

Interview with Jessie Beattie

08/23/1980

Location: Menominee, Michigan

IN: Now we can start with your background, like your childhood, when you were born, things like that.

JB: I was born in 1893 in Ingallston Township. I've lived in Ingallston Township most of my life [laughs].

IN: Were you actually born at the farm?

JB: No, I was born about a mile and a half southeast of the farm.

IN: So almost to Cedar River then?

JB: No, it's southeast...

IN: South! I'm sorry... I know where you mean then.

JB: My grandmother was supposed to take care of my mother when I was born. She had my Uncle Chris had gone to Chicago to take on the World's Fair and they were supposed to be back in time, but I beat them to it [laughs].

IN: I see, so you came early?

JB: I came a little early.

IN: That's great.

JB: I grew up... well, I spent probably about three years there. Then we went right across the bay to Door County and we lived over there. So there was about three years over there and then we came back to Menominee, just close to Menominee. We kept moving farther north all the time. We lived then in the same house I was born in, and I went school in an old log schoolhouse that was built at the south end of the farm. It was just a small place. I think there were only about six or eight of us children going to school at the time. Some of them were anything but children; they were big grownup boys and girls [laughs]. After I went to school there we moved to Dead Man's Point. That was more up the Cedar River. We lived there for seven years. I went to school at Cedar River at that time. We used to go and visit the farm. We always spent Christmas at the farm. My uncle was growing up at the time.

IN: Okay, now your uncle is Chris?

JB: Yes, he was seven years older than I was.

IN: What connection are you with August and Catherine Reichert?

JB: They're my grandparents. My mother was Emma Reichert.

IN: Did you ever actually live at the farm then?

JB: I stayed there two winters and went to school. That was as much as I lived at the farm.

IN: That's when you were at the little log school there.

JB: At the little log school.

IN: Can you remember how old you were at the time?

JB: Probably about seven-years-old.

IN: So it would have been about 1900 or so?

JB: Yes.

IN: What do you remember about your grandparents?

JB: Well, my grandmother always worked hard and she always seemed to be tired.

IN: Was she healthy?

JB: She was healthy to a certain extent, but after my Uncle Chris was born she got up and started hard work too late, and she had female trouble. So that kind of hindered here a bit and made working difficult for the rest of her life. She never did go to a hospital to have it taken care of.

IN: How old were you when she died.

JB: I'd have to think [laughs]. She died just before you were born.

IN: 1921, okay.

JB: I was born in 1893.

IN: So you would remember her very well then?

JB: Oh yes.

IN: How about August Reichert?

JB: Well I remember him too because I was married already when he died. My second son was born just afterwards. He was born in December and Bud was born in January. He was a great man. He always smoked a long pipe with a crooked stem and the great big bowