What about your daughters?

TK: Well one's a registered Nurse the other one is a Doctor who married a Dentist. She was a register nurse but after she got married she said no more nursing and he opened his own office, they still live there not bad.

MB: Did you have your children during the Depression?

TK: Well it was a hard time

MB: How did you manage?

TK: We struggled a little bit but not too much

MB: How much did those mines work then throughout the 1930s?

TK: No, we worked 1 or 2 days a week

MB: Did you live in this house then?

TK: No I lived in the third house from here, her mother's house

MB: Was that a company house then?

TK: No there wasn't a company house here, when I first came here they were building houses up Summerset Avenue there. They called them moon houses, from Front Street they had houses on both sides. But the people bought those house houses, all the houses back then was company houses.

MB: But when you were living back then in the 1930s, was that at least a company house then?

TK: No, we had that house for a long time

MB: it was a private house then

TK: Yea

MB: So you wanted to own your own home not live in a company house?

TK: I lived with my mother for I don't know how many years, she was alone before she got married, and her girlfriends got married she went on her own. But after her brother got married, he wanted to stay at home. She moved in here after I fixed it up.

MB: Well it's a nice house I like it, it has a very nice kitchen here

TK: We got two rooms, and she had her floor done, and she's forgetful.

MB: So how did you manage to live through the Depression without the mine running regularly, did you grown your own food?

TK: Well I was a paper hanger going on how many years

MB: And that supplemented mining?

TK: Working the mine, and two days after I work only a side shift, and then I come home in the morning and I have breakfast, do some paper hanging until about 1 or 2 o'clock, then would come home and go to sleep. Then go back and work until 11 o'clock. So I was able to make a little money.

MB: Did you have a garden or not?

TK: Did I, oh boy was it a garden, a lot of people had gardens like that

MB: Did your wife canned food then?

TK: Yes we ate lots of it, we ate a lot of Mushrooms

MB: Did you go pick Mushrooms

TK: Yes

MB: What about berries, did you pick berries?

TK: Yes berries, black berries, mushrooms, oh I was crazy going picking, but the last 3 years I haven't picked so much. The last few times I did go, I remember freezing them down in the cellar, and they were better that way than canning.

MB: Tell me more about your mining experience.

TK: Well hear in Windber I was making coal, hand loading, we had the conveyors, and a friend of mine he was working on a street car line, and he got laid off and he got a job in the mine, and he was working with a jackhammer, drilling holes through the roof and the bottom and he says going back "You what that job?" Because it was overtime on that Job, and every dollar counted that day, so I took that job, I worked with two machines, a soft drill and a drill for the sand rock, and I work that job for two years, by then I was all fixed up, all that dust I was getting. What

happened was I used to get a motor myself, at that time, they took the motor off immediately a lot of it was broke down and they needed it. So I got the motor running in that section, so he placed me where I want to go. So I drilled a hole in one place and then I come out to look for the motor and then I see him coming, and I said come on pick me up and take me to another place. No no no, I was going to get the stretchers men got killed over there, I said listen if you want to do that I going to report you and say you didn't drill the holes, I don't care, I went over there to see if it was clear or not. So that was dangerous, the whole way through you had to hold on to the cars in order to get in there. I come there and sure enough there's a rock laying on the road, and he must of, he was fixing the track or something he was on his knees and the rock fell right on top of him, and broke every bone in his body. I come in there and I say "What the hell are ya's looking at, why don't you try to get him out. And I said, "Do you have any jax, lifting jax"? So they didn't want to say they stole a jax from the track men regularly trackmen go and fix them, because whenever the car jumped it would be a lot easier to get it back in line using the jax. So they bought two jax out and put it under there and I said were going to pick it up, we look at the rock first, they see it but they didn't' and we didn't see no cracks or nothing. Well we got to raise it up. I said get the crib locks, the twelve by twelve bout that long maybe more, and I said get the crib locks and the cap pieces and were gonna raise and we keep on shoving it under the rock to hold it then raise it up,. I said well somebody has to go and I get him. Everyone said I'm not going, and I said "what's the matter, what are you afraid of, if you want to go, go ahead, I said I will go, first I want to go so because I can reach him, I crawl under there and saw him he was laying there. And I got a hold of him by the belt and started pulling, and I holler to the over guys pull, then I come out of there and I said what the hell were gonna raise the rock some more, we have to wait couldn't get him out something was holding him and I don't know what. Then I crawl in again, I layed there and tried again, and I looked around me and I find out what was holding him. Under him was a latch which was holding his belt. So I grab him by the pants and go under him unleash the belt, grab him by the pants of both legs, and yelled pull. They pulled me out and I pulled him out. Everybody was afraid, and I wasn't so sure at the time either. I was that kind of guy.

MB: It sounds like he was badly wounded that he couldn't live.

TK: I examined everything before I went and I seen that cause he had the box right under him, solids and he cracked

MB: Do you remember the man's name who was so badly hurt?

TK: I believe it was Clyde [Wynnsenger]

MB: Did he die then after that?

TK: He was dead laying there, everything was buggered up on him. The rock was from here to there, and he was right under.

MB: Were there lots of mining accidents that you remember in Windber mines?

TK: Well mine accidents I got two of them

MB: Were there any other accidents in Windber that resulted in deaths.

TK: Oh there were a lot of them killed. I had the accident where the rock fell on me and broke both of my legs, Well the rest of them, whoever got killed or ended up dead, it's right there/ when I was a check weigh man, and they would call up in sight the ambulance, they said a man in killed in mine 4F down on the conveyor you need to come here, and I was a check weigh man and I hear them call for an ambulance. So I know my brother in law was working in that section, so I say to the other weigh man, I bet you out of two of them I bet you one of them is killed. Both my brother in law and this guy that I mentioned, they lived in [Conemaugh]. My brother in law was staying with my mother. Sure enough they brought back my brother in law. Rock fell on him and killed him I said one of them two was killed and that's it.

MB: How did you feel going into those mines, were you worried about the possibility of accidents?

TK: No, A lot of guys were afraid of the mine, once you get in, if it's gonna happen it's gonna happen.

MB: Did you remember any miners having any superstitious beliefs about mining?

TK: No

MB: I've heard some stories where miners have refused to go in certain days because of a belief

TK: Well that's what I mean, it's either ya work for one day and come out, or you don't come out at all.

MB: But you don't remember any general superstitions about people thinking that there will be a accident or something. '

TK: You don't know what's gonna happen to you, just like that guy in Indiana who got burned up by that gas in the mine, it was a lot of them, hundreds of them at one time, the whole mine blown up and then that's it, and then today you don't hear that much, because now their raising hell about it. Now some of those inspections regularly on the mines and cut some of them off, federal inspectors, so now their raising hell, so now they have to hire some more they given citations for so many mines, when the inspections you fix it up, a lot of them were handing out big fines, and there still investigating what happened at that mine.

MB: Did the miners you work with ever sing any songs while working or coming and going.

TK: "15 tons", that was one song we would sing, all the money went to the store some miners work two weeks get three dollars, unless they went to the store, and that's it.

MB: I've always been curious, how did the similarly smaller stores survive because of the company stores, because company didn't like them did they?

TK: Well there had the miners where they wanted, a lot of places you had to buy from the company store. I worked here at Carpenters park, I worked there I didn't get anything from the company store I went to the store there. One day they come to us and say "the company is raising hell, working here and not buying anything, the Boss say "why don't you go and buy some stuff here every now and then".

MB: Was that true in Windber? Did you fight for your job if you didn't shop?

TK: Yes they had a precedence, you got to buy from the store because you got to buy from the store. Every now and then I would buy stuff from the small stores, but then the company start cruising out, and they start freezing other companies out by lowering their prices.

MB: In 1927 those first years when you were in Windber, did you go to Johnstown a lot?

TK: Yes

MB: How did you get there?

TK: The streetcar

MB: Did it run regularly]

TK: Yea

MB: What did you go to Johnstown to shop for?

TK: Mostly clothes, we had clothes here, but they were a little higher, over there you try to get something

MB: How often did you go to Johnstown?

TK: not too often, once a week, twice a week, we would get want ever we wanted, they had so cloths for the kids, because the company store held that price "you want it, take it", "you don't want it leave it and go some other place. They didn't pressure you, some companies did pressure you.

MB: You know people were more dependent on food here, but clothes they could go elsewhere.

TK: Some companies would make you buy from the company store or move out. But they didn't necessarily pressure you to buy anything.

The company owned everything. Some of the other towns were dictated by the company store.

MB: So did you go to any other big cities very often?

TK: I worked on the railroad for a year, I was breaking on a freight and at the same time traveling on the trains.

MB: So you did a lot of other jobs while you were still mining? Like the paper heading job,

TK: Today you have nothing like that, I worked in the mills, and I worked in mines and broke everything. Machinery Where the 50 men were working in the coal mine, those men were working in certain sections then they had this side street. They put the Conveyor, 2 men per station, and the conveyor you would cock shoot and you rode it up. Then you got the miners working, now five men can do the job just as easy thanks to machinery. They tried to stop the machines, they got the machines today in there, and there was a change, going on nothing stopping them. But that coal mining thing, that wouldn't last soon all that heat and smoke and dust. They put about 50 gallons of oil into one shift and it burns, I had work but I was working on the belt, we would dump the coal on the belt, I was operating with about 10 other guys.

MB: Do you have silicosis yourself Mr. Kush

TK: Yes, that what I said

MB: Do you remember receiving any benefits for silicosis?

TK: We got the pay from social security under black lung. That's what they called silicosis, black lung.

MB: And that's only been fairly recently that you can only get benefits for that?

TK: Yes

MB: Wasn't that for the 60s, the miner before didn't get any benefits

TK: No you were on your own, but not when the Union starts, then they get paid, they get a debt benefit, a black lung if rotted, and a small pension.

MB: Did you ever go to any mining conventions?

TK: For the local unions, at the convention of Altoona

MB: Who were the local leaders?

TK: Just like any other places, the Union, or any lodges or professors, if your good looking than they send for you

MB: They sent you because you were good looking, what was the first election in America that you remember?

TK: The first election I remember was at Cambria where went on strike, it didn't last very long.

End of Tape 1

Beginning of Tape 2 (February 29, 1984)

MB: So you were gonna tell me about why you thought the strike at Cambria steel had the difficulties they had there and why the strike failed?

TK: That was Cambria steel and Bethlehem that bought that on, I wasn't working very often at Cambria steel, then Bethlehem steel took it and there was no union, and then the Union started again. That's what I was saying, when my brother was pulled out of the UMW organizers they put him in CIO organizing.

MB: So what did you think of John L Lewis?

TK: Well he was the man. He was good looking nobody could beat him.

MB: Did you hear of the IWW at all of this, or other unions besides the United mine workers?

TK: No we didn't have none of the other unions around here.

MB: But the unions you never heard of any other Unions besides the UMW?

TK: No

MB: When you think of elections Mr. Kush, thinking like for presidents, who was the first President in America you became aware of in a election?

TK: Truman, and Hoover

MB: Oh you remember Hoover hon?

TK: yea Hoover days, everybody remembered them.

MB: What were they like?

TK: Well they called them Hoover days, no work.

MB: So you liked FDR?

TK: Truman and Well I liked all them Eisenhower, but I was Democratic all my life

MB: Were most people in Windber Democrats?

TK: Yes, very Democratic. Yup Windber is, Central City, [Conemaugh] Township

MB: What do you think about FDR?

TK: He was a good president and a fighter, he gave us the Union, he was the guy to give us the union

MB: So you remember that, how did things overall change with him?

TK: Well there was a lot of trouble

MB: Tell me about, I wasn't born yet I just read about it.

TK: There were fights for the Union, companies and that, companies jurisdiction was over here, they rode on horses, you walk and if you didn't move for them a horse would be right on top of you. Scabs they had then, we fought it out.

