

INTERVIEWS WITH STEPHEN AND KATHERINE RICHVALSKY Windber, PA

February 23 and February 26, 1984

By Mildred Allen Beik

SR = Stephen "Steve" C. Richvalsky (1910-1985)

KR = Katherine Zahurak Richvalsky (1911-1993)

MB = Millie Beik

Beginning of the Interview (February 23, 1984)

Beginning of Tape 1 Side A (February 23, 1984)

[The conversation has begun. When Beik turns the recorder on, the Richvalskys are telling Beik about a Hungarian custom that involved inviting people to a wedding.]

KR: Some would send invitations. Two men, you know, with the Hungarian flag if they were Hungarian, would bring them.

SR: Red, white, and green, a little cane, a little short cane; and people knew that they were inviting, you know, with that cane as a representative--

KR: They would have a poem, right? Some kind of poem.

SR: Well, you said a little verse. They would send first.

KR: That was the invitation.

MB: To the wedding? I would love to see to see any old photos that you have. That would be wonderful. That would be great.

SR: That was the invitation. You'd go, and you said a verse. I don't remember the verse anymore. [He had taken part in this custom.] But, maybe, if I thought about it longer, I would remember.

MB: It would come back to you. Okay. Well, if you think of that, tell me. We could record that so then we would have it. The other thing that I would do with these is, when I finish, I'll give you a copy so you would have one. And I don't know if you have a child or some relative who would like to have it, then you would have something. I could copy it for you.

SR: What I'd like to do now is--That's one thing with the weddings and going back, remembering the first priest that I remember.

MB: Okay, we can do that.

SR: His name was Father Fojtán, Hungarian.

MB: Okay.

SR: And you spell that in Hungarian, F-O-J-T-Á-N, with a dash above the “a.” that’s Fojtán in Hungarian.

MB: Yeah.

SR: I didn’t know whether you were interested.

MB: Well I'd like to know more about how the Hungarian church got started if you remember because you were here. But before we do that, let me get, I know your full name. But give me your full name so we can get it on the tape.

SR: Stephen [spelling] S-t-e-p-h-e-n Richvalsky. [spelling] R-i-c-h-v-a-l-s-k-y.

MB: Right. And tell me when you were born because basic facts like that we want to know.

SR: November 4th, 1910, and I was baptized in the Polish church because our church wasn't done. Our church wasn't built then yet. [Beik moved the recorder closer to him.]

MB: So that was--The first church was the Polish church.

SR: The one I remember, the Catholic Polish church. The way I remember it is that I was baptized in there because there were eight of us, but I guess the rest of them were baptized in the Hungarian church when that was built.

MB: There were eight of you in your family?

SR: There were eight of us, yes, four boys and four girls.

MB: Were you one of the older ones?

SR: I was the oldest one.

MB: Oh, you were born in Windber?

SR: I was born--Well, I lived where she lives now, 665 [Railroad Street].

MB: Oh, so your parents--Tell me something about your parents then. Where did they come from?

SR: My parents came from Olaszliszka, Hungary. Let me write it.

MB: Oh, that’s my father’s village.

SR: Is it?

MB: Write it anyway.

SR: Olasz. I can’t write very well. Olaszliszka. [spelling out] O-l-a-s-z-l-i-s-z-k-a. See, in order to spell it properly, if you pronounce an “s” in Hungarian, it's written as a “z,” and if you pronounce an “s” by itself, it’s pronounced “sh.” See?

MB: Yeah.

SR: So Olasz would be [spelling] O-l-a-s-z, Olaszliska [spelling] O-l-a-s-z-l-i-s-z-k-a. If I put just a plain “s,” it would be pronounced Olashlishka, which is wrong. Okay? I don't know if you can read that or not.

MB: No, that's fine. So were both of you parents from this village then?

SR: Yes, yes. I went there to visit it. I don't know how many years ago--five or six years ago. I went to visit.

MB: Yeah, you have to tell me about that, too,

SR: Yeah.

MB: I'd like to hear about that.

SR: Well I went to the church that they went to, and I think we have some movies there, too. I'm not sure.

MB: What church was that? The Roman Catholic?

SR: Yeah, and they were repairing it at the time. They were fixing the roof on the church. We made--It was a holiday, a Catholic holiday, and we had a procession around the church. And I remember that we had to go around mounds of sand and cement that they had made, you know. We had to go around. It was very interesting.

MB: So when did--

SR: My only problem was that I cry a lot. (Both laugh.) It's a weakness. It's a weakness.

MB: No, no, it's not. It means you're very human and you're very feeling. That's what it means. That's all right.

[Beik then turned off the recorder until Mr. Richvalsky recovered. He has cried easily ever since he had a stroke. During this interval, a neighbor came to the door, and Mrs. Richvalsky began to talk to her in an adjacent room. Until this person left, their muted conversation can be heard in the background of the resumed interview.]

MB: Tell me that again because I--

SR: My parents planned on going back.

MB: Did they?

SR: And I went to Hungarian school. See, we had a Hungarian school under the church.

MB: Here in Windber you're talking about now?

SR: Yes.

MB: Oh, okay.

SR: And it bothered me because I went to the public school during the winter months, and

during the summer I had to go to Hungarian school. I had no vacation.

MB: Right (laughing). Could you tell me a little bit about your parents like what they did before they came here then, you know, in the village?

SR: Well they--In Europe they were farmers. They were all, most of them were farmers, and they raised their own food and things like that.

MB: Did they live--Did your mother work somewhere when she was--? [Mrs. Richvalsky and her visitor can be heard talking softly in the background.]

SR: No, they did housework.

MB: No. They did housework, and your father farmed?

SR: The women would go out with the men, out to work on the farms.

MB: Can you tell me about that? Do you know how that worked?

SR: And they had big vineyards, which was very important, and they would make four or five barrels of wine which would last them all until the next grape season.

MB: That's a grape-growing region there, isn't it? Tokaj?

SR: Olaszliszka. Tokaj wine.

[Katherine Richvalsky can be heard speaking quietly in the background to her neighbor. Stephen Richvalsky also mumbled something].

MB: So they did that. And the women went out and worked, too, with the men?

SR: The women went out and worked in the fields. And my father told [a] story that one of the children was born when my mother was helping on the farm where, see, they were working, and she was pregnant. But all of a sudden, she told my father to hitch up the horses and "Hurry home, hurry back." And every once in a while my dad told a story that she would say "faster" and then she would say "slower." So anyway, she had it [the child]. So now what else would you like--?

MB: Did they ever talk about coming then?

SR: Yes.

MB: How'd they come? Did they come all together once to come to America, or how did that work?

SR: Well, every man had to serve three years in the army. My dad served three years. Do you want to see a picture of him?

MB: Sure.

SR: Let me--. [Beik turned off the recorder while he got the photo.]

MB: Oh, what a nice picture! He must have been pretty young in this picture here.

SR: He was a hidasz. That's what they call hidasz.

MB: What's that? I don't know what that is.

SR: How do you say it in English? Bridges. When they come to streams and rivers. So they call it a hidasz. That's in Hungarian, a bridge maker.

MB: So, you had to be in the army to be a bridge maker?

SR: No, you had to be in the army. You had to serve three years. Everybody does. They still do. So you had to serve three years in the army after a certain age, and then they release you. But they always had to have a certain amount of soldiers ready to go in case of attack.

MB: So he served his three years.

SR: Yes.

MB: And then he decided to come to America?

SR: Yes.

MB: Why did he decide to come then? Did he come by himself?

SR: Because they heard that this was a good place to get rich and then go back. And they planned on going back.

MB: What would they have done if they had gone back then? Get money to--?

SR: Well, he bought a home, you know, through a priest and through his close relatives. He bought a home; he bought land, grape vineyards. He was ready to go back, and the war broke out, the First World War.

MB: Oh!

SR: He couldn't go back. He wanted to go back because he wanted to serve in his army. They wouldn't let him, not from this country, see. They wouldn't let him go back.

MB: So did he come?

SR: But he was so--Hungary was his home. Right? [Mr. Richvalsky started to cry, and Beik shut off the recorder briefly. He talked about a photograph when Beik turned on the recorder again.] That's her brother, who--Let me get my glasses.

[Resuming the conversation that began before Beik turned off the recorder]: They came to this country to get rich. Yes. All the money that he [his father] made would go to Europe.

MB: Oh.

SR: And they were so proud and so happy about it. They got vineyards and a home. They bought a beautiful home. My wife and I saw the home. [Directed to Katherine]: How long ago

is it since we visited? Oh, I forget.

KR: In '75 we went to Europe.

SR: '75. So how many years is it? That's about eight years, right? What year is it now? '84?

MB: Nine years now, something like that.

SR: And we saw the church and all that stuff and the vineyards and you know.

MB: Did your father come by himself then, the first time?

SR: With my mother.

MB: Oh, together (emphasis) they came, and then they were both going to go back.

SR: Together they came.

MB: Do you know when they first came then? When they came, what year?

SR: I was born right after they came. So it was about 1910.

MB: They came then? Huh.

SR: Maybe 1909, you know, maybe a year before that, but it was between 1909 and 1910. I'm sure of that.

MB: I see. Okay. Then they had you, and then they had seven other children.

SR: Seven other children.

MB: Can you tell me what their names were or anything and when they were born?

SR: Yes. The one that followed me was Barbara. [To Katherine] Is there a family picture here?

KR: Yes, [pointing to a set of photos] this is my (emphasis) side [of the family]. This [pointing to other photos] is his (emphasis) side here.

SR: Only two are missing there.

MB: [To Katherine] I was going to ask you about yours.

SR: Two are missing there. That's me; that's my sister Barbara; then came Betty; then came Andy; then came Frank; and then came Mary; and then came Helen and Charlie, which aren't on here. Too bad.

MB: Oh boy. It must have been something having all those. Did women have their children at home then in those days?

SR: Yeah. They had a midwife come to the house.

MB: Oh! Do you remember who the midwives were from then at all?

KR: What was her name? The midwife from 17th Street?

SR: Hegedus.

KR: Hegedus. Yeah, that was it.

SR: They had a store. Hegedus [did]. Her name was Hegedus. I wanted to tell you that most every Hungarian name--I made a speech one time in New York. Well, I wanted to be funny. I wanted to be serious. So I said most Hungarian names mean something, like "Hegedus" means a violinist, "Káposzta" means cabbage. I named about four or five. I named--

MB: This is good. I want to hear this. I don't know this. This is good.

SR: I named about four or five things, and then you take my name, which is Richvalsky, and it doesn't mean a damn thing. (Beik laughs; all laugh.)

MB: It doesn't. How disappointing. I was hoping there was going to be some great meaning to that name.

SR: I considered myself pretty good in those days, you know. I was scared stiff, but I didn't cry.

MB: Oh boy. [Then Mr. Richvalsky started to cry, and Beik shut off the recorder briefly.] Did I tell you this? Father Fojtán was our first priest?

MB: Yes.

SR: All right. Now you have that. He used to come out, and I'll give you an example. I remember him--vaguely. He used to come out to bless the homes, and they would put, well, that door had it now. This piece came out, too, and they put the date on there. Gáspár, Melchior, Balthazar. That was the three (pausing)--

KR: [helping out] kings.

SR: The three kings- Gáspár, Melchior, Balthazar. Gáspár, Melchior, Baltasar. They put G M B on the door.

MB: When did they do this?

SR: They still do it once a year, once a year, once a year. He was just here after Christmas. They bless the homes. They do it. All the Catholics do that. The priest comes out with a couple altar boys and blesses the home, and he writes the date and the initials of the saints, you know. So anyway, this priest, I told you what his name was--

MB: Fojtán.

SR: Fojtán. And I'll tell you how to spell that, too, in Hungarian. So I was going to tell you about Fojtán. Anyway, he came to the house, and ours was the last house. Thanks a lot. [Mr. Richvalsky thanked the neighbor as she was leaving.]

And he came out to bless the home, and our home was last. And my dad always had good wine, and so he [Fojtán] had a few wines. And on the way out, I'll never forget it. And Fojtán, the

Hungarian priest, knew some Hungarian songs, and my dad was a wonderful singer. Dad and Father Fojtán, on the way out, they sang this Hungarian song. (He laughs.)

MB: Can you sing any Hungarian songs? You wouldn't sing one for me, would you?

SR: I'd cry.

MB: Would you sing one for me now? I would love to hear one.

KR: Why don't you sing one?

SR: No.

MB: No. Okay. Maybe some other time, if you think about it, you would for me, or maybe if a bunch of Hungarians would.

KR: Sing the one you would sing going up the stairs, the Hungarian song.

SR: [He sang a phrase in Hungarian.] I don't know. [He sang another Hungarian phrase.]

MB: Did people sing a lot?

SR: Yes, they were all jolly people, very jolly. They didn't have much time, but when Saturday would roll around! Saturday and Sunday were their days. And they would have, for example, along this hill here, you look along this hill as far as you could see, there'd be smoke, and everybody would go out and cook bacon on a stick

KR: On Sunday morning for breakfast.

MB: Bacon?

SR: For breakfast.

KR: Did you ever have any? Did your father?

MB: Yes, but I didn't know that everybody did that, though.

KR: They'd drop the grease on the bread.

SR: They'd slice up onions and radishes and spread it on the bread in the grease.

MB: See, some of those things I thought just my grandparents and my father did, but they were common, I guess, to everybody [Hungarians].

SR: No. Everybody did it. You would see all these fires and smoke along on the whole side of the hill here because, especially the Hungarians, they were in the habit of doing that on Sunday.

MB: On Sundays.

SR: On Sundays.

MB: After church or--?

SR: After church most Sundays. Most of them after church. Well, some didn't go to church like the [Hungarian] Reforms. They didn't go to church. They did that early in the morning, but you'd see the fires burning all along the hill. So it was nice. That's why I don't even like to think about it.

MB: Oh. That's really something.

SR: But I'll never forget that my dad and Father Fojtán sang that song on the way.

MB: Well that's a nice memory to have. So he was the first priest. Do you remember when they were trying to organize the people, the Hungarians, to have the church? You were a child then.

SR: They didn't have to. My dad said they were so proud of building one. See, the reason for that was because almost every nationality in this town had their own church, and the reason for that was because they couldn't speak any other language. My parents, for example, couldn't speak English. Right?

MB: Right.

SR: So they built their own church. And all the Hungarians were the same way. See, they couldn't speak English; so they built a Hungarian church. They had a Hungarian priest, Father Fojtán. Now when he went back to Europe--He went back; he left here. The way I heard about it, he was killed by a train crossing the tracks, or something happened, and he just disappeared. That's all I know about Father Fojtán, but I wanted to tell you that story about coming to the house to bless the homes, you know, and then leave singing. (Both laugh.)

MB: Tell me about some of the holidays then.

SR: The holidays were very important. For example, if Easter rolled around, when Easter rolled around, we used to go around and duck the girls, spray the girls. You learned a little verse, a Hungarian verse, and I remembered it so well that when I came here, there was a Mrs. Repko [who was] lives down a little way. She was Hungarian. I went down and sprayed her with perfume.

MB: You mean when you came back? After you retired, you did that?

SR: Yes.

MB: Could you do that now?

KR: She was so happy.

MB: Could you say that now? How did that go?

SR: What? The Hungarian verse?

MB: You said a little verse, you said. How did that go?

[Mr. Richvalsky recited a Hungarian verse about Easter.]

MB: Can you translate that for me?

SR: [He says the first line of the poem in Hungarian and then translates it. He goes line by line, repeating the Hungarian phrases, and following with an English translation after each phrase. The English translation he made was]:

On Easter day today
It was a habit for the young people to go out.
Coming up from your dreams

Back in the days
A basket with eggs in it
Don't be late,
Our group can go on ahead.

So that's the best translation that I can give you.

KR: They'd give you an egg.

SR: And then they'd give you an Easter egg, a colored egg, and sometimes they'd give me two. (He laughs.) And when we were kids, we'd go from house to house, and maybe they'd give you a penny, Easter eggs, and candy, I guess, if they had it. But it was nice.

KR: So the men would go and duck the women on Monday, and on Tuesday the women would go and duck the men.

SR: Which wasn't proper, but they did it just to get even with you.

KR: So Tuesdays, you know, they were all at work and everything. So we would get together and get water buckets, you know, ready, and when they'd be coming home, they'd march down the street here, and we'd duck them.

SR: Throw a bucket of water on them.

KR: But the men were a little meaner than the women.

SR: Well, because it wasn't right.

KR: If some of the girls were in bed, they would go up to the bedroom and throw water on them, you know.

MB: Oh!

SR: But there was perfume. All the boys carried a little bottle of perfume.

KR: Well, not all of them.

MB: Was this a custom that came from Hungary?

SR: Yes.

MB: Did they do this in Hungary?

KR: Yes.

SR: Yes. Now there was something I wanted to tell you. I guess told you, oh, about the school. I did tell you.

MB: Well, tell me for this.

SR: We had Hungarian school during the summer months and public school during the winter months. So I resented it very much because, why should I go to school all year when all the other kids were having fun in the summer time? I found out later that the reason for me going to Hungarian school was because they were planning on going back, my parents, and they had a little store next to the house that they bought, and I would run the store.

MB: Oh! So they wanted you to be educated.

SR: [correcting Beik]: They wanted me to speak Hungarian. And then we had--When I was going to Hungarian school, we had Hungarian plays, and I'll never forget. I was a hussar. Do you know what a hussar is?

MB: Yeah. Tell me anyway.

SR: A hussar was a soldier that had a helmet and was dressed in red and white and beautiful brass buttons. He had a sword, and I was so little that the sword would always drag. And the [unintelligible word]. Let's see what else. I remember I was in it. Oh, I can't remember the names now. I did know the names. But anyhow, we were all in the play, and a fellow by the name of Ivancho was the leader. He came from Europe. He was very good in Hungarian, and he knew a lot of these plays. So he made up this play for us, and we had the play in the church. And our parents came to see us, and it was nice.

MB: Did your parents...When they came here, did they speak any English?

SR: No, that's why it was hard, very hard. And my dad, knew a little bit of German, what he learned in the army.

MB: Oh.

SR: And Germans were everywhere. Most of the time, then, they could speak German, so he spoke German. But later on he learned a little bit of English, too.

KR: But you see when they came from Europe, they could have had jobs in the steel mill or--?

SR: My Dad did start in the steel mill.

KR: But just because the mother came and she was homesick, she wanted to live in a place that was like Europe, you know. So Johnstown, you know, was a city and congested. So the father, they left the steel mills and came into the mines just so she would be happy.

SR: That's the reason my dad came to this town because he had some friends here and my mother cried a lot because she--

KR: [interjecting] She missed her home.

SR: [continuing] She missed her home, and the city of Pittsburgh was too much of a city for her.

So they came. This was here.

MB: So he went to Pittsburgh. They went to Pittsburgh first.

SR: Yes, to Pittsburgh. He had a cousin who was well known in the mill, and he got him a job right away, but my mother cried and cried, and they had to move out.

MB: Had people in Olaszliszka heard of American much? How did they--?

SR: Oh, yes. This was the country where you got rich.

MB: So they had heard of it. Did other people come here before to pass word on first? Did they hear from steamship people? Do you know anything about that? You don't know.

SR: No, I don't know anything about that. Anyway, my parents said they had friends who came here.

KR: Then they had a sad life because his mother--and his Dad worked so hard in the mine, and they wanted to go back. And the mother was buying material. She bought a big trunk and everything so [that] when they went back to Europe she's going to have all these nice materials to make. So the father was sending all of his money to Europe.

There was a priest that was supposed to take--He was sending the money to this priest, and the priest was supposed to buy barn equipment like tractors and things because they had grape fields, right?

SR: Yeah.

KR: And they thought when they go back, they're going to have all those nice things. And then this priest went away and took all the money. And then his mother really got sick over all that, and the father, too.

SR: They lost everything they had right after the First World War. Then my dad had nerve enough to start all over again, and then my mother had a thousand dollars saved right after the strike. And some shyster salesmen came around, and they sold them a lot for over a thousand dollars in Youngstown, Ohio.

MB: Oh, for heaven's sake!

SR: And they had to pay taxes on that, but they couldn't do that because things got slow. They lost that, too

KR: There was no lot, you know. They just had these people coming--

SR: Shysters.

KR: [continuing] and these poor Europeans, they didn't know any better.

SR: They thought they would get rich, you know.

KR: So then, afterwards, they said, why don't we (emphasis) take the lot over. He had things.

We went to Youngstown. There was no property there at all. So she lost even that thousand dollars, you know, just like that.

SR: A thousand dollars in those days was a lot of money.

MB: So did your father and mother then go to Pittsburgh and then right to Windber?

SR: Right to Windber.

MB: Right to Windber. I see. Okay. So did he start working in the mines right away then?

SR and KR: Yeah.

MB: What year? He would have been here in 1910 then, right away, if you were baptized here. So he worked in the mines. Did he work there all the rest of his life then?

SR: Until he got sick.

MB: When was that?

SR: After my mother died.

KR: He lost his mother. She was only--what?--forty eight.

SR: She was only forty eight years old.

KR: She had a gall bladder operation, and she got yellow jaundice and--

SR: I'll be right back. [He left the room.]

KR: [continuing] But I guess, you know, all that--the problems in Europe and everything--and I guess she was just so sick over everything. And I guess then, in those days, a gall bladder operation was kind of--Like nowadays, it's really nothing and simple, and yellow jaundice they could clear it up. Well, she was afraid to go for the operation, you know, and she just kept lingering on and lingering on. Finally, when she finally went, oh boy!

[Mr. Richvalsky, who was returning, tripped and almost fell.]

MB: Be careful!

KR: So then, after she died, the father just broke up, and, oh, he had a stomach operation, an ulcer. He had a half of lamb's stomach put in, but he was never good after that.

SR: My mom died February 13, 1938. My dad died December 24, Christmas Eve, 1965.

MB: He lived quite a few years after that then.

KR: Yeah, but he didn't have a very nice [life] then, you know. They had to break up home here because most of the children--We were in New York, and his sisters were there. And the kids came out, and they couldn't leave him alone here.

So he came to New York, and he was lost, you know. Over here he had friends and everything.

In New York you don't know your neighbor even, you know, and [there is] nobody to talk to. Over here you get up in the morning and stand at the gate and everybody "Hi, ya!"

MB: Did he live up here then?

KR: There's a schoolhouse down on the lower side.

SR: 638, 638. [the father's old house number on Railroad Street]. You know those school houses down here, the very first house on the lower side.

MB: And he worked as long as he could in the mines all that time? Then he--

SR: Uh huh.

MB: Now did you (emphasis) go in to the mines?

SR: Yes.

MB: When did you go into the mines?

SR: I went into the mines when I was sixteen years old. I was fifteen, and then I was in the eighth grade, and all the parents--I figured I'd help out. So I got a job in the store, the Eureka store, Eureka. I worked there for a year, and they weren't paying me anything. They were paying me forty eight dollars a month

KR: Well, in those days, that was good money.

SR: For a month, that's very little, a dollar a day. Anyway, from there I told my dad, I said I went down to ask the boss. Chris Ward was the big boss. He was the big boss in the big store downtown, the Eureka store. His name was Chris Ward. Anyway, I went down to see him, and he said he couldn't do anything for me. So I said, "Thank you very much." And that was it. So I went to work in the mine with my dad, and then on Saturdays when there was no work in the mine, they called me back at the store to help out.

MB: So you were able to get by a little better.

SR: I did do a little better.

MB: So you started in the mines about 1926 then or--?

SR: I started in the mine--Let me think now, [in] '26. About '26 I started in the store. [In] '27 I was in the mine and [counting] '27, '28, '29. I worked three years in the mine.

MB: And then you left--

KR: [interjecting] and you were married. (All laugh.)

SR: And then we went to New York. I had a brother-in-law in New York, her brother, that had a brother-in-law in New York, and his brother-in-law was an attorney in town, in that town.

KR: (Quietly): That was 1929, the Depression.

SR: I was ready to come back because there would be maybe four, five hundred men [at the potential workplace] at the start of the Depression. So anyway, when all the men would be called outside, nothing doing. And there would be a couple hundred men waiting out there for a job, and they'd all leave. This man Mike Ritz told me he'd talk to his brother--

End of Tape 1 Side A

Beginning of Tape 1 Side B

SR: Like I said, they told me not to leave, and when all the other men leave, and go in and tell the manager, what they call him, the guy who hires everybody, tell him that John Ritz sent you. And he says, "What can you do?"

SR: And I said, "What do you got?" What can I do? And he said, "Can you paint?" And I said, "That's my trade." (All laugh.) [unintelligible comment]

MB: This is in New York you're talking about now?

SR: This is how it started.

MB: In New York City itself or somewhere else?

SR: No, no, 35 miles out of the city, Hastings-on-the Hudson.

MB: Oh, okay.

SR: We lived right above the Hudson River. If you drive up the Hudson River, you'll drive right into the river.

MB: Pretty.

SR: Beautiful! It was a beautiful spot. We still have the home there. Our children live in it now. Anyway, I told them that painting was my trade. I got in. And the paint job was almost finished, and I talked to the boss again. There was this fellow by the name of Bill [?], a very nice Irish boss, a little short guy. I'll never forget him. And he said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll talk to the electrician boss." And he said, "Don't back out. Lie if you have to," you know.

SR: And I said, "Okay. I'll try it." Anyway, I went over to the electrician boss, and I told him that I'd like to work for him. "Can you drive a crane?"

SR: "Well, yes, but it's a little bit different than this." I never drove a crane in all my life. I was scared stiff. And he said, "You go work with that man." His name was Mike Gulich. "And you work with him; you work with him in the meantime. Then come back at 4:00 o'clock, and you take over.

KR: [intervening] Excuse me. She wants Windber (emphasis) stories.

MB: That's okay. I can just--I would like to know what he did, other work experiences in between, sure, other things that he did, because you explained and you mentioned something. Gulich--that's a Hungarian name, isn't it?

SR: Goulash is Hungarian; Gulich isn't.

KR: It's Slovak.

SR: Slovak, yeah.

MB: Slovak. So you found an ethnic community in New York then?

SR: More or less. More or less because I became the president of the Hungarian Club there in New York.

MB: Oh, you did?

SR: Yes, I could speak it [the Hungarian language] so well, so fluently, at that time. If you don't practice it, you forget.

But anyway, I got in by lying my way into the plant. And this was during the Depression in 1929, and I stuck it out. It got a little bad at first, working only three or four days a week, maybe one day or two days. And I remember one week I didn't work at all, but I had a job where others didn't even have a job. I worked hard there, and things got a little better.

Then the Second World War broke out, and I volunteered to go in because all my brothers went. They all, they said [that] I can't go because I was a foreman. You can't leave the plant; it was a defense plant. So a fellow by the name of Pete [unintelligible name] and I went upstairs to talk to the manager, and they took poor Pete. They took him, but they wouldn't let me go in. So I stayed in the plant, in the defense plant, and I worked during the whole war. I was a foreman then so [that] I had an easy job. And, well, I could go on from there.

KR: You were there for twenty years.

SR: I was there for twenty years.

MB: Twenty years.

SR: Then they got a hold of me. I knew that the plant was willing to fold up. So I decided that I would go into the floor business. I bought some tools. And there was a fellow working for me, and he was in the floor business, and he showed me how to do things.

SR: [There was] a parochial school that they just built in that town. They decided, well, I (emphasis) decided to clean up the floors, you know, polish them off, and then they talked to me. A couple of priests talked to me, and, anyway, I cleaned it up and I left it. That was it. But I went back to my regular foreman. They [the old job's bosses] called me back in a second time. I went back. I was foreman. So I talked to my wife, and I said, "What do you think, hon[ey]?" They want me to work for the church."

SR: And she said, "Well, your business on holidays is no good anyway." She said, "Why don't you try it?" So I did that for twenty years. (All laugh.)

KR: He went into the floor scraping business, but it wasn't--It didn't do anything for him because they only wanted their floors done, you know, on Thanksgiving Day or Christmas. Then when they start bringing in, when they start building these new homes, then they had floors that

were finished, right? They didn't need a sanding and--

SR: Well, after a while, it got so bad that when they built a new home,, instead of putting hardwood floors down, they'd put carpets down over plywood.

MB: Oh, I see.

SR: And things got pretty bad. So, anyway, I talked to her, and she said, "Well, go to the school."

SR: Well, my daughter became a nun. One of my daughters became a nun. Then I decided, "Well, I might as well work for the church."

KR: Well, the church and the convent and the school. So there was quite a bit of work to do.

SR: The church, convent, and school. And the rectory, too. I had four.

MB: Did you do that until you came back to Windber, then?

SR: I did that, and then I retired there. I told them that was enough.

KR: They made a big party for you.

SR: They made a big party for me. I cried a lot.

MB: Had you always planned to come back to Windber, or was that--?

KR: We always (emphasis) wanted to come back.

SR: Yes, this is our home. We lived in this house right there. You can look out the window, and you can see her house. She lived right there.

MB: Wow! Mrs. Richvalsky, why don't you tell me, what is your first name?

SR: Katherine.

KR: Katherine. But I don't know as much as he does.

MB: Okay. Oh, you do. Can I ask when you were born and about your background a little?

KR: I was born [on] January 15, 1911.

MB: Then you can tell me about your marriage and stuff later and customs and things.

KR: (Laughing) Ours were about the same as the Hungarians.

MB: Well, now, you come from a different, do you come from a Slovak background?

KR: Yes.

MB: Now, your parents--Were each of them--Were they born in Slovakia then?

KR: Yeah, they were, in Czechoslovakia.

MB: Then, were you born here, and they there, or--?

KR: No. I was born here. My father was here first, and then my mother came out with the first baby. She had a baby in Europe. Joe was only a year old, I guess. She came from Europe with her feather bed (laughing) they carried on the boat.

KR: She had it pretty rough because my father was here first, and he was kind of like a little gigolo, you know. He was having--Over here, instead of birthdays, they celebrated name days and feast days. And, well, anyway, he had a lot of girlfriends and everything.

MB: Oh.

KR: So my mother's brother was here, and then he came back to Europe and said to her, "You better go to Windber." Because my father completely forgot about her, you know. So she came unexpectedly, you know. So like I say, she brought the baby Joe, and the feather bed, and then how did they get from New York to Windber because then--?

SR: Well, your father came to Windber because they had, like my father, they had friends and relatives that worked here in the mines. So they would inquire and--

KR: They had a little station, and I guess they had a horse and buggy, and so this guy, or was he the one delivering beer? I don't know. But she was at the station, and this fellow with the horse and buggy, he said [something to her.] She said who she was and everything, and he said, "Oh, yeah, I'm taking some beer up to there. They are having a party." And he brought my mother up here, and here my father was having a party. (All laugh.)

KR: So then, after that, it wasn't so nice; it wasn't a nice greeting or anything. She had a hard life. So then there was twelve of us, one after another.

MB: Wow! Well, when did you your father come, and when did your mother come? Do you have the years?

KR: I don't know.

MB: Had he been here a real long (emphasis) time before she came then?

SR: No, no.

KR: Well he couldn't have been here too long because--

SR: I guess about a year.

KR: He served in the--

SR: Hungarian army.

KR: Hungarian army.

SR: He was a bugler, a kürtös [Hungarian word for bugler]. You see Czechoslovakia at that time belonged to Hungary. They had to serve the same time as the Hungarians. So he served three years. We had a beautiful picture of him at one time, but I don't know whatever happened

to it.

MB: Well, do you know how old your parents were when they got married? Did they work in Slovakia then?

SR: I would say--

KR: My mother worked in the parish for the priests. She used to cook, and, you know, and she was saying [that] even then how hard it was. They would only give them like bread or something to eat. And my uncle, my father's brother, worked in the same parish with her, and then once in a while--I don't know what he was--but he would bring her something more to eat than just bread. She would bake the bread and everything. But, you know, the priest and whoever was there had good meals, but the servants wasn't allowed to have, you know, what they had.

MB: How old was she when she was doing that? Do you have any idea? Was she like, you know, in her twenties or was she much younger?

KR: Younger, I think, maybe about seventeen or eighteen.

SR: I would say he was about--Well, he served three years in the army. Then he came here a year later, and he was here for a year. So he had to be, I guess--When you're eighteen, nineteen, or twenty years old--You're eighteen years old when you go in the army.

KR: Yea, nineteen or eighteen, I would say.

MB: Do you have the name of the town that they were from, or the village that they were from? Do you know what that was?

KR: What do they call it? Spics?

MB: Can you spell that?

KR: [Spelling unsurely] S-P-I-C-S.

SR: I don't know. I don't remember.

KR: Spishka, they would say.

MB: Did you go visit there when you went back?

KR: I wanted to, but the Hungarians wouldn't let us go. His relatives wouldn't let us go from Hungary. We didn't even know we had relatives, you know. And we just took a chance. This one priest that he was working for in New York, this young priest went to Hungary. And when he came back, he said, "Steve you have to go to Hungary."

KR: And Steve said, "Oh, I would love to." He said that his father told him all about how nice everything was, and his father and mother had all these nice stories and everything, and he always, he said, "I can't afford it."

KR: And Father Cochran said, "What do you mean you can't afford it?" And he said, "No, we

need a car.” And he said, he said, “Steve, you go to Hungary, and you can get your car later on.”

KR: So we did. We were so happy, you know. So we didn't know of any relatives. So then we had one in Canada, and she said she was corresponding with one of his uncles. So she gave us his address, you know. So when we went, we landed in Vienna, right [looking at her husband]?

SR: Which was part of Hungary at one time.

KR: Yeah.

KR: So we spent about three days in Vienna, and then we were supposed to go to Budapest, you know, to meet this uncle. So then we didn't speak German. See, we couldn't. Everybody was German even in the hotel where we stayed, you know.

SR: Yeah.

KR: We had a quite a hard time, but I said, “God was good, and he just let us stay.”

KR: So then we met this doctor from New York and his wife. They were going to Budapest. So he heard them when we were going over on the plane, he heard them talking Hungarian. So he went over and said, “Excuse me.” And you know, we've never been to Europe, you know, and this and that, and they said, “Just follow us.” He was studying in Vienna. So he knew Vienna very well. So he said, “Just follow us.”

KR: But, boy, you got to run. You know, they got off the plane, and everybody is running. And we had to change money, you know, and all of that. And I guess they had everything all settled. And this airport was quite a ways from the town, and then they had like a limousine that came, you know, well, like they do here. And that limousine was ready to take off, and we were still [not ready]. Everybody was on there, and we were almost missing it.

KR: And we were so lucky that we met these people, because, see, when we came, they asked us when we went to the agent, you know, to plan our trip. “Well,” he said, “Are we going to stay with relatives, or did--we were supposed to make reservations, but we didn't realize we were going to Vienna. We didn't have any relatives in Vienna; we had relatives in Budapest. So then this “Follow us!” So we tried hard, you know.

KR: And they hailed a taxi, and we were in with them. And then we were going from one place to another. And it was in September when all the college kids and everybody was in Europe. So it was hard to get a room. So he would tell the taxi, he knew the place, you know, to stop here, stop there, at this hotel, at that hotel, and it was all taken. So, finally, they found--it wasn't a hotel. It was a little old lady that lived in this, well, she had rooms, you know. But she had to be very careful who she was taking in, you know, and she had to call up the--I don't know what they call them- the cops there--

SR: Gendarmes.

KR: [continuing] and they took our history and everything, you know, because she was a little old lady. Anyway, we were lucky that he found this place for us there, and they stayed there, too. So it was nice. So then they had a bus that came and took us on different--St. Joseph's.

SR: Beautiful, beautiful in Vienna, a beautiful place.

KR: It was very nice.

SR: We saw a lot of things that we wouldn't have seen.

KR: So then we were ready to go to Budapest, and he had to send a telegram, you know, to these people that we're coming, what day. So they--I guess this boat only goes once a day. So somebody said, "Oh, why don't you go up the Danube, you know, instead of by the train? And we said, "Oh, that's nice. Could we do that?" So finally that's what we did, you know.

SR: Let me tell you. You skipped one part, when I was inquiring in the station, and this fellow--for some reason he looked like a Hungarian--so I tapped him on the shoulder, and I said, "Beszél magyarul?" I asked him, in Hungarian, "Does he speak it?"

KR: He got hold of me, and he hugged me. "What did you say? You're going to Budapest?"

KR: He said he was from Budapest, and he came to Vienna. I don't know what he was doing there. And he said, "Oh, we're going to walk to some saloon in Budapest." So anyway--

SR: She says, "Oh, no you don't."

KR: So, we went up the Danube and it was beautiful, you know, the river.

SR: Yeah, we went up on a--I don't know what they call them. It's one of those speed boats that barely touch the water. I don't know what they call them in English.

KR: We have a lot of pictures.

MB: Hydrofoils, I think.

SR: Something like that.

KR: Yes, that's what it was.

SR: We had a beautiful ride up the Danube. And when we got there--let me tell it--Then when we got there, I said, "How are we going to know them?" They don't know us. And they're high up on the deck.

SR: We got off the boat, and I'm carrying two suitcases, and we heard a fellow yell from up on top of the deck, "Richvalsky, put your hand up!"

KR: Is Richvalsky here? Then we put our hand up, and that was how we got to know them, and they took us--

SR: They were my first cousins, one of my first cousins.

KR: He took us to their home--

SR: In Budapest.

KR: [continuing] and they took us all around Budapest. And, oh, we stayed there for three days

with them, and then they had another cousin in Miskolc.

SR: Right.

KR: So then she took us by train to Miskolc, and then we stayed there three days. They just wouldn't let you go, you know.

MB: You never got to see your side.

KR: No. So then from Miskolc, then he went to where his father and mother--

SR: Olaszliszka.

KR: Olaszliszka, where they had their home and the church where they were married in, and even some of the flags in church that his mother had embroidered. You know, the flags, well, when they have processions, they carry those flags. And then when we were in Miskolc, we went to this one cousin and then his mother's family. Well, they didn't get along. They didn't want us to meet (laughs) his mother's sisters, two of them. We were [there] for three days, and they wasn't far away or anything, and this family just didn't tell us lots of things.

SR: So we were staying with my father's cousin, first cousin. Well, they had a little boy--

KR: Yeah.

SR: He's served in the army since. But he said he'd go with me for a little walk because I wanted to find where my mother--

KR: Down to the river where his mother used to swim, and this little boy said he'd take him down to the river and show him around.

SR: Anyway, on the way back, I was walking down the sidewalk, and I said, "Who is that?" And he said, "That's Boros." That's my mother's side.

MB: Boros is your mother's side?

SR: That was the name, Boros. [Spelling] B-o-r-o-s.

KR: Her maiden name.

SR: Anyway, that was my mother's youngest sister.

KR: She heard we were there.

SR: So she was leaning on the gate outside waiting, and I walked up there, and so, from there on, I met all the others.

MB: My grandmother's maiden name was Boros.

SR: Really?

MB: Maybe we're related, and we didn't even know it because they came from Olaszliszka.

KR: Really? (All laugh.)

SR: We are related. My mother's name was Boros, [spelling] B-o-r-o-s.

MB: That was her (emphasis) maiden name. She married a Jelenik. Her name was Priscilla.

SR: It's funny. My father seemd to be very friendly with the Jeleniks. They knew the Jeleniks very well.

KR: Yeah. So anyway,--

MB: Go on.

KR: This one cousin from Budapest that took us to Miskolc. He was a butcher. And he would go and he would bring raw bacon and--

SR: Cold cuts.

KR: [continuing] cold cuts for breakfast. And I couldn't speak. I understand some Hungarian, but not much. I can't hold a conversation, but I know [some Hungarian]. So the lady wanted to know what I want to drink, you know, and I said, "I drink tea." And she said, "How do you want it, cold or hot?"

KR: I said "meleg [the Hungarian word for "lukewarm"]."

SR: Hideg [the Hungarian word for "cold"].

KR: I wanted hot tea. See, so when she served it to me, I said, "Oh, gosh, I can't drink cold tea in the morning." Well, anyway, so he told the woman, and she said, "Well, she asked for cold tea." And then I tried so hard to talk because he [her husband] said he's tired of, you know--

SR: [interjecting] translating.

KR: [continuing] translating, you know, for me. He said, "You're on your own." And, oh, I was getting so tired.

SR: She could speak some.

KR: And then I'm an asthmatic, you know, and I get short of breath, and it was so hot in Europe that September. And they would take us up in these churches, you know, with the big stairs and everything. And the women would, this one here and this one there, and they're pulling me, and then finally I said, "I can't go." I couldn't get my breath. And he said, "You better leave her alone. She can't go up."

KR: Then I said [that] I'll wait downstairs and let them go up. And then they'd take me to these hot spas [and say] "Oh, you're going to lose your asthma." Through tunnels, what do you call, caves and things and [they would say] "When you go through that cave, you're going to lose

your asthma.” And I would get claustrophobia, you know. I couldn’t be closed in. But we tried.

MB: You tried.

KR: I tried.

SR: It hit you pretty well.

KR: So what I was going to tell you about this butcher. He wanted us to himself, you know. So he took us to some nice gypsy places at night, and they played the violin, and we danced and, you know, and all that. So when they took us from his place to where his mother was, to Olaszliszka, this guy comes up, you know, and he wants to be with us all the time. And he had a mother-in-law up in Olaszliszka, and she was very ill.

KR: So we went to this church. It was August 15. It was a big holiday, you know, and there they still have procession[s] where you go outside around the church and everything. So we joined in, and someone comes up then and tapped him on the shoulder and says, “I’m your father’s sister.”

MB: So you really have lots of relatives there.

KR: Oh, yeah.

SR: All in Europe.

KR: Well that was--she--

SR: One time I went to the bank in Budapest, and they have to have your name, you know, to change your money, and the lady who was waiting on me is my cousin.

MB: Was your father the only one of his family to come here then?

SR: Yes.

KR: I think so. Yeah.

MB: So everyone else stayed. Why did he (emphasis) come when the others didn’t? Just to make the money that you--?

KR: Wasn’t there one who was sick in Canada?

SR: Yes. A brother. András. He was in the First World War. Well, he wasn’t shot up so much, but he left his wife and stayed in Canada. And my dad tried to talk him in to going back to his wife, but he never did. So that was the only relative besides my father that came to this country.

MB: [To Katherine] What about your (emphasis) family? Do you know did they--was your father and mother the only ones who came, or did other people from the family come here?

SR: Her father had a couple of brothers.

KR: Yeah, he had two brothers here.

MB: Did they come before your parents came?

SR: They must have.

KR: Yeah, they were here because they were at that party, too. We have pictures, you know, from when my mother came.

MB: Do you know if they came right to Windber? Or did they go someplace else before they came here?

KR: No, my parents came right to Windber. My father did. But he also--Didn't he work in a steel mill?

SR: Who?

KR: My father.

SR: I don't remember.

KR: No. I know where he went. He went right to Windber, and he was working in the coal mine. And his brother George lived in Ohio, and he had a job as a conductor on a trolley car. So he asked my father, you know, to leave the mines and come there. So my father went, but I don't know if he took a job on or not. I think that he just didn't like it there. He came back and went in the mines. They insisted on going in this mine. I don't know how they ever worked--

MB: In those days.

SR: Well, there was nothing else to do, and they was making money, you know.

MB: Was it easy for them to get the jobs when they first came?

KR: Yes, yes.

SR: Oh yes. Very easy.

MB: In other words, they were looking for people.

SR: Especially that type of people.

KR: My mother had a brother, and his wife wouldn't come from Europe, you know. She was afraid to cross the ocean and all that. So he lived with us most of the time. And then he had a son, and he came out here, and he went into the mines. But he didn't like it, and he quit, and he went to Ohio. He was working in Ohio.

MB: So did your parents, when they came, did they ever talk about boarding anywhere, or did they just come to the house?

KR: Well, when my mother came, they had, like they call this, the shacks. You notice this--

SR: Down behind. The shacks they call them.

KR: That's where I was born.

SR: You can see them from the window here. Stand up and look out the window, on the lower side. Look on the lower side.

MB: They call those the shacks?

SR: Yeah.

KR: That's where they, mostly the European people [lived]. They had this type of shack up [at] 33 Mine, they call it, right? There's nothing there anymore. It's how you go to Central City. I know that's where my mother came to. My father lived there, and my uncles were there because they are on the party pictures.

MB: Did they board, though, before your mother came?

KR: Yes.

MB: Was he boarding with someone?

KR: Yeah, I think my father boarded with his brother and his wife.

MB: I see.

SR: While I think of it, can I cut in? While I think of it now, what do you call it when they baptize the church?

MB: Oh, dedicated?

SR: Dedicated, yeah. Templom szentelés [Hungarian for “blessing or dedication of the church”], yeah, [the] blessing of the church. When they built our church, I mean, when they finished the church, before they finished the church, I remember the big bell that's up in the tower now was down on the lawn in front of the door.

MB: Oh!

SR: By the side door.

MB: Uh huh.

SR: Anyway, they had a big picnic. They had a big get together, and we had gypsies in the park and templom szentelés, they call it in Hungarian, the baptizing of the church, the new church. And I'll never forget it because they served Hungarian goulash, you know, and I had a plate of it. All the children got a plate of it. And the gypsies, all the musicians were Hungarian gypsies, and they played at the picnic. It was sort of a picnic, and I remember them asking certain people what song they would like. They played. But that's part of the--I forgot to tell you about this when they blessed our church.

MB: That's interesting.

SR: That was in 1919, right?

MB: Right. So were there lots of gypsies? Was there lots of music?

SR: Yes, if there was a wedding, you wanted to hire some gypsies.

KR: My uncle George from Central City, he played the violin, but he had the real gypsies with him, too, even on his wedding. They played for his wedding.

MB: Here it is, a picture of him.

KR: Well, anyway, what I was going to say was that he played for my brothers' wedding. So we lived here, and Margaret, the girl that he married, lived down by the school house.

MB: O-o-oh!

KR: So the gypsies, oh, they came up marching, and all the people followed--

SR: Up the road.

KR: [continuing] up the road. And they came, and they got the groom, and then they took him down to the bride's house, you know.

SR: Music all the way down.

KR: And it was in November. I was surprised. It was cold then.

SR: It was chilly. But it was fun.

KR: Like I said, my uncle had about three or four--

SR: Real gypsies.

KR: [continuing] real gypsies that played. And then, when we had the Hungarian dances here, down Eighth Street, boy (emphasis) that was something!

SR: We always had gypsies, the Hungarians [did]. Well, you see, the thing was that they always closed at 12:00 o'clock; they couldn't go past 12:00 [p.m.]. That was the rule, the law in the state. So just before 12:00 o'clock, around 11 or 11:30, all the crazy Hungarians would start a fight. [Beik laughs.] And, boy, that was something to watch.

MB: Did they fight with each other or with other nationalities?

SR: With each other.

KR: Like, they would be jealous because some Hungarian fellow from Europe would come, you know--

SR: We called them "greenies." We called them "greenies."

KR: [continuing] and dance with your friend, your girlfriend. This gang thought they owned all the girls, you know. Nobody was allowed. So they would start a fight with them because they were dancing with somebody else.

MB: Did you go to Slovak dances then at the Slovak churches, or how did that work?

KR: Yeah, that was about the same, I think, [for] the Slovaks and the Hungarians.

SR: The Slovaks were more peaceful.

KR: I think the Hungarians have a little more temper.

MB: So you used to go to a different church? Right?

KR: I went to St. Cyril's, the Slovak church, and I went to school there, too. They had built a new school. First we went to the Polish [church]. Only the Polishes had a--

SR: That's what I said before. Yeah. That's where I was baptized.

KR: Then they built this. So then I went to the Slovak school, but I didn't go too much. What was the--?

End of Tape 1 Side B

Beginning of Tape 2 Side 1 (February 23, 1984)

[As the conversation resumed, the Richvalskys were showing Beik family photos.]

SR: That's her family.

MB: Oh, that's really nice. Let me see.

SR: You can count them there.

MB: Why don't you tell me who all your brothers and sisters are?

SR: She can name them all.

KR: I lost three of them already. This is my brother Joe. I think he would be friendly with your father. And that's my brother Steve and George, my sister Mary, Betty, myself--Katherine, and John and Mike and Andy, and then there's Elmer and Eddie.

MB: And your parents. How nice!

KR: She was a little woman. He was handsome. He was like a politician. (All laugh). It's too bad that, you know, they didn't have such a real vacation or anything.

SR: You always talk so bad about your dad. I think he was a great guy.

MB: Were you like the second oldest then or what or who--?

KR: Yeah, my sister Mary is the oldest, and then I.

SR: Among the girls.

KR: And Betty is the youngest.

SR: That's the girls.

MB: You said Joe was born before you came and then--

KR: Yes. He came from Europe. Joe did. He was a year old.

MB: And then everyone else was born here.

KR: Yes.

MB: So then, how, with the boys and girls together, which one were you in time? Like, I mean--

SR: Joe and Andy came over here, you know--

MB: I just meant in age, like--How many older brothers and sisters, both, did you have?

KR: We were just about a year apart, wasn't we?

SR: You were a year and a half. You were a year and a half. Joe was the oldest, and then you came to Andy.

KR: We lost one, a baby, I guess. That was after Andy, right?

SR: Yeah.

KR: And then Mary.

SR: Steve. You want the boys now, don't you?

MB: No. Together, both of them together, which was which.

KR: Then my sister, then Steve, and then, I guess I, then my brother Mike and then George and John and Eddie. And Elmer was the baby.

MB: Wow! Quite a family. So your mother had to work hard and do all the laundry and--

KR: Oh yeah. She worked so hard, and she never went any place, you know. She wasn't able to go.

SR: You couldn't go. No time to go anyplace.

MB: Tell me what the company houses were like back then. I know what they were like later, but I don't know--

SR: When we first moved into them, there were kerosene lamps. No electricity. And they were nice.

KR: Then when they put the electricity in, and I was home doing laundry, and we cleaned up everything, you know, after they finished. And I guess I must have thrown everything in the fire, you know. We had the coal stove, and they had a little door on the side. And every once in a while, you'd put the poker in, you know, to put the coal down, and this wire came and just burned my mother's eye right out.

MB: Oh, no!

KR: So that was sad. And she had a little baby. He was, I don't know, a couple months old, my

brother Eddie. And so, it just, you know, burned it right out.

MB: Oh, for heaven's sake.

KR: And that was such a terrible thing. We didn't know what to do. My father was working, you know. Poor thing! We just had the pan there, and the blood kept flowing and everything. She didn't want to go to the hospital. She had a little baby, you know. Then when they took her to the hospital, well, she had to take the baby, too, you know. So Eddie was crying, and it bothered her because she thought they wasn't taking care of him, you know, and, oh, it was sad. It was terrible.

KR: So she lost her eye, and she did pretty good with the one eye. I mean, my father didn't read or write, you know. He didn't know much. But she was pretty bright, and she would read the newspaper to him and all that.

MB: Oh, I see. What languages did your family speak?

KR and SR: [simultaneously] Slovak.

MB: So you know that pretty well.

KR: Yeah. I used to write and everything else, but then, we had a--

SR: Then she'd translate it to me, and I wrote it in Slovak. If you can read and write in Hungarian, you can do it in Slovak, too.

MB: Really?!

KR: Yeah, she was very proud of him because, like I say, he would, you know, write in Slovak to her, too. Like I say, I had this one uncle that his wife wouldn't come to America, and he lived with us, and you know we had twelve in the family. We had boarders, too, besides.

MB: How many did you have?

KR: Oh boy. We used to have about two, three boarders, and we often wonder, like now, even when our kids come home, you know. We had boarders. Where we gonna sleep? Where we gonna sleep? We'd better go to a motel or something. Gee, we had twelve and three boarders, and where did we sleep? I don't know. Boys and girls together. Three or four of us in one bed. It really was something (emphasis), I'm telling you.

SR: There was three of us. Three boys slept in one bed. You had to.

KR: So, anyway, this uncle's wife wouldn't come out. So he lived with mother, see. And my dad didn't approve of it too much because it was hard going, you know. That's why my brothers went to work in the mines so early to help feed the family.

MB: How early did they go in the mines?

KR: Oh, gee, what was Andy? He was only about fourteen, sixteen.

SR: Sixteen, fourteen.

KR: Yeah, and he said that he would walk up the railroad track, and you know they carried that dinner bucket, they called it. And he said he could slide it on the railroad track. He was so young and short.

SR: Oh yeah. He'd slide it up the railroad track.

MB: Did he work with your father then?

SR: No. He was a spragger, and his brother Joe was a motorman, you know.

MB: Tell me what those jobs were like. What was a spragger?

KR: My father was a timberman. Right?

SR: Her father was a timberman. You know, in the main headings, you know, they put up big timbers.

KR: Joe was a motorman.

SR: Joe was a motorman.

KR: Andy was loading coal?

SR: No. Andy was a spragger.

MB: What's a spragger? What's a spragger?

SR: A spragger? They called them spraggers then because when they shoved the car down the track, they'd start spragging the wheel. They called them sprags. They are wooden.

KR: It's like a little cloth or something.

SR: Like, it's what they call them--sprags. They are sharp on both ends, and you had to put them in the wheel. You had to use them in the rear and turn them in. No brakes on the side. You know what I mean?

MB: Oh, wow. Was that dangerous then?

SR: Yeah.

MB: It sounds dangerous.

KR: Oh, yeah.

SR: Andrew was hurt a couple of times.

KR: My brother had his head crushed. Andy, and my brother Joe.

SR: Joe still suffers from it. Joe still has a bad knee.

KR: And the older one, I'll never forget that. When the ambulance would go up, well, all the women would go out to see, well, who were they going to bring down, you know. And my mother went shopping. Like they would get statements, every two weeks?

SR: Uh huh.

KR: And it was statement day, and she would go down to the Eureka store to pay her bill. And then she wouldn't bring no money home, you know. They would really take everything. They would really take everything. So, well, she was able to bring us a little candy or something, you know, a little treat on statement day. So I was home, and the ambulance stopped in front of the house, and here it was my brother. And he was all crushed up, his arm broken, and he was in the hospital for such a long time.

SR: Over a year.

KR: They would set it and re-break it and set it. He lives just down below here.

SR: He still can't lift his arm up.

KR: And he still can't lift his arm up. I think he has like a silver plate or something in there. But both of the boys were really, you know--

SR: [Interjecting] Banged up.

KR: So I'll never forget that, you know. I had to go out to the ambulance and see that it was my brother.

MB: How old were you then about?

KR: I'd say maybe about twelve, huh?

SR: I'd say so.

KR: Twelve, thirteen.

SR: She had a lot of sadness in her life, too.

MB: Yes, yes.

KR: So when we would do the wash, we would do, like on Monday, we would do all the white things, you know, like the boys' shirts. Oh, we had a lot of shirts. (She laughs.) And then, the second day, we'd do the bedding. The third day we would do what? The miners' clothes.

SR: The miners' clothes.

SR: Then the carpets. Oh, God!

SR: All week.

MB: What kind of house did you wash them in? Did you have running water in the house or anything?

KR: We had water in the house, but we had to--We had those copper boilers to boil. Imagine! And we had a stick, like, you know. We used to boil them to make them nice and white.

SR: Ever see the big copper?

MB: No, I don't think so. I've heard about them, but not in my time.

KR: Yeah. We used to turn them over with this, you know. They would be boiling, steaming hot. Then we'd take them out and put them in. We had tubs in the house. We had, you know, tubs on the chairs. They would cut off the back of the chairs, you know.

SR: You didn't ask her how we took a bath.

MB: Yeah. I want to ask you. And did the miners--They had wash houses later. Did the miners come home and take baths in those days?

SR: They come home, and they'd get the big tub out, see, before I worked with my dad. Then my dad would wash up, you know, down to his waist, and they had what they call a chutak [Hungarian for a thin fragment].

KR: A soap rag, a wash cloth.

SR: A big soap rag. And my dad would fold it up. It would be like a big pancake, yeah, and slap it on your back, and that was a signal for my mother to scrub his back. All right. Now after she's got all that scrubbed, then he'd roll up his sleeves. He was mostly dressed, and he'd roll up his pants and wash his feet. Now the lower part of your body, you'd only wash once a week. If it was a full bath, Saturday, because, see, when you're in the mine, you pull your shirt out (emphasis) over your pants so the dirt and the stuff would roll right out. See?

MB: Oh, I see.

SR: That's the way they did it. Now, then, can you picture this? Twelve kids, eight kids, and every Saturday you had to take a bath.

KR: Yeah.

SR: And my mother would line them up, see? You took a bath and [unintelligible words] more hot water.

KR: In fact, one year we came home from New York, and we brought some friends--a good friend of his. And so the mother was, you know, setting up the tub in the cellar. "Okay, you're next," you know. And he said, "In there? I'm not a cockroach. I can't get in there." Coming from New York, he was to take a bath in the tub. But then they had the--But that was pretty rough, you know. We girls had to scrub the brothers' backs like this.

MB: Oh, you did?

KR: Yeah. We had to wash their backs, too.

MB: Where were the bathrooms? When you had to go to the bathroom, was that outside?

KR: and SR: (simultaneously) Outside. Yeah.

KR: Like I say, in the cold winter days, we had no shoes or anything. We'd go to the bathroom. We never had colds, and it was cold. Or, either, the carpets, you know, they would have linoleum. Then they would have new carpets. And then they had burlap sacks.

SR: On top of the carpets.

KR: The cows would feed on this.

SR: Beef pop.

KR: Beef pop. And the sacks my mother would save, and they'd sew it together, and they'd cover up the carpets, too, you know. So once in a while, you'd have to wash the carpets. So those things were so big. We couldn't do them by hand in a tub. We'd put them on the front porch and scrub them with a brush. And in the wintertime, you know, my dress would be all frozen, and [I was] barefoot, scrubbing those carpets and rinsing them in the tubs, you know.

MB: Oh boy.

KR: So here I'm 73 [years old] now, and I'm just having knee problems. I said, "Well, that's not too bad since twelve years old." (All laugh.)

SR: I worked in a store, down in the [Mine] 35 store. Mrs. [unintelligible name] and a few old timers would come in barefoot in the winter time. They'd stamp their feet and knock the snow off their toes. At Eureka.

MB: Oh, wow. Boy!

SR: They didn't live too far away from the store, of course.

KR: Yeah.

MB: They didn't make enough money to buy things for their feet, I guess.

KR: I guess some of them couldn't afford it.

MB: Well, when you--What was I going to ask?

KR: Yes, we had the outhouses, and that was pretty rough, you know.

SR: Tell her the story about that. You tell it sometimes. I don't know if you dare tell it now or not, what your girls used to do when the neighbor was in the toilet.

KR: That's nasty.

MB: Tell me. Tell me. Everybody has something.

KR: We were just kids, and, you know, it's a two holer--the outhouse. So there was a blind man that lived next door to us. So my girlfriend, not this one who came by today, so we would see him go in. And we would get a stick, and we'd go in ours. Isn't that awful? (She laughs.) And he was Polish, and he would say [a Polish curse]. Oh, that was awful!

SR: Was he partly blind?

KR: Yeah.

SR: He was partly blind.

KR: He would go around with a cane.

SR: See, the outhouses were split so [that] you had a part, and the neighbors had the other part. So they'd get this poor blind guy.

MB: Did the people tend to live, like in [Mine] 35 or [Mine] 36, [with] all the Polish people together and all the Hungarian people together--

SR: No.

MB: [continuing] or was it all mixed up?

KR: They were all mixed.

SR: All mixed

KR: We had just a few Irishes, right?

SR: Very few.

KR: Just about three families, I think.

SR: I remember. I'll give you a good example. Most of the people here were Slovaks, Hungarians, Polish, but very few Irish. And this one Irishman, he was not an Irishman; he was a Scotsman. He lived in the new houses. A Scotsman. Anyway, they stopped in front of--I can't think of his name now--

KR: Kankula.

SR: Kankula. He was a tough little Hungarian. But they were quiet, and this Scotsman stopped in front of him out on Saturday night. Well, us kids were out in the street.

KR: He was singing a song.

SR: And he started singing, "Oh, the Hungarians ain't no good."

KR: The Hungarians ain't no good.

MB: So what happened after he sang that? I'm anxious to hear. (Beik laughs.)

SR: I can't think of his name now. He was about my size, maybe a little bigger. He was a tough little guy, son of a gun.

KR: Kankula, Steve Kankula

SR: No, somebody before that. Anyway, he backed up and hauled off, and he slapped this Irishman, this Scotsman, in the mouth, and he rolled into a ditch. He picked himself up and-- They held their own.

KR: I thought he took that fence--

SR: No, that was different. That was different. That was another fight. Down by our house, the

same thing happened. It was across the street. I'll never forget because I was out there. This guy stopped there, and he started bitching about--Anyway, he was bitching something about the Hungarians, and this guy just left.

He went in the back and took the clothes line pole. You know what I mean? The clothes line pole. And he came out. The guy was still by the fence, and he [the Hungarian] whacked him [the Scotsman] on the head, knocked him clean across the road, and he fell in front of our house. He just listened to him, and, you know--

MB: So the different nationalities--What about Slovaks and Hungarians and the Poles?

KR: The Slovaks, they were, the Slovaks, I don't know. They didn't seem to have any problems, you know.

SR: With them.

MB: So was it mostly Scots and Irish?

SR: No. That's why I say, only one or two Scotsmen lived up there in the new houses, and they didn't get along with the Hungarians. I never forgot that because the Hungarian was so calm. He just leaned and listened to him for a while singing "They're no good," and--then, boom!!!

MB: When you think about Windber and being in the town, were there any nationalities that you thought were favored more than others or like in the mines working--?

SR: Yes, the Italians. The Italians.

KR: The Irish. The Italians.

MB: What kinds of jobs did they get?

KR: They were bosses.

SR: Well, now you say, I can't say for sure, but [they were] something like the mafia. They just took care of one another, see? They got the best jobs. But most of the people up in this area never paid much attention to them.

MB: But the Italians didn't live up here then.

KR: No, they--

SR: No they lived out west.

KR: They're mostly on 21st Street.

SR: 21st--22nd Street, up around that area.

KR: That's like mostly--

SR: Still it's Italian.

MB: It still is.

SR: There are some nice people, though, like Frank Martino and a few others. They're nice enough, but in those days [of] the foreigners, it was different.

MB: Now when did you two meet, and how did you meet?

KR: We went to school together. (All laugh.)

MB: Did your parents, like in your own case, with your parents, [did] your parents meet each other in Europe, or did somebody arrange their marriages, because sometimes that was common.

KR: No.

SR: No, not that I know of. No, they made up their own minds about who they were going to marry.

MB: So what about your parents? Did they ever talk about how they got married? Was that something like their parents arranged or--?

SR: Well my parents, from what I gathered, my father loved my mother, and my mother loved my father very much from when they were young and in Europe. I remember my dad telling a story that his father, my dad's father, didn't agree with who he was marrying because they were big shots. See, my father's side was big shots. And my mother's side was lower class. So they didn't agree, and my father's father wanted to hit him, and he [the son] just came out of the army. He had three years in the army. So my dad said he was in the army, and it kept him from hitting him [his father]. But they [Stephen's parents] loved each other very much. Of course, my father had the Hungarian temper, like most Hungarians do. I can remember some of them were pretty bad. But it all turned out all right.

MB: [To Katherine] What about your (emphasis) parents? Did you ever hear any stories about them? Sometimes parents have a lot to do with who their kids marry.

KR: I think almost like he said. I know my father was going with somebody else. I don't know how, one way or the other. I don't really know, but she said that, I guess, they got married on the spur of the moment. He was going with somebody, and then something happened between them. So then he met mother, and they just got together.

MB: So it wasn't arranged by anybody.

KR: No, no.

MB: Now you have to tell me how you two (emphasis) met.

SR: When we were kids. We knew each other from the time we were kids. She lived here, and I lived down below. We went to school together.

MB: So when did you get married then?

KR: In 1929 we were married.

SR: Yeah. It was close to 1930.

MB: Did you want to get married sooner than that? When did your family--How did a marriage work in those days?

KR: They weren't too enthused about it, but--

SR: It worked out all right. I remember your dad when we first came back after we went to New York. I came back to visit, and her dad came down and talked to my dad. And before I left, they were seen together. They seemed okay with us.

MB: So how old were each of you when you got married?

KR: We were nineteen. We were only a month [apart]; he's November, and I'm January.

SR: She always tells me that she's younger than I am. Hers was January; mine was November.

MB: I guess she is (laughs), not by much.

SR: Yeah, yeah. Every year--1909.

KR: We were too young. And then, like I say, his mother was ill, and then we went to New York. There were no jobs here. He had a hard time getting a job, and he couldn't get anything around here. So my brother, you know, asked us to come out there. And, finally, he landed a job, and what did he do? Two or three days a week, he'd bring home [an] eight dollar pay and all that. And they would say his mother was in the hospital, and she was asking for him. She wanted him. And, oh, it was hard. He'd come out and go back home. And then they'd say she turned for the worse. She only wants him. So he went back and forth as much as, you know, he could.

KR: But we had it hard from '29 to get started. Like he said, he had that job. He was going out and cutting grass. It was a good thing we lived in New York because around here you couldn't make no extra money. He cut grass for the rich people.

SR: I was very lucky because at least I had a job, where most of the people were laid off.

MB: Well, how had the mines been working here before you left?

SR: Oh, bad. Very bad, very bad.

KR: They closed up there for a while.

SR: I was doing two days a week before I left.

KR: Yeah.

MB: Can you tell me a little bit about what the working conditions were like then? This is before unions were here yet, I guess. Yeah.

SR: Yeah.

MB: Here, particularly, these were the only mines that you ever worked in. Right?

SR: Yeah.

MB: The ones around here. Okay.

SR: I don't think there's much to say about the working conditions because they were always the same except when the union came in. Then they got more money and more money. They got paid for this, paid for going in, paid for coming out, portal-to-portal pay, they called it, which was after my time, after I left.

MB: Sure.

SR: So anyway--Eventually, John L. Lewis went too far. See, one thing about miners that most people don't understand [is that] the company owned the mines. There's only a limited number of things they [the miners] can do. They [the company] can close it down. They [the company] can move out if they want to. And I learned that here, and when I went to New York, that's what I was worried about mostly.

MB: Closing down?

SR: And sure enough, that's what they did, eventually, after I got out of the plant.

KR: So he [Stephen] went to work with his father. His father was a hard worker. He worked real hard, you know. Like some men go in, and they don't really do much, but they wanted to go to Europe so badly. I think your father was about the highest paid. He was bringing in the most pay, right?

SR: [He makes an unintelligible comment.]

KR: And then when he [Stephen] started, he had to keep up with his father. So he was making nice money, too. But when we wanted to go out, you know, to a movie--What was it? Ten cents or something to get into the opera? And he couldn't afford, you know, to take me to the movies because he'd bring in like \$100 pay, and his mother would take it, and she would give him fifty cents. So this one time--

SR: I bought you some Cracker Jacks, didn't I?

KR: So sometimes, you know, you could never make a date because you didn't know if he's going to take you or not.

SR: I tell you. One time I did, I made a date--

KR: That's what I wanted.

SR: [continuing] and then--

KR: He had a whole dollar.

SR: [continuing] I had a whole dollar, believe it or not.

KR: And he said, "I'm going to take you to the movies today."

KR: And that was the first date, you know, and we're walking down and we're walking down where the Eureka store is. It's closed up now. He puts his hands in his pockets, and he finds out-

-no dollar. He must have lost it, see? So he meets a friend, Mike Gerula, and takes off with Mike, and he leaves me because he didn't have the dollar to go into the Arcadia [theater].

SR: So she went to the movies by herself, and I waited until she came out.

KR: So that was his excuse. He met his friend, and he walked away. So it was a good thing I had ten cents in my pocket. And I went into the movies. So he waited until I came out.

SR: Sad.

KR: But [it] wasn't that sad.

MB: He didn't tell you it was because he didn't have the money?

KR: No, no.

MB: You didn't know that, and you thought he just abandoned you, I guess.

KR: Yes.

SR: Later I told her I lost my dollar. I looked high and low. I got up early the next morning, and I walked up and down the street.

KR: We were so happy [that] we was going to the movies together. He got a dollar.

SR: A whole dollar. Can you imagine that? I could have bought her an ice cream soda and all that stuff. And I lost it.

MB: So it was really hard to plan for getting married when you decided you wanted to.

KR: Oh, yes, it was.

MB: Well, how did a wedding work then? Did you go off and do it by yourselves, or did your families try to help you?