MB: Did you have a company Union before you joined the United mine workers?

TK: No

MB: Did the company try to set up a company Union, one they tried to control when FDR came in.

TK: Some of them got a Union, but most not?

MB: Do you remember any city elections in the city of Windber?

TK: Yes, for the Mayor and councilors.

MB: Were there any people seem to win the election a lot more than others?

TK: Yea the good looking ones, I was elected to the committee man, for this precinct I don't remember which one, I was a committee man for about 5 to 6 years

MB: For the committee or the council?

TK: For the Democratic Party, I was committee member, that wasn't a county election it was a Union election. Then I was to judge elections, I was on that for about 5 years'

MB: For the Union again or the city?

TK: No, for the county, county or city it was a county election and you just voted on that, I was on the committee and I put my name up for the judge of elections.

MB: When you think of politics in Windber, was anyone more powerful than some, who were the big names?

TK: Well I don't know, I'm not in politics

MB: No back in the late 20s when you first came to Windber/

TK: Quite a few guys trying to be but they got knocked off because they were crooked. They want to sit on both chairs, and you can do that, so they well [Gerazingler] he was mean and he would shoot you.

MB: Tell me?

TK: He gave the orders, how we gonna work this at that. He and his men would bring their clubs to the election, he come after me one time.

MB: Why did he do that?

TK: prior to that he was a tax collector, he was running taxes, and I was a committee man for the number four precinct, and this tax collector come over here and see me so I go and pay at his house. He own a house on 10th street there, so I pay at the house, and this guy he see me, and he got Clement, the man who died in Windber, and he bought him over to my place, he went and tried to get me to convince the precinct to vote Republican for him, because he was a Republican. They come over and we go into a room and he says "What's the matter with you Thad? What are you trying to pull off?"

I said what was the trouble? You campaigned for the Democrat? I said yea I help him out, and he said what the hell is a matter with you and I thought he was going to go nuts. Nothing's wrong, I can help him out can't I, and he goes why and how, I can help him out. That man was he dirty, I said I helped out, what you mean you helped him out, I helped him get out. He was a tax collector, and he got the company to take the taxes of the used statement, and that way. I went to the office, and I asked him why did you pull the taxes of my statement? Don't I pay my taxes, didn't I pay ya, he goes yea. So why did you pull if off, so I said give me that money. I pay when I feel, I want my money, and you got no business to take the taxes of my statement. And he gave me the money, and he got in trouble, he wasn't allowed to do that if that's your money.

MB: No so this guy was a powerful person, anyone else you can think off that was a powerful person.

TK: yea there was Jerry Ziegler, there was a few of them.

MB: I heard there was a story on how Windber got its name? Where did the name come from?

TK: From Berwind,

MB: Did you ever know any of the Berwinds, personally?

TK: Well I just see them when they come here, I see them every once in a while.

MB: They don't live here?

TK: No, they just had their superintendents report on Windber.

MB: Who do you remember being the big company people then?

TK: There was the whole company around Windber. It was all company men. They wanted to be elected, and they would all there beer and whisky in cups during election time, and drank it in their homes. Like in the mines, I'll pick one, if he was republican, they would tell the miners that if you didn't vote republican than you wouldn't have a job

MB: Really?

TK: Yea that's the way it was, until they organized and got the democratic they tried to dicked them around, well they dicked most of Summerset County already. This last election they put Monte in four, for the commissioners and clerks and courts they got them

MB: If you were telling somebody what Windber was like then, how would you describe the town in 1927?

TK: The town if you look around in the houses, everybody got nice and clean, gardens and yards and that, you know they praised the towns, today the people that was here, they went away they circle that, if they working in a city or something like that after they got laid off, they would come back right over here.

MB: Why?

TK: They liked the town, the mountains and all that.

MB: What do you like about Windber?

TK: Everything

MB: Like What

TK: I'm well known, I never had trouble with anyone, and I went to clubs.

MB: you still go to clubs?

TK: I only belong to this one only, I used to go to booths and eagles.