KR: They helped, you know. Like our, my mother--They'd have their chickens and this and that, and they'd--A couple of women would get together, and they all helped to cook.

MB: So they kept animals at the houses?

KR: Yeah, pigs and cows. My mother had chickens and ducks.

SR: Everybody had a cow.

MB: Really?

SR: Oh, yeah. Almost everybody.

KR: Yeah.

MB: How long did they have cows? Do you know? Because when I was growing up in the '40s, there weren't any cows any more.

SR: Well, I think they cut out the idea of throwing the manure in the back. Everybody had a big manure pile in the back of the house.

MB: So, until you left in 1929, there were cows?

KR: We had cows when we had our children because when we'd come back, I had my sisters and my brothers and wife who lived in this house--her name was Agatha Brutsky [spelling?]-so she took over after my mother passed away. She just came in, you know, and married and had all these cows and chickens and everything.

KR: So when we would come home for vacation with our kids, they wanted to see her, how she milked. Where does the milk come from, you know? And how, where [did] they get the milk? So she would take these little ones, and she said, "Okay, pump the tail," she told them. And they would be pumping the tail, and they thought that's how the milk comes out. And she had these poor kids pumping the cow's tail. (All laugh.) So I don't remember when they had to get rid of all that stuff.

KR: Well, then my brother came to New York because the mines closed up here, and he was what? Fifty five. And the mines closed up, and there was no work here. They were very poor. They didn't have, you know. Now they have welfare and all that. [You] get food from here and there. In those days, they didn't get anything. So they were lucky to have cows and chickens and everything, you know, so [that] they could live on that. So then, they closed up the mines and everything, and my brother wanted to come to New York, you know. And we said, "Gee, he's fifty five." And the union was in. He [Stephen] said, "You can't get him a job." And so, then he was a fireman in New York and an ambulance corps man, and he was talking to some of these fellows at the fire company. And they said there was one tinsel light by the Chevrolet Company, and they didn't, you know, care what age it was. They didn't have a union, right?

SR: No. He was a good worker, and I told them, I said, "The man is fifty-five years old." It didn't make no difference.

SR: A friend of mine at the fire department, he said, "Tell him to come out."

KR: So it was sad because he was never in New York, just a coal miner all those years, you know. So when he came, and he [Stephen] got him this job, and he brought his miner clothes, you know, with him because they were very poor, you know. So he insisted on taking them to work. Well, anyway, then you gave him some of yours, khakis and this and that.

MB: What year was that about?

KR: Let's see [thinking]. He was fifty five, and he died when he was sixty two, and he had fifteen years in New York.

SR: I'd say about 1948, I think. We had that little home across the aqueduct then, right?

KR: Stephanie wasn't born then yet, was she?

SR: I don't know. I think you're right. Yeah, because we lived in the apartment when she was.

KR: It might--

MB: I was just trying to think if it was the '30s or '40s or what.

SR: I would say it was in the '40s.

KR: About '42.

SR: So I got him the job, and he was very happy. And things went along beautifully. When he was getting on his feet, we got him a janitor job. I used to be a janitor, and then we got him that job.

KR: Well, the thing was that he came out, and he lived with us for two years. We kept him, you know, and she [his wife] just--the children just couldn't leave Windber or she (emphasis) [couldn't]. And so she kept saying, "Well, we have to sell the cow. We didn't sell the cow yet." [She said] this and that. And he used to come once a month. He would drive from New York one day and go back, you know. Once a month he would do that. But for two years he was with us by the time she made up her mind to come.

KR: So she had three children: Mary Ann; Dorothy; and Stephen. So, anyway, then she came, and they stayed with us for a little while, and then we got them an apartment. And you know how the apartments are. They are big tall things, and you look out the window, and there's a building there. And here [in Windber] they were out in open spaces, you know, so [that] the kids were so homesick. And they couldn't see sitting up in that thing. They were so broken-hearted, and they just wanted to come back here, but, you know, he had his job there.

End of Tape 2 Side A

Beginning of Tape 2 Side B (February 23, 1984)

KR: So we had gotten them this job next door, and they said, "Oh, we can't do that. We don't know how to run a furnace. We don't know." So Steve said, "Well, I'm right here." And he said, "We'll help you out. You just say you know how to do those things."

KR: So then they were happy. They were on the ground floor, and they had a little garden in the back, you know, and they were right next door to us, which made it nice. So but they're the only people that really appreciated what we did for them.

SR: They never forget. They never forget.

KR: Because Stephen [one of their children] went to college. They said [that] if they lived in Windber, they would never have went to college. And then Mary Ann [another of their children]. And they are all school teachers. So finally, it didn't end up so nice. Well, he was there fifteen years, and then [earlier] he worked in this mine, and he had that silicosis. And then he had, he got an ear ache, and he went to the--Dorothy [another child] was the last one that was graduating. She was going up to--Where was Dorothy? In Albany.

SR: Hmm, hmm.

KR: She was graduating, and she said, "Oh, Daddy, I'm going to graduate." She said, "I want you to look nice when you come for my graduation." She said, "Get a nice suit and tie and everything, you know, so you look nice." So then he got everything so nice. And he got an ear

ache, and he went to the doctor. And the doctor said, well, he had a growth in there.

SR: A tumor.

KR: So they sent him to New York to a--

SR: Brain specialist.

KR: Yeah. And they said he had a tumor on the brain. So they operated on him, and he just lived one month. And that was very sad. So he never got to Dorothy's graduation or [used] the suit. He never put the suit on or anything.

KR: But his wife and the children, they are just so nice. They'll never forget us, you know, that we kept them there, and we, that they had that opportunity. Otherwise, we always tease them because there's a family down [Mine] 35, the Borkas [spelling?] or whatever they call them, and they were like, a little like, senile or something. They say, "Oh, Stephen would have married that girl, you know, right here [if he lived] in Windber." But they are all doing well. Dorothy's in Georgia, Stephen's in Schenectady.

SR: They never forget us. He writes to us. The girls write to us. She, the mother, always sends me a bottle for my birthday.

KR: Well, my brother, when he [Stephen Richvalsky] got him that job, well, he would always get him a bottle of Scotch, you know, like for his birthday or Christmas, you know. That was the only way he could, you know, say, "Well, that was nice of you to do what you did for me."

KR: So then his wife took over, you know, after Steve went. She never forgets him. She works in the post office now, and she's got a good job. But she's a very good person, and like Dorothy, for my birthday, she'll call way from Georgia. She'll send us a card, you know, and Mary Ann--

SR: They never forget. It's nice, really nice. We don't expect it.

KR: Because we, like I say, you know, we were married in 1929, and when we went to New York, we had a hard time getting started. And his mother--You know these girls would be looking for work, and she said, "You go to New York, to my brother [correcting herself], to my son Steve's. They'll get you a job."

SR: (Mumbling and hard to understand) She did that three or four times. And we got them jobs. Housework. But they were happy to get something. You know what happened one day. A cop brought three of them in. A policeman, "Do you know them?" "Yes. We know [them]."

KR: They were looking for us, you know, and they couldn't find us, and the cop, he couldn't— He wanted to know that they were okay and everything. But his mother would always send the girls. "You just go. They'll get you jobs."

SR: See, he [the cop] did a good job.

MB: Wow!

KR: We hardly had--Sometimes we had nothing to eat. It was so sad. And then the girls would get on their feet, and we never heard of them. They would get married and have weddings.

They never invited us, you know.

MB: Oh dear.

KR: So I say that this one family really appreciated [us], you know.

SR: Some of the girls did, too. There were a couple of girls that were nice, but most of them just forgot about you. And it hurts a little bit because we went through so much, you know. We couldn't afford anything, and here we were offering them--

KR: We only had one bedroom, and sometimes we slept on the floor and let them have out bed. (She laughs.)

MB: Right.

KR: So you know it was rough, but--

MB: So you were able--Now you went how far in school again?

KR: I just went to sixth grade.

MB: [To Stephen] How far did you (emphasis) go in school?

SR: Oh, I started--her brother Steve and I--the one who had a tumor--him and I started in the eighth grade. And he quit and went to work in the mine prior to me. I quit, and I went to work in the store. So we never finished eighth grade. And yet I was proud of the fact that when I went to New York, they took a college graduate in every department--a guy who went to Georgetown University--Can you imagine that?--and put me in his place. (Beik laughs.) I'm real proud of that.

MB: Right.

KR: Yeah.

SR: There was a manager who told me, "Steve, you know more about this work than the college man does." Seriously.

KR: Yeah. He really did well, you know. I mean, that we didn't have much schooling or anything.

MB: Did your parents want you to be a coal miner? How did they--?

SR: Well, no, I see--

KR: They thought they were gonna go to Europe. (Katherine and Beik laugh.)

MB: Okay.

SR: Like I told you. I figured if I worked in the store, they were making what? Forty-eight dollars a month or something like that. And I told my dad, "See, even if I just help supply you with the light, I'll make more money than that." So that's why I insisted on going to work there.

MB: It was your (emphasis) idea then, and they wanted to go to Europe.

SR: My idea.

KR: I was lucky. We both worked hard in New York, you know. I was working for a Mr. and Mrs. Morrill [spelling?]. They were doctors of research in the Albert Einstein [institution?], you know. So they had a little baby. She brought this little Elizabeth home. I hadn't seen a little todd in a long time, but she didn't believe in staying in the hospital. She said, "You only get germs in the hospital." So she had her baby one day. She brought this little one home, and I had to take care of it. It was a good baby. She just slept, and I fed here and everything.

KR: Then they had a little boy, Alexander, about three years later. I worked for them for about twenty years. And then that paid because we only had one grandson Scott, and he's studying for a doctor now. So it was pretty hard to get him into a medical school or either like. So she took him into Albert Einstein. From the beginning, she said, "Just to get a little experience," you know. She said, "You won't be getting paid for it, but you'll get a little experience, you know."

KR: So then when Scott finished his high school, and then he was going to this medical school, she had him come down and talk with her, you know. And after she got through talking, she said, "Oh, Scott," she said, "I'm going to see that you get something better," you know. So she said, "You come down and so and so. I'm going to introduce you to some doctors."

KR: So he did. He went to Albert Einstein. He talked with three doctors, and they said [that], oh, they each wanted him, you know. So one said he was gonna have him operate on frogs or something. And Scott said, "Oh, I can't do that. I don't know anything about it."

KR: So this doctor said, "I don't either." He said, "You're gonna learn and then tell me." (All laugh.) But he's doing very well. He only has about two more years, and then he'll--

SR: Two more years.

KR: He's a nice boy, too young to worry too much [about], but, like when he started college, you know, and they had all that dope and everything, we were praying. But he turned out all right.

MB: What about your parents? Did they want something for you, like--

KR: No.

MB: Did they think you should work hard? What kind of values [did they have]? SR:

SR: They had nothing to give you.

KR: Yeah. Nothing. I mean, like nowadays, kids get married, they get cars, they get homes, they get--? What did we get? I think we got a dish towel or something like that. And they had nothing. They couldn't [give]. My mother felt bad about it, but what are you gonna do?

MB: Did you get married in the Slovak church, then?

KR: Yeah.

MB: In St. Cyril and St. Methodius?

KR: Um hm. And then, when my mother died, well, she had a little will. So each of us got fifty dollars, like, you know. But that's the best she could do, I guess.

MB: Sure.

SR: Which was nice.

KR: Yeah.

SR: They tried hard.

MB: They tried hard.

KR: But, like I say, what a difference from nowadays, you know, like even [with] out kids. (She laughs.) And his parents were very--And even with the little amount that he would make, you know, when we went to New York, he was always trying to send something for his mother because they had hard going, you know, and--

SR: I remember I won a prize one time, a check. I won quite a few of them. Twenty-five dollars, I think it was. And I sent the check to them with a letter, you know. I'm so proud of it, and yet I felt sorry for my parents. I didn't think that was right because her and I were just barely getting along, you know. I didn't see any reason. So we tried hard. Yeah.

MB: Yeah. You sure did. I was looking at some materials, and apparently there was a big strike here in 1922.

SR: Yes, yes.

MB: Do you remember much about that?

SR: Yes.

MB: Can you tell me about that? What were some of the issues, and then what happened?

SR: I'll give you some idea of how serious it was. Some people lived back here. They had a little farm. And the deputies that they had--they had a lot of deputies here at that time during the strike--ride horseback. Some were on foot. They carried weapons, clubs and guns. The first bad news I heard was that this lady that lived in the back there--

KR: An old lady.

SR: She was raped by these men.

MB: Oh!

KR: Yeah. It was terrible.

SR: That was number 1. The people--I remember my dad kept a hatchet in the kitchen by the door in case they break in or something, you know. It was a sad thing. Well, anyway--

KR: Then they had a stack of food up here at the mine.

SR: At the boardinghouse.

KR: What was the food for?

SR: For the scabs.

KR: That was terrible. Oh, yeah, for the scabs. And, you know, we would go up there, and it's not a nice thing to say, but we would go in the garbage, and we would be picking up things and eating it.

SR: That's where I got sick, poisoning. They put poison icing on the thing, you know. It made me sick. So anyway--

KR: Then, one thing, my mother, well, to keep things going, they used to make moonshine, and she would sell it, you know, and just if somebody needed shoes or something, you know.

SR: My wife was a delivery gal.

KR: We had cows, and we used to deliver milk, and they had those milk cans, you know, nice milk cans. What were they? Aluminum?

SR: Cork. Yeah, aluminum.

KR: So I had an aunt down Seventeenth Street, way down, you know, near the rock dump there. So my mother made moonshine, and I used to deliver milk, too, you know, sometimes. So this one time she put the moonshine in the milk can, and here these deputies were, you know, guarding the thing, and I'm going down with this. (All laugh.) If they would have saw that, but we had to be careful from the guards, you know.

MB: Did people, did many people get evicted from the houses?

SR and KR: [simultaneously] Yes.

MB: How did that work?

SR: The first one down [Mine] 35 was [Poluski]. Their name was Poluski. Anyway, we were going to school, and one morning we see all the furniture out on the sidewalk.

KR: Yeah.

SR: They said, "Either go to work, or get out of the house!"

KR: Yeah.

SR: Because the company owned the homes, too. See? So they had to get out. We went to live with the [Boyosh] a blacksmith on Twenty-Second Street, Jacksonville and Twenty-Second Street. Anyway, we lived with him until our money lasted. When our money ran out, no more money. My dad went to Amy, near Barnesboro. Amy Run, they called it. And I'll never forget that because he went to work in a mine there. I don't know whether it was nonunion or whatever

it was. At least he made a living there. Then, the time the strike was over here in Windber, and we came back from Amy. So that's how rough it was.

KR: We were supposed to get out, too. And the day they were going to put everything out on the street, one of my brothers decided he'd better go to work, you know, instead of us moving out. So that saved us. And then the strike was over, but--

SR: They lost. They didn't get anything. But that was the beginning.

MB: Did they come and serve you with the papers saying they were going to throw you out of the house or something?

KR: Yeah, yeah.

SR: Well, the company owned the house. They owned it. You only paid rent. And they owned the mine. So they could lock you out of the house and let somebody else in.

MB: And did you have to shop at the company store?

KR: Yeah.

SR: Yes.

KR: That was one thing that you couldn't go [elsewhere]. If something was cheaper, you couldn't go no other place. You had a store book, and, you know, you'd buy on that. Then when you'd go pay your book, you had no cash or anything. They [the company] took everything (emphasis). And they had those--What was that? Due bills?

SR: Due bills. Yeah. I know. I worked in a store.

KR: What was it for?

SR: Some people didn't have a book.

KR: Oh, that's right. Yeah. They wouldn't give you--

MB: What's a due bill?

KR: It's like, I guess, if you didn't have enough money, I guess, to pay. Like if you had a book, you could buy so much, but they [the company store] only allowed you so much for the other. So they would give you--It was like a statement, you know. I guess, I don't know, they would just allow you so much and then--

SR: That's right. I worked in a store. I know.

KR: What you bought, if there was a balance or something, they had a little pulley from the office, you know, where you bought your things. They'd put this in there and send it back to the office. And he would stamp it or whatever [with] how much more you could spend, you know.

SR: Okay. How much more you could buy. If you went down to get your pay and pay your book or your due bill, if you didn't have enough money, they'd give you fifty cents cash, which

was an allowance that was over the allowance that you really deserved. See, the company--The Eureka store, the company store, and the company, and the mine was all one.

MB: So what would happen if somebody tried to buy food someplace else or something?

SR: They would send you a pig. Not really a pig, but they'd send you so much food, you know. If you buy someplace else, you pay for that!

MB: Oh.

KR: Well, there was a butcher used to come around, wasn't there?

SR: Sabo.

KR: From house to house.

SR: Paul Sabo. His son, I meet him almost every day downtown, him and [Frank] Garlathy. They worked together, two butchers. They're old; they're out of business. But that's the way the company worked. They'd force (strong emphasis) it onto you, you know. If they found out you was shopping someplace else, here it is! And you pay for it!

KR: Yeah. They used to send--Like my mother, you couldn't afford, you know. They would send--She would order so much. They had a man come around to take your order, whether cornflakes, cornflakes, oatmeal, or pork 'n' beans, dry beans, or whatever, you know, people [wanted]. He would come around and take orders for it. My mother would only want so much, but when the order came, it was a whole case to make sure that they get all [the profit]. She didn't order a case. She just wanted half, but, no, they'd send the whole case, and you just had to take it.

SR: I used to walk down to Garlathy's and go down the railroad tracks and walk up there so they wouldn't see me bringing that meat home.

MB: I see.

KR: You kind of had to sneak it or something.

MB: Did they have Coal and Iron Police around? Or was it that they kept them at the mine except during the strike then?

KR: They had a watchman. Is that what you mean?

MB: I don't know.

SR: During the strike they had these guards--pussyfoots, they called them.

KR: Oh yeah. Where did they come from? I don't know.

SR: They brought them in from someplace. I don't know.

KR: Then they start bringing in families that would go to work.

SR: Scabs!

KR: Scabs. They called them scabs. Away from Wilkes-Barre.

SR: And different places.

KR: And I don't know from where. Different places.

SR: Most of them came up from Lehigh. They were Spaniards. They were Spanish.

MB: Really? Spanish?

SR: They'd be all shipped up, and they'd be--

KR: We were really afraid of them, you know. And then this one family that lived here--the Sajas--well, they came from Wilkes-Barre some place. And I don't know if you ever heard of this Stephanie, the coal miner's daughter [who] marries a--

SR: A millionaire, and then some.

KR: A millionaire, Hitchcock, from New York. You know that?

MB: Tell me about it because I don't know about it.

KR: In fact, we were in New York when we saw it in the papers in New York, yeah. So they lived in this (emphasis) house. Their mother and Stephanie lived in this house.

SR: She was a beautiful girl.

KR: She married this--He was a--

SR: Millionaire.

KR: [continuing] A polo player, he was or something, but he was a millionaire. So she married him. He came here with her. Then he lived in this house. And they didn't have, they didn't have, well, they always had a toilet in this (emphasis) house, but--

SR: There was one inside.

KR: There was no outhouses. These were called new houses. They were, you know, built way out.

SR: In this house, this new house. They called them new houses. They're not so new anymore, but they called them new houses.

KR: Yeah, so, anyhow, he lived here, you know, in this small place with Stephanie and the mother, and they had about four or five kids, too, didn't they?

SR: I don't know. I guess so.

KR: So then, what happened? Well, he died finally. Well, they went to New York.

SR: She married another rich man. (Beik laughs.)

KR: Yeah, she married his friend. But I was going to say that they only had a shower here I

think, no bath tub or anything.

SR: They had no shower either.

KR: Were they the first ones (pause) who made the shower or something? We lived across, and we used to watch. He'd sit on the porch, he a millionaire, you know. (She laughs.)

SR: It was a very big deal, a big deal (emphasis). A millionaire married someone from our street. My God, that was something!

KR: Yeah, they had a big write-up about it. So my sister-in-law that I'm telling you [about] that married my brother, Steve's wife, that was so good. We bought this place. It was very old and rickety, you know. And when she would send us a letter, she'd say, "Hitchcock's motel." (They all laugh.) And the mailman used to get a big charge out of it, you know, coming on our end to "Hitchcock's motel." (All laugh.)

MB: Oh, that's funny. Oh, wow.

KR: Maybe I should give you something to eat or drink or something.

MB: Oh no. Thanks. This [tape] is almost over, and then we can just wind it up for now. Maybe if you're kind enough to let me come back again and ask you some other things. This is fantastic, the things that you have to say and tell me about. (All laugh.)

SR: Some are pretty nasty, too, I think.

MB: Well, you know, life is a combination of a lot of things, I guess.

KR: So we were lucky. We just have two daughters. And one's a nun and one--we only have one grandson--Dolly's one boy.

SR: He's gonna be a doctor so we hope we live long enough to see him be a doctor.

KR: And see him take care of us, but--(They laugh.)

SR: We're getting old.

KR: My daughter [Stephanie] just celebrated her twenty-fifth anniversary in the convent. She had a nice big party in Clifton, New Jersey.

SR: That's some place.

KR: Yeah.

SR: I never saw anything like it. You know there's something funny about this because I used to be good at talking and all that.

MB: You still are.

SR: No, since my stroke, I cry easily. So I had it [a speech he was supposed to give at the anniversary event] all written up, what I was going to say, you know, to my daughter, you know, from the time she was a little girl, a baby and all that. But when the time came, I couldn't do it.

So my daughter came over. She said, “What’s the matter, Dad?”

SR: “I don’t know. Forget it.” I had to think--

KR: He did such a good job. He was so worried.

SR: She said, “You gotta go, Dad. Come on. You’ve gotta hold my arm.” She pulled me. (Beik laughs.)

KR: She said to him, “Daddy, I hope you make a nice little speech of support for me.” And he said, “Oh, I can’t do it.” Because his speech is kind of a little numb on one side, too. He said, “I can’t do what I did before. I can’t do it” So Dolly had her twenty-fifth anniversary, and he made a nice speech. And she says, “Well, you did it for Dolly [her sister]. You can do it for me, too.” (Stephen laughs.) So he said, “Oh, no. no. I can’t.”

KR: Oh, he was so sick. He was upstairs sitting for weeks, you know, and he’d come down and tear everything up. “I can’t do it. I can’t do it.” (Mr. Richvalsky and Beik laugh.)

KR: So then when the time came, we went to New Jersey, and he’s sitting up in his room. And all our relatives are coming to the party, and they’re all wanting to see us because they are all in New York, you know, and here and there. And “Where’s Steve? Where’s Steve?”

KR: I said, “He’s in his room somewhere.” I said [to Steve], “Everybody’s looking for you.” He’s up there. He said, “I don’t want to see anybody. I don’t want to see anybody.”

KR: He was so nervous. Well, then, when the time came, we went to church because she had a mass with nine priests, you know. It was really beautiful. We came into church. So Stephanie takes us down. Then she had a group of--he was a young priest, a singing group, you know. They had guitars and everything. They were going to play for her. So we went up, and we were talking to this priest and Stephanie saying that her father’s so nervous. He doesn’t want, you know, to go up and make his speech. So then all of a sudden these guitar players started up, and he broke out crying.

MB: Oh.

KR: It wasn’t out of the church or anything. But it was such a beautiful mass and everything. So then, after that, [was] the reception, you know, and this and that. And then she said, “Okay, Dad, it’s your turn to go up.” Because she had a lot of school teachers teaching school, and all the people [from the school]. She has a children’s school. They all used to love her, and they are so good, you know. And so they were going up and making different speeches and that. So she said, “Okay, Dad.” He said, “I’m not going up.” (Mr. Richvalsky and Beik laugh.) She said, “Get up. Mother and I will give you some support.” We go up, and I’m on this side, and he did such a nice job.

MB: (Softly) I’m sure he did.

KR: But he was so worried, you know.

MB: I’m sure he did.

KR: And everything just cheered up. She had about 300 people there. It was really nice.

MB: Wow. That's fantastic.

KR: Yeah, that was really nice. And she's such a, you know, and everybody just loves her and--

SR: She takes after her father. (He laughs.)

KR: That's the only thing that we miss is, you know, the children, and we don't see them too much.

MB: Yeah.

KR: But we went up to the senior citizens, to the Catskills, New York. There's a Brown's hotel, they call it. Everything is on the indoors, you know. So we took it [the trip] because he doesn't drive that much. When we first came here, we were always going to New York. We drove back and forth, you know. But now we can't go that far anymore. So we have to take a bus or a train. So this time the seniors were going up to the Catskills. So we said, "Oh, that's good. We'll go up there." We spent a week at the hotel. And then Dolly, my daughter, picked us up and took us to her place, to Hastings, and we stayed for Thanksgiving. And what was it, [how long] we were there?

SR: I don't know.

KR: About four weeks. So it was nice, you know, that it happened that way.

SR: Somebody upstairs takes care of us. (He laughs.)

KR: So then his sister, younger sister, Helen, she has a beautiful home at the beach. So for Thanksgiving she had--Instead of us going from one house to another to visit everybody, she had all of us come to her beach house. And, oh, we had such a nice time. It was right on the ocean, you know. We were facing the ocean, and she had like a two-story beach house. It was gorgeous. We had a nice time. All the family was there, you know. She has a daughter Scott's age, and she's a teacher in North Carolina, and Scott came from Virginia, you know. So they had, it was so nice that even the kids got together.

MB: Oh, that's nice.

KR: So we had a nice Thanksgiving.

SR: And somebody to take good care of us.

KR: And then our daughter drove us home.

MB: Great!

End of Tape 2 Side B

End of the Interview (February 23, 1984)

Beginning of the Interview (February 26, 1984)

Beginning of Tape 3 Side A (February 26, 1984)

MB: I missed some very obvious things when I was listening to the tape like I never got your maiden name, you know, Mrs. Richvalsky.

KR: Zahurak.

MB: What was it?

KR: Z-A-H-U-R-A-K.

SR: Zahurak.

MB: Oh, see, I never even thought to ask you when you were talking about your parents. Of course, that was their name and so on. I don't know why, until I listened to the tape, [that] I hadn't realized I didn't even ask that. But [To Mr. Richvalsky] you wanted to tell me something.

SR: You're not interested in this [referring to a church paper]?

KR: No, she has one.

MB: I've read it. I've read it.

SR: Do you have one?

MB: Yeah. Father [Francis] Luddy gave me one so--

SR: I can keep this (emphasis) then?

MB: Yeah, sure. But that's sweet of you.

SR: Now you had some questions. I made a list of the things on there.

MB: Oh.

SR: I'll start with some of the holidays you had written down.

KR: We already told about those holidays, didn't we?

MB: Some, maybe.

SR: New Year's Eve, I think.

MB: Okay, tell me about New Year's Eve, how that was celebrated.

SR: Is that thing [the recorder] on now?

MB: Yeah, it's on. It's going.

SR: New Year's Eve. The hills around here would rock. At twelve o'clock midnight there would be an explosion of dynamite of some kind.

MB: Oh really! Fireworks of some sort. (Beik laughs.)

KR: This here--

SR: Believe it or not.

KR: This New Year's Dolly and Billy, our daughter and her husband, they called us about fifteen minutes to twelve because they wanted to see the ball come down in New York, you know. So they wanted to call a little bit early so they could see this ball come down on t.v. So, all of a sudden, these neighbors here were shooting off dynamite, you know. They shoot dynamite.

MB: Oh, I didn't know that.

KR: So over the phone, they said, "What's that?"

KR: "They are shooting dynamite."

KR: "You're kidding." They got all excited. "Are you kidding?"

KR: No, the neighbors here, they went out in the back yard, and they're shooting, and the guns they bring them in.

SR: Shotguns.

KR: They still do that.

MB: They still do this?

KR: Yeah.

SR: Some do.

MB: I don't remember that at all.

SR: If you go out on New Year's Eve, and wait, you can hear the gunshots.

KR: And then Helen [?] Marcinko here, she goes up and down the street with a--

SR: A trumpet.

KR: Well, her son has the trumpet, but she has lids from pots and pans [laughter], and they're going up and down.

MB: Did lots of people used to do that on New Year's?

KR: Yes. They did that with pots and pans.

MB: When you were a child, they did that with pots and pans?

KR: Yeah.

MB: [Was there] anything else they do on New Year's that was different?

SR: That would be about it.

MB: Did they have a big party or anything or special foods?

KR: I guess they went downtown or so. This Helen Marcinko, she usually had the neighbors come in, you know, to celebrate in her place. That's about all for fun.

SR: I just wanted to tell you about the New Year's Eve day.

MB: What about New Year's Day? Did people do something--?

SR: Nothing that I can think of. No.

KR: I don't remember.

SR: It was at midnight that they celebrate.

MB: Uh huh. I see. What about Lent? I guess that would be--Would that be the next holiday?

KR: They make Advent wreaths, right? Like Stephanie, now that's she's a nun. She brought us home from Thanksgiving. She said she wouldn't be able because they wanted us to stay until Christmas. And she said [that's] because she's very busy in the convent because they make an Advent wreath. I guess each night they light a candle or something and have certain prayers, you know.

SR: That has nothing to do with our town.

KR: Well, Father [Francis] Luddy, he has it in front of the altar [at their church].

MB: How was it celebrated when you were growing up, though? Did you have to fast like for a long time?

SR: Oh, yeah.

KR: Oh yeah. It was very strict.

SR: Yes, fasting. Yeah.

MB: Do you remember anything else in connection with Lent?

KR: Like years ago, when you went for communion, you couldn't eat from Saturday night, right? Until Sunday--

SR: At mass.

KR: [continuing] at mass. You really had to fast. But now they don't. I guess for an hour or so.

SR: That was about it for Easter. You're talking about Easter, right?

MB: Is there anything else? You talked about the ducking. What else was traditional with Easter then?

SR: That's about it.

MB: That's about it.

KR: There's a lot of baking and stuff like that.

SR: Oh yes. Oh, yeah, one more thing. I remember there was a certain house that everyone would take a basket of food.

KR: Oh, yeah.

SR: And the priest would come to that house and bless all the food. All the food was blessed. So mother would take a big basket. And they had eggs, boiled eggs, cheese, sweet cheese. She knew how to make that, and it would be in the basket.

KR: Bacon and anything that you were going to eat--

SR: Kielbasa, smoked kielbasa, anything like that, anything you were going to eat for Easter dinner.

KR: [continuing] for Easter dinner. And then they also had these like that bread, the host--

SR: And that would be blessed.

KR: [continuing] and that would be blessed. You could have a piece of that before your dinner.

MB: Oh, wow.

KR: This was nice. The Hungarian women would have this in the basket, and then they would

have a nice crocheted cover for it, you know, like the Holy Supper. And they had that embroidered. Now, well, they would take it to church, too, but this town had a certain home picked out, like up here. You would go to this one home, and the priest would come.

SR: I remember that he would go house to house in the beginning, but then they changed that because it was too much trouble. So everybody would bring their baskets to our [emphasis] house, and then the priest would come in and bless it.

MB: How did he choose the house? Did people just agree to go to some one person's house?

SR: The priest would just say it was necessary to bring it to your house. You'd say, "Sure."

KR: They still do it now. They take it to church, but there's only a few families that do it. But the women were proud just to have--One would have a nicer cover than the other, you know. They tried to outdo one another. (Beik laughs.) But then if you didn't go to confession, you couldn't eat the holy food. You had to go to confession for Easter, you know. Then you was allowed to eat the holy food.

MB: Oh boy. Let's see. What other holidays would there be? What about May Day? Was that (emphasis) celebrated? Was there anything with that?

SR: Fourth of July was next, I think. Oh, May Day!

MB: Did you do anything on May Day?

SR: On May Day, the branches, yes. They'd bring green branches for a maypole, some green branches, and tie them on the posts on the porches, you know. That was the celebration.

KR: There was no partying.

SR: No, there was nothing special except your dad would sit out on the porch with his boys and sing. (He laughs.)

MB: Oh, how nice! Was there any special song connected with May Day that you sang or--?

KR: I don't remember that there was too much for May Day.

MB: Uh huh. Well, then there would be July Fourth. Then, would that be celebrated at the park? At Recreation Park?

SR: The Fourth of July parades would be in town. There'd be big parades.

MB: Tell me about them. I don't know much about them.

SR: [On] The Fourth of July, there would be a big parade and bands and all that, you know. Then, on the Fourth of July, they would be at the park. They'd have a big celebration at the park.

You could buy hot dogs and corn, boiled corn. I remember we used to go with a little plate because they only give you so much. We wanted more corn. So this, for our third table, you know. You got a couple more ears of corn, see, when you speak up and we'd eat it.

MB: What kinds of parades were these? When you were children, do you remember parades? Did each of the ethnic groups, did any of them, have bands?

KR: Yeah. They would come from out of town. They had firemen and high school bands.

SR: Well, mostly they were local.

MB: Were there any like Italian bands, Slovak bands, or Hungarian bands?

SR: Not that I know of. They were all just high [school].

MB: Oh.

SR: Whatever they were, I don't remember.

KR: They were high school bands mostly.

SR: The high school still has a band every year. They march up and down the street.

KR: In New York, he was the president of the Hungarian Club, and they had parades. He was the leader. What did you do with that picture you had down in the cellar?

SR: I'll dig it out. (All laugh.)

KR: Most of the people in New York thought that he was born in Hungary, that he--

MB: Oh, because he spoke so well.

KR: Yeah. He became president of the Hungarian Club there, and then he was, I don't know, [for] five-six years. They just, you know, wanted him all the time. He's such a shortie and everything. He was leading this parade through the whole town, you know. I don't know if he carried the flag or not, but anyhow, he's leading all of these Hungarians, you know, from the Hungarian Club. They had all these different groups, but he was leading the Hungarian group. So they just, you know, insisted on him--

SR: I had it for four years.

KR: Four-five years.

SR: Four-five years.

MB: What was the Hungarian Club? Was it a social club?

KR: Yeah, you'd say.

MB: What was it? Oh, the American Hungarian Citizen's Club. [Looking at photograph] These are people from Hastings?

KR: Yeah, that is all from where we lived.

SR: They never did that until I got there.

MB: Oh, you organized it? That's a nice picture. Boy!

SR: You know why we had to stop there? We were late, and the trailer was going by us on the other side of the road. So we had to stop and wait and get back in line. We had to go up a hill. From the Hudson River they [had] a steep hill. We were late in getting organized and getting out there and everything, the flags out there and ever. All of sudden someone came down and said they changed the route. And that is why we are standing still there [in the photo].

MB: So what did your club do (emphasis) besides march in parades then?

SR: What did we do? I don't remember. Oh, we had Hungarian festivals, and we had the grape dance.

MB: A grape dance?

SR: Do you know what a grape dance is?

MB: No, not really. At harvest time or something?

KR: Yeah.

SR: Yeah, It's sort of a national thing in Europe. And here they have it down in Yonkers, too, once a year.

KR: In Johnstown.

SR: In Johnstown, too. The organization! (He laughs.)

KR: Well, we did it in Yonkers, too, with the Hungarian Club. They have the hall decorated, and they have the grape leaves all over. They make a great big wreath--

SR: In the center.

KR: In the center. Then you're dancing, and if you take a bunch of grapes for your partner, then they have like a watchman, a guard. They catch you--

SR: They catch you, and you pay for it.

KR: [continuing] and take you over to the judges, and you have to pay, you know. You have to pay whatever they say, you know. And then, for the great big wreath, they want a lot of money for it, you know. So somebody would buy it for his sweetheart, you know, or whoever.

SR: We had it down at our church a couple of years ago, didn't we? Yeah.

MB: In Windber?

SR: Yes.

MB: Did they used to do that when you were kids?

KR: Oh, yes, down Eighth Street.

SR: Eighth Street hall. Have you ever heard of it? It used to be Hungarian.

MB: I've heard of it, but tell me more about it because it was beginning to not do much when I was born.

SR: This is very exciting because there is one thing in common in the Hungarian Club. Naturally you wouldn't go beyond 12 o'clock. So at 11 o'clock, most of the young guys, they'd talk Hungarian, they'd start a fight.

KR: You told her.

SR: I told you this?

MB: You were telling me about this, but what type of club was it? Was it a social club like this for social affairs for Hungarians in the community? Could somebody who was Polish go to it, or how did that work?

KR: No, I guess you had to be a member, right?

SR: No, not really. Not really. But they only played Hungarian music so the Polish wouldn't go in.

MB: Was it connected with a lodge, a Hungarian lodge?

SR: I think so. I think so. Yes.

KR: Yeah. I think that--

SR: Yes, I remember how they organized. I imagine it was a club. Yeah. It was a club. That's what it really was, a Hungarian club. I guess the Slovaks had--

KR: They held dances there [at the Slovak Club]. Did they have weddings there? Yeah. They would have weddings there, too, and--

MB: Was it connected with the church in any way, too?

SR: Not that I know of.

KR: No, I don't think so. It was really like Lutherans, right? And I don't know--

MB: Oh, did both the Reformed people belong to that--

SR: Yes.

MB: [continuing] and the Catholics?

SR and KR: Yeah.

MB: Was there ever any conflict between the two groups?

SR: That's what I'm saying. That's what I'm saying. (He laughs.)

MB: Tell me about that. I don't know anything much about that.

SR: Well, the young guys would show off you know. I had a good friend by the name of Joe [Kordas]. He wasn't much bigger than me, but he was powerful. He never drank. He was always sober. The rest of the guys would drink and start a fight. They'd get in between these blondes. All you could see was these blonde heads.

KR: There was a time when, like we said before, that we used to call them "greenies" [the new immigrants] that came from Europe. They were older men, and they would try, you know, to court us girls. So when we would go to this dance, they were from Europe, and if they took us to dance, then these boys, you know, didn't like it very much.

MB: I see.

KR: So when they would see you dancing--

SR: That was when most of the fights started.

KR: [continuing] they would start a fight.

KR: This one greenie, I guess he's related to Anna Gary. I guess he was her husband's brother, right? Alex.

SR: Yes.

KR: He wanted to dance with my sister, and she didn't want to or something. So then somebody started a fight. Oh, my brother, right? My brother Andy started a fight. So my sister Mary takes to the cellar way down the stairway, and she took a soda bottle and hit him on the head.

MB: Oh boy. They were rough.

KR: Oh, sometimes. What was that family that was noted down Scalp [Level]? Boy, they were really rough. The lights would go out and everything. Everybody was screaming.

SR: Rakoczy.

KR: They were rough fighters.

SR: Rakoczy, that's right. Rakoczy. They killed one guy.

KR: So everybody would have a good time, and then they would finish it off by fighting, you know. (Both of the Richvalskys laugh.)

MB: Oh boy. Well, you talked about the club and the lodges, and I guess there were lots of these fraternal society lodges, like for insurance because there wasn't any other kind of insurance.

SR: Right, right.

MB: Do you know much about that? Were your parents members?

SR: Yes, they were. I had to go and pay the society. I think it was once a month.

KR: Oh, societies, yeah.

SR: Once a month. You'd see a kid going down. "Where you going?"

SR: "To pay the society." Once a month, you know, you'd pay it.

MB: That was for death benefits and sick benefits?

KR: Yeah.

SR: Yes, it was only like, maybe, \$500 or \$300. It wasn't much. In those days that was big money.

MB: Yeah. So if there was an accident and somebody got killed, they would have some protection.

SR: Yeah. Right. Sure.

MB: There really wasn't anything else, was there? Just family.

KR: My mother belonged to this lodge.

SR: Verhovay, they called it. Verhovay lodge. Verhovay.

KR: The Slovaks had Jednota or something.

MB: Oh, Jednota.

KR: So anyway, like I say, when my mother had that accident, and then, you know, they wouldn't do anything about it. There was no suing, you know.

MB: Things were different.

KR: Yes. Even way later, somebody said, oh many years after that, the lodge was--If you were a member of the lodge and there was an accident, you didn't need to pay any more in the lodge. But she didn't know that. They just kept paying. There was nothing. Somebody told us, but like I say, way later, that we should have sued and this and that. And she shouldn't [have] been paying on her lodge because if it's a loss of an arm or leg or something, you don't pay anymore. You're still injured, but you've not--.

MB: She lost her eye.

KR: She lost her eye, and there was nothing done about it.

SR: Now we come down to Thanksgiving Day. Right?

MB: Did you celebrate Labor Day or Memorial Day, too? Did you--?

KR: Memorial Day.

MB: Did you celebrate that at all?

SR: Not much, no. The Fourth of July [we did].

KR: The priest would go up to the cemetery, and he had mass up on the cemetery.

SR: When was that, honey?

KR: Memorial Day.

MB: Did you do that when you were a kid? I can't remember when Memorial Day started. I think, was it after World War I? I have to check that. I don't remember if it was after the Civil War.

KR: On Memorial Day we would go up to the cemetery and light candles.

SR: Yes.

MB: Oh! That was Memorial Day?

SR: They had Memorial Day, or was that All Saints Day?

KR: That was All Souls Day. That's in November.

SR: In November.

MB: Okay.

KR: All Souls Day and All Saints Day, I think. Then everybody would go up to the cemetery. The priest would come up, too. Then everybody went along their graves and would light candles. But now, I think, well, this Memorial Day, Father Luddy was up at the cemetery and had mass up there.

SR: Yeah. He goes up every year. We went up for two years now. He's [Father Luddy] been here about two years.

MB: Did they celebrate Labor Day in September at all? Now there's Labor Day in September. Did they celebrate that when you were kids or not?

SR: I don't think so.

KR: Yes, Labor Day used to be a big holiday, but now they don't do much.

SR: Well, I'll tell you something. Years ago, when Berwind was still running this town, if you looked from here up to the park at night, they had fireworks. All you had to do was to stay in your backyard and watch the fireworks. You didn't have to go to the park.

KR: Oh, yeah. They used to have beautiful fireworks.

MB: For any holiday, I think, wasn't it? Just about.

SR: Yeah.

KR: Mostly the Fourth of July--

SR: Fourth of July mostly.

KR: [continuing] and maybe Labor Day. Was it Labor Day? Yeah.

SR: Labor Day, yes.

MB: What about Thanksgiving, I guess. You were going to tell me something about that, how you celebrated that.

SR: Thanksgiving, it was called “Chicken Day.” (Richvalskys laugh.)

MB: Chicken Day? I didn’t know that. We always had chicken paprikás.

SR: It was because-- (He laughs.)

KR: They would have a goose or a duck or chicken, but they never had turkey on Thanksgiving.

MB: Your family either? Did you celebrate--?

SR: It cost too much.

KR: No, my mother had her own ducks, and I remember we always had duck or goose.

SR: This little creek right here, they would make a pond for the ducks.

KR: My mother had geese. So my sister went to work to Ohio for some Jewish family. She had to go early to help the family. So these Jewish people, when they have a duck or a goose or a chicken, I guess, you have to have a rabbi kill it, you know. So they were so happy because my mother had raised a goose, and she had to keep stuffing corn, you know. They would open the goose’s mouth and keep pushing--

SR: And force. My mother did the same thing.

KR: [continuing] so the goose would get nice and fat. Then they would take it down to Windber someplace,--

SR: Kosher.

KR: [continuing] and then they would mail it to Ohio to this Jewish family.

MB: Oh really. Sure. Goodness.

SR: Kosher. My mother used to stuff them. It was in the nice weather. She was stuffing it with corn, you know. She’d wet the corn in the water. She would take the tray to the store. After a while, I remember the goose got so fat and couldn’t fit back in the coop. (All laugh.)

MB: I guess that was great success then. It got fattened up.

KR: I guess. Every Sunday we had chicken soup, I guess. So they would kill the chickens. What did they do? Get the chicken and whirl it around, throw it on the stump, and chop its head

off. Sometimes the chicken was still alive with the head off.

SR: The way we did it, there was a custom to not leave any blood in there. Make sure it bleeds thoroughly, so when you cook the chicken it doesn't have any blood in the veins, you know, little black veins. So the way my mother used to do it, you would put the chicken between your legs, pull the head back, peel the feathers off the throat, and then cut the throat. Then hold it there until it bled enough. It would flap around a little bit, but that was it. It would always be bled enough so that there wouldn't be any blood left in there. You buy a chicken nowadays, and nine times out of ten, you'll find a blue vein in the chicken, right?

MB: Yeah, right. Everyone complains that they don't have the taste that they used to have either.

KR: Oh no. We found out, too, like that in New York you make a soup that it would taste fishy. They said they feed those chickens fish instead of corn. It really wasn't a good taste or anything. It wouldn't be clear. It would be like milky or something. A lot of times over here now, too, they don't have such good chickens anymore like they did. Well, hardly anything I think tastes like, you know, even beef or something. They don't taste like they should.

MB: Was there anything else associated with Thanksgiving then that was traditional?

SR: Well, except that "Chicken Day" was chicken.

KR: Chicken Day.

SR: "Chicken Day" we called it.

MB: Well, then, I guess there must have been--You mentioned All Souls Day before then. Christmas was the other time. How did you--?

SR: Christmas time, The Hungarian and Polish Catholics dressed like shepherds. It's in this book.

KR: Bethlehem.

MB: Well, show me anyway while we are talking. Show me.

SR: They carried a small stable. You'll find that in there, too.

KR: Oh, it's in there?

SR: Sure it is.

KR: They had pictures of it? I didn't see that.

MB: "Christmas Shepherds Visitation."

SR: That's it. That's it.

KR: That is what it was called.

SR: Those are the little churches that they carried around.

MB: They carried a church?

SR: Yeah, but it was supposed to be just a barn, you know. But they had a little church that they carried.

MB: And they dressed in Hungarian costumes then?

SR: Yes, well, these are the shepherds' costumes. And this is the guy. He would be dressed in the sheepskin costume. See it, with the boots on? He'd always be, he'd act dumb. They would say [in Hungarian] "Bless yourself" and he would say [in Hungarian] "Should I knock the little church cross off?" He was always the comedian in this skit.

MB: Oh, I see, it was a funny thing? No, it wasn't funny?

SR: No, it was very, very religious. They come from a church. I don't really know them, but they look like Hungarians.

MB: Oh, I see.

SR: This is the priest that I spoke of, the first priest, Father Fojtán.

KR: What about the--they called him [unintelligible name], the comedian, right? He would come in, and he would bang this stick--

SR: They had a belt on a stick.

KR: He would dance around and do funny things. We were scared and would hide behind--

SR: Everybody was afraid of him. He had a wooden ax, and he would chase you around with it.

KR: He'd come and chop.

SR: He would go out, and everyone had bacon and kielbasa hanging out in the winter time, out on the porch. So he would steal it. He would come in the house and sell it to your father. (SR and Beik laugh.)

MB: So what houses did they go to? To all the Hungarians in the parish?

KR: Hungarians would go to the Hungarians, and the Polish would go to the Polish. They had

their own, too.

MB: But each ethnic group had a custom like this from Europe?

SR: Most of them did.

MB: Most of them did.

KR: The Polish and the Greeks, I guess.

SR: The Hungarians.

MB: Did they do this in the morning then after a mass or during the day?

SR: They would come at night.

MB: Christmas night or Christmas Eve night?

KR: No. Christmas day time, Christmas during daylight.

SR: By the time they got to our house, they were half-drunk, and it was night.

KR: Everybody would give them a drink and everything...so.

MB: So they made it around to each house. That must have been something. (Beik laughs.)

KR: Like I say, we were young then, and we were scared of this fellow. He was trying to be funny, and we would hide behind the coal stove. (She laughs.)

MB: I don't blame you.

SR: My brother Andy did something. I don't know what he did, but he crawled under the porch, and the porch was so low that the guy with the ax couldn't reach him.

KR: They would sing the Christmas carols.

SR: It was beautiful.

KR: Oh yeah. It was nice. They would sing all the nice Christmas carols.

SR: And my dad would help them out because he knew all the songs.

KR: They would sing all of the nice Christmas carols.

MB: Would they sing them in Hungarian or English?

SR: Yes, they did. Mennyből az angyal [Angels from Heaven]. I know the song.

MB: Could you sing me a song? (SR laughs.) I want you to work yourself up to singing some song in Hungarian for me so I can get that on tape. I think it would be really nice to have that sometime.

SR: [hesitantly] I'll try. I'll try.

MB: Okay. If not this time, maybe another time. I think that would be very nice to hear that.

KR: It would.

SR: [He sings a song in Hungarian.]

KR: [She sings a song in Hungarian and laughs.] The Slovak is almost the same. I mean, the Christmas hymns, the tunes.

MB: Did St. Cyril's come and do the same thing then?

KR: Yeah. They had their own tunes.

SR: [He sings in Hungarian.]

MB: Oh how nice! That's nice. That's really nice. Do you remember any Slovak songs, Mrs. Richvalsky?

KR: Yes. The same tune like that.

MB: But different words?

KR: Well, Slovak.

MB: Did you have any poems or anything that went with this? Did they bless the house or do anything? The house blessing comes after Christmas?

SR: If you go a little above that door, you'll see the date on there. The priest was just here. He seems to be blessing the house.

KR: That's after Christmas, right?

MB: It's not Christmas, this visitation?

KR: No, this has nothing to do with that. I think that's like what?--forty days after--no! They call it the three kings after Christmas.

MB: I see. Did we miss any holidays?

SR: Yes, you know that's amazing. I sang that song without--I broke down at the last minute.

MB: That's really nice. People don't sing those any more, I suppose.

SR and KR: No.

MB: That's why it's so nice to have because that's part of something that has passed.

Are there any holidays we missed? What about--? Did you do anything on name days then and birthdays? Did you celebrate birthdays at all?

SR: We celebrated name days more than anything else.

KR: We did not have too much birthdays. Even the kids, we didn't have parties, you know, for our birthdays. It was mostly like our parents. It would be their name day. Then they would have parties, and they would gather and have drinks and people over.

SR: St. Stephen's, like my Dad; St. Joseph's, and your Dad.

MB: It was a social time where people ate and drank. How did the christening--Do you remember going to some christenings?

SR: Yes. Big celebrations for that.

KR: Yeah.

MB: Can you describe it for me?

KR: The celebration was like weddings almost.

SR: Christenings she's talking about.

KR: I said this would be like a wedding. They always had big christenings.

MB: They did. What were they like? Went to church and--?

SR: Baptize the baby. The godparents would take the baby and hold him while it was baptized.

KR: Most of the time, like my brother, my parents, you know, they went to church to baptize him, and then they didn't remember, like they would say, let's give him his name. They said, "Well, József." And then they were baptizing--

End of Tape 3 Side A

Beginning of Tape 3 Side B (February 26, 1984)

MB: Were the godparents considered very important people?

SR: Yes, yes. My godfather went back to Europe. I'll never forget it. He went back to Europe. Oh, I guess I was about maybe five or six years old. I rode down to Windber, down to Johnstown. That's where we left him. And we went down by trolley car. I'll never forget that because he had a pistol, and my father wanted to know what he was doing with a pistol. He said that if the ship starts to sink, he said he was going to commit suicide. That's why he took the pistol. We never saw him again. We never saw him again. He went back to Europe.

KR: One nice thing about when the baby was born was, well, they had the babies in the house. The midwives had the babies, and then the neighbors would all bring food. They would bring baskets, and they'd bring canned food

SR: Yes, so much food, more than you can imagine, and better than you can imagine. It was the best.

MB: For a birth in particular?

KR: Yes.

SR: Yes, we had a boarder. His name was Horvath. He is on that picture. I saw him. He said "God ..." [Hungarian phrase] (Mr. Richvalsky laughed.)

KR: We used to look forward to, you know, when we had a baby in the family. Boy, we'd look forward to that food because we never had too much of anything, you know, and a lot of food they brought, right? Canned food.

SR: A whole basket. A cooked chicken.

KR: They baked the chicken and everything that goes with it, you know. The neighbors would bring it in. Yeah, a new baby--

MB: Wow. A reason to have more children. (All laugh.) I don't know.

KR: I would bake, you know, the breads. They all had coal stoves. They would put the bread in, and, you know, it wasn't in a pan or anything. They just put it in the oven, and boy it would be--

SR: I remember my mother. Sometimes the bread would get a little too brown on top, and she'd take it out on the porch. She would put it between her legs, you know, and she would get a big knife and scrape the burnt part off. I'll never forget that. How she held onto it I'll never know. Boy it was so hot! They'd put butter on that and melt the butter on the bread.

KR: We were talking about the feast days. We had an aunt up in Central City and uncle Mike.

They didn't have any children, so, well, we would go visit them, you know, on their name days or something. My aunt would just have this bread, and they had bacon, and it was raw bacon, you know. They would keep eggs. They would cure their own bacon. So that's what we would have at the party, bread and raw bacon, and then they had drinks, you know, beer, whiskey, and everything with it.

SR: Can you imagine eating that fat bacon, about that thick, you know, and you slice it up.

KR: We never had cholesterol or anything.

MB: Yeah, that's what a lot of people say.

SR: Can you imagine that? I think back, and it makes me sick thinking about it.

KR: So that is what, you know, we always remember.

SR: Big side of bacon, you cut off whatever you wanted, and fresh homemade bread. It was really something.

MB: Do you remember any big weddings that you ever went to--?

SR: Oh God, yes.

MB: [continuing] when you were kids? What were they like?

SR: Oh God, they lasted all night.

KR: They used to last three days.

SR: But the thing would go on all night long and then start all over again, you know. (Beik laughs.)

KR: And the next day, they would sell the bride's shoes, right?

SR: Yes.

KR: They would give the money.

SR: Yes, to make money for the bride, they would do everything, you know.

KR: They would have a bride dance.

SR: They would give you a shave; they would put lather and soap on you. That would all go to the bride.

KR: Yeah, that was all going to the bride, you know.

SR: Your father got a shave, didn't he? Remember the Mozes [spelling?] wedding?

KR: Yeah, Charlie Mozes.

SR: Charlie Mozes, yeah. I stayed there for all night long. My dad knew where I was, and he didn't say a word. All night. The next day I got up early. I went to bed, and I got up early and went back again.

MB: It was still going on.

SR: Three days.

KR: It lasted for three days like.

SR: The man across the street--who was that?--that man John Toth and the gypsies left the second day. And they called us and I played the fiddle.

MB: Oh, you play the fiddle? You didn't tell me that before.

SR: I have a fiddle upstairs. I never touch it. I tried it here. One time, my daughter asked me to play it, but since I had a stroke, my fingers don't want to move the way they should. I just forgot about it.

MB: Oh, that's too bad. Well.

SR: It's hanging up there in the closet.

KR: He did play for quite a while there. He had a little--Like on Sundays, usually after doing a lot of cooking and everything, and I would, you know, wash dishes, and he was supposed to dry. So he would pick up the violin, and he'd be playing, and I'd be singing. I would wash the dishes and wipe them. I would be all finished and singing.

MB: So he never had to dry the dishes. (All laugh.)

KR: That was his way of getting out of the dishes.

MB: So you liked to sing a lot? That was nice.

KR: Yeah.

MB: Did you play any musical instruments, or did anyone in your family?

KR: No, his (emphasis) family was very musical. As big of a family as we had, there was nobody who played.

MB: Did they sing a lot, though?

SR: Yes.

KR: Yeah, my father and my brothers. Yeah, Slovak songs. They were very good. Like I say, for these name days, the uncles and the brothers would get together. They really sang.

SR: One of your uncles played the violin. He'd come around.

KR: Uncle June, yeah.

SR: Uncle June played the violin, but he wouldn't play it for your father. Her father would ask [him] to play it, and he wouldn't play it.

KR: My father had to put a dollar on the bow--

SR: He had to pay, put a dollar on the bow.

KR: [continuing] for him to play. My father was, you know, he liked parties. He really had a nice voice.

SR: He was sick one Monday, right? And he was standing in front of the gate of this house right here, and shaking hands with all the miners who were coming by on their way home from work.

MB: Oh boy. Is there anything else with weddings that you can think of, sort of, that are outstanding things?

SR: They were outstanding.

KR: You know about the bride dance, I guess?

MB: Tell me about that. Describe that for me, how it worked then. I know what it is like now.

KR: Well, they had the bride dance. And if you wanted to dance with the bride--what did they have? --a dollar--

SR: Silver dollars.

KR: [continuing] silver dollars. And the lady would stand with a plate. She had an apron, you know, and then one would have plates. And if you could break a plate, you threw the silver dollar to try and break the plate, and if they broke the plate, then they got a drink, right? They dance with the bride and get a drink.

SR: If the dollar jumped out of the apron--

KR: You couldn't dance with the bride.

SR: The bride dance is nice.

KR: Yeah.

MB: Did you like to go to weddings?

SR: Oh, yeah. It was one of the only enjoyments that we got, you know. What else were you going to do? Did I ever tell you the story, did I tell you about how poor we were? We weren't poor, but my mother wouldn't give us a nickel, you know, to go to the movies. They used to have serials in the opera house. They just tore it down. Just last week they finished tearing it down. You probably saw it. It was the old opera house.

MB: I know. I remember it.

SR: Anyway, one day in the alley--maybe I told you this story, I don't know--one day in the alley, everybody had a big manure pile in back of the alley because they had a cow. Everybody had a cow. So we were running over this manure pile, you know.

MB: Playing in the manure? (Beik laughs.)

SR: Yeah. I found fifty cents. I found fifty cents. So I took it back. I didn't tell my mother. I would never have gotten it back. I scrubbed it with cleanser and everything. I got my fifty cents. I went to the movies, to the opera house every Saturday, for five cents. Imagine how many times could I go? Figure it out.

MB: Ten times.

SR: Ten times. All right. Ten times for fifty [cents]; now I know. Anyway, Route Rollin was hanging off a cliff. Root Rollin [Roland? spelling?] was one of the stars--

MB: Oh, okay.

SR: [continuing] in those days. And there was a train coming by, and that's where they cut the film off. I never saw it. That was my last ticket.

MB: You never saw how it ended. Oh dear. (All laugh.) What did you do for fun?

SR: That was it.

KR: There really was nothing much. Like on a Sunday, we could only take a walk up towards the mine. That's about all.

MB: What about picnics?

SR: Well, they played games under the lights here, that light by her house until nine or ten at

night, you know. Then we would get these old powder kegs and make a big waste pile. We would steal the fire out of the steel part where the wheels are saturated with oil. We would make a big fire out of that and put those old powder kegs around and sit around. There would be one or two guys who would tell a good western story, and we would listen to the western stories until your father came for you with his strap. (All laugh.)

KR: There were a lot of games like what was that? Baseball--

SR: Baseball, liberty pole, run sheep run--

KR: Kick the can.

SR: There was an awful lot of games.

KR: We would play under the lights here. And then there was a curfew at nine o'clock, and we all had to go in, and we wasn't ready to go in. So then they had this [S.W.] McMullan or whatever--

SR: The chief of police.

KR: He'd come on his motorcycle. When we would see him coming up, we would all run. There's a pipe over there, and we'd hide in there until he would go by and then we would come back out again. Or sometimes we would go hide in a cow barn or someplace. And then my girlfriend would say--she lived in this house. We lived in the house below, and she'd say, "Don't come in our yard. Don't come in our yard." In case the cop came.

MB: This was a curfew for the children?

SR: Yeah.

KR: Yeah. You had to be in by nine o'clock. We sometimes had somebody watching, and here he comes, you know. So then we would all hide.

SR: Tell her about your brother.

KR: My brother went in the cow barn. Sometimes, this McMullan, he probably knew that we were hiding around. So I guess he would take a walk and go around the alley. So my brother didn't take any chances. So he went, and he hung on a cow's neck so [that] if you looked, you wouldn't see his feet. And he was getting tired. (Beik laughs.)

MB: Wow! Oh boy.

KR: Then, like I say, my mother very seldom got a chance to go out. My brothers would drive my father to Central City, here, but she had cows and chickens and a lot of times she couldn't go, you know. So once in a while, if they had a big party, she would go. So I would milk the cow for her because, like I say, my older sister had to go to work. I would milk the cow for her. My

brother, you know, I'd be milking the cow, and Mike, he found some kind of a sheepskin. I guess they used to save the skin from animals, you know. And he put that on, and I'm milking the cow. And I had the bucket almost full, and he walks in. And I just, you know, got so scared that I dumped out all the milk and everything because--

MB: You got startled.

KR: Once in a while--

SR: He is still the same. He's still the same. He is full of mischief. He can hold a straight face and tell you a lie, and you would never know he's telling you a lie. He's good at it. He comes and visits us once in a while.

MB: Does he live in Windber?

KR: He's married to Mrs. Gary's sister. They are in Ohio now. Yeah, they live in Ohio.

MB: Can you tell me, when you were children, do you remember any funerals? What were they like then?

SR: Well, I'll give you an example, Joe [incomprehensible last name]'s father. Most of these fellows were killed in the mine. They were either severely wounded, or a young guy had a broken back. But anyway, I'll give you an example. Joe [?]. His father was killed in the mine. It was July. It was real hot in the house so instead of having the casket in the house, they put it out in the front yard.

KR: Well that was the funeral. They took him out. They had the sermon in the yard.

SR: They had him out in the yard. But most of these, if you go up to the cemetery, most of them were killed in the mine.

KR: There would be singing, you know, and the women would be crying. The women would be crying, and they'd say, "Oh my, don't leave me. What am I going to do without you? I can't live without you. Take me with you. Take me with you." My dad always said, "But push her in. See if she wants to go with him."

SR: Then she did; she married another guy.

KR: The Hungarian women, they all, they would cry, and they'd have to have singing, "Don't leave me and this and that. Take me with you." So my dad said one day, "Push her in. See if she'll stay there." Then he said, [in] about another month, she'll be married.

MB: So if someone [Hungarian] died here in [Mine] 35, they would be buried in the Hungarian cemetery. Did people walk from here?

SR: Yes, with a brass band, all brass with the horns and the drums. They would march from the

house, all the way down to the church, and then all the way up to the cemetery.

KR: Did they have the horse and buggy--

SR: The horse and buggy.

KR: [continuing] when [unintelligible name] died. I remember that.

SR: The hearse would go by with a team of the horses.

KR: People would follow.

SR: It was a beautiful hearse because on the side they had--

KR: It was coach-like.

SR: [continuing] coach-like, the little tassels hanging on the side. It was beautiful.

MB: Who was the band then? Was that an ethnic band?

SR: I don't know what kind of band it was. But I guess probably Italian or something like that, beautiful marching music. They went all the way down to the church. Just recently, I walked up from downtown, and it almost killed me. When I was a boy, I went to school every day. I walked over the hill and back again three, four times a day. It never bothered me. I didn't know it was so damned far. (They all laugh.)

MB: We have cars now. Did you parents ever have a car?

SR: No.

MB: [Speaking to Katherine], Did yours?

KR: Mine did, my brothers.

SR: Well, later on, yeah.

KR: Well, not too soon, but what was that model? Something?

SR: When they got older. Later on, a Pontiac Opal. That's a Pontiac, an Opal.

MB: Your brother did, but not your parents?

KR: Oh yeah.

MB: But your parents didn't actually have one.

SR: There was one, our neighbor down there by the name of Miklos. He got a Ford. It was a

Star car. Anyway, that was the name of it. One day he went out to crank it. It had a crank on it, and he broke his arm. So he got rid of the car, and he never drove again.

KR: How about the one that took you to Pittsburgh to see that lot that his parents bought?

SR: That wasn't the one. I went to Pittsburgh to see, [Mike] Schwab, and my father's uncle, you know. Anyway, it was a Model T Ford, and we started out from here, from [Mine] 36 here. He was our neighbor, Schwab. My dad and I sat in the back seat. Every time we came to a hill, he'd pull the car over to one side to let it cool off before we went up the hill.

MB: Oh boy. It took you a while to get a Pittsburgh I bet from here.

SR: All day. We were going so slow that I could reach out and break off branches, you know. Anyway, we finally got there. When we got to Pittsburgh, his tires fit right into the trolley tracks, you know, where the trolley tracks are on the road, and he couldn't get it out. My dad said, "Get ready to jump." There was a river there, you know, and I said, "In the river?" and he said "Yeah, jump in the river."

MB: So did you?

SR: No. He finally stopped the damn thing, and we pushed it out. That was our trip to Pittsburgh. It took all day to get there. Let me tell you about speaking of taking all day. When we left town here, during the strike, this is something I forgot to tell you.

MB: Okay.

SR: We all loaded up our trucks. Everybody had a truck. We had about five or six families going at one time. We were all going to Amy; that's near Barnesboro. Anyway, we loaded up the truck. And the biggest and the oldest--I was the oldest one in our family, and every family had the oldest one. So they rode in the truck. I will never forget. All day long, from here to Amy. My God, it's only about--We drove from here one day. We went up to see it, her and I. It took us an hour to get to Windber. All day we were driving that truck.

MB: Things were different then.

SR: We finally got there and unloaded, and then we had a big bacon roast. All the Hungarians [did]. Boy, I was hungry. I'll never forget it, but they wouldn't give me too much. But I was hungry.

MB: When you were talking about, you said, your family going to live with another family, had your parents been evicted?

SR: They weren't evicted, but they decided to move out because there was so much going on here. And they went to live with the blacksmith. His name was [Baryak], up around Jackson Avenue on 22nd Street.

MB: So the blacksmith allowed you to come, though?

SR: He asked (emphasis) us to live with them.

KR: They would take them in.

SR: So anyway, we lived with him until the money ran out, and then we went to Amy.

MB: You told me that, but I didn't know who he was. I wasn't sure who he was, and I wasn't sure if you were evicted or not.

SR: Didn't I write that? Didn't I tell you that?

MB: You told me that, but I didn't know who he was. I wasn't sure who he was, and I wasn't sure if you were evicted or not.

SR: I told you the other day that the first one who was evicted, their name was Pulaski. One of the boys still lives there. But they put their furniture right on the street. See, they [the Berwind-White Coal Mining Company] owned the homes. They don't anymore, but they owned the homes then. And they had the mines. So if you went on strike, in order to get you back, they'd take the furniture out. So my dad didn't want the furniture thrown out. So we moved.

MB: Wow!

KR: I think my brother Joe--

SR: He was union.

KR: He went to work someplace else.

SR: Indiana.

KR: And he came to visit. And he came to visit my parents, and the deputies came in, and he couldn't stay. He couldn't visit my parents--

SR: So he had to go out.

KR: [continuing] because he was scabbing someplace else.

SR: A union place.

KR: I mean he went to work at another town someplace. He couldn't even come to visit us.

SR: Because the company owned the house.

KR: They came and told him to get out.

MB: Do you remember anyone organizing the union?

SR: Yes, her brother Joe. Her brother Joe, Andy Kada, and someone else. They had some great Italians. They went down to Delaney field. I remember my dad had a pencil-striped suit. It was blue, and that year he was at meeting[s] so much in the sun that the suit faded. (Beik laughs.)

MB: At the Windber Museum, they have somewhere a picture of all these miners from Scalp [Level] at a union meeting in 1922. Sometime if you ever go there, you might want to look at that.

SR: My picture is down there.

MB: Is it?

KR: He had a school picture.

SR: A school picture. I think it was taken in third grade. Well, you wouldn't remember that, but my picture's on it. All you can see is my big ears, my head sticking out there in front of me. Yeah. I took it down. I had it for years and years. My mother had it and gave it to me. It was a school picture. I finally decided the best place for it was down at the museum. I took it down there. That's the reason I took it down there.

MB: That was nice. That was nice.

KR: You didn't know the names of everybody on the picture. And then Don [Shurda?]

SR: He was very, very nice. He is dead now, but he named every one of the kids on that picture that I couldn't remember. There were one or two I couldn't remember.

KR: So he told you to take it down there.

SR: I think all the names are written underneath it, you know. So if you ever go to the museum--

MB: I'll look at that. You mentioned that rape that took place in 1922. Do you remember how people reacted to that?

SR: Yes, very frightened. Very frightened. We lived in #665, and the Repkos lived to the wall then. Susie, the oldest girl, came out on the porch, and she told me what happened. I was so damned embarrassed for a girl to tell me that. I told her I was embarrassed. And then, of course, that was one of the reasons my family moved. My dad was so frightened.

MB: Did you [Katherine] hear much about that?

KR: I didn't hear too much. I knew that something happened.

SR: We knew, but we didn't know much about it. It could have been, but everyone was all excited about it.

MB: You don't remember what the grievances were that set off the strike or anything like that, do you?

KR: We have company coming, every Sunday.

MB: Oh.

KR: I don't know about that.

[At this point, the Richvalskys wanted to end the interview.]

End of Tape 3 Side B (February 26, 1984)

End of the Richvalsky Interview