MB: Now you belong to the Polish club

TK: yea that's an independent club. Booths and Eagles were cheap, but I end up pay 20 to 25 dollars now to get in, and you ain't got benefit.

MB: So what are some other things you like about Windber?

TK: Nice people to live with, you can get along with anybody, just walking the street, “Aw Mr. Kush, How are you?” I don’t know. So small kids they know me

MB: Is there anything you don’t like about Windber?

TK: Well ain’t much to say about that, but it’s some of those politicians I don’t like. The trouble here is, Italian people around.

MB: Was that always problem

TK: The problem is that our people would turn around and vote for them. If their all running, they get these committee men and the workers to vote for them.

MB: Do you think the company would favor the Italians. Back when the mines operated fully.

TK: The Company had a fighter in Italians.

MB: Why do you suppose that?

TK: Well the way they are and the way they treat people. How they do it I don’t know, for bosses, they bring them wine, buy them shoes, they had favors, when they got dead work they got paid, I done the same thing and I didn’t get nothing.

MB: Did they have better jobs than the ordinary miner?

TK: Well there were no better jobs, you got to load coal go ahead a weigh coal, you want to know the tonnage it was up to you, that’s how you got paid.

MB: So you were still loading coal when you were close to retirement?

TK: No I was a bell operator.

MB: Ok

TK: When I retired I was check weigh men in 1962

MB: Can you think of anything else important about Windber?

TK: Cusqa Centaya. That was a big time, I remember when I saw the general manager from the mine to give us one of them mine cars. The I tell him, we can take it on the street but we have to cut a certain part of because it would ruin the street. He got into the shop, and told him to make the cart like a motor.

MB: Is this the parade in 1947?

TK: Yea

MB: Ok I see what you're talking about. Did you make a float for that?

TK: Yea we had a float

MB: For the UMW?

TK: Yes, I was on one side of the car and had the oil light on

MB: I saw some photos of them, their nice

TK: If you ask someone, they got the books, they had it in the company store under sale, a lot of people got that. And the minders used to have a big parade for the fourth of July. They go through there, and all those guys were sitting on their porch and laughing at us dummies.

MB: Were there lots of Parades

TK: Firemen got the parades usually, but we got some big ones. Masons from Altoona with their horses and cars, fire trucks, army, American legion parade. We had 5 of them every year, and one in August Polish day.

MB: Was that a big event

TK: yes, got about 4 or 5 bands playing, you got the Canadian band fiddlers from Canada.

MB: Where did you have that up by the park?

TK: yes that was the only place you can have that.

MB: When you were here early, did they have a Polish sports team?

TK: Yes, but not separated, everything was the same, well quite a few us went to college and became football and baseball players. Maybe you read about a Kush from Arizona.

MB: I guess in the 20s and 30s there used to be a lot of sports team that would play in the park like baseball and soccer?

TK: Yeah, cities had it, baseball and that, but then [Wisemiller] dies.

MB: So what do you do on Polish day?

TK: All kinds of food, and Dancing, and Singing, a few Germans come in, most come from Detroit and Jackson, Michigan.

MB: Do you have a favorite Polish food?

TK: Polish food names.

MB: Do they say in Polish that it's a Polish day?

TK: Yes

MB: Do they talk in Polish or sing?

TK: Well my one daughter she not too bad, this one understands but can't speak it, my boy in Delaware, the same thing. My one daughter was brought up to speak Slovak because she lived with her grandmother. Well a lot of people come over to me and ask me different questions about polish.

MB: Do you think it's hard to learn, if you're an American that doesn't know anything about English.

TK: Yes, I would get into a lot of Arguments with Hungarians. Telling me that Hungarians weren't white. They weren't Hungarians before, they were Tatars.

MB: Were there a lot of jokes which happened between Polish and Hungarians?

TK: Yes but nothing too bad. Just jokes

MB: Were any fights which occurred at the clubs during dances

TK: No

MB: Is there anything else about Windber you would like to discuss?

TK: No

End of Tape 2

End of Interview (February 29, 1984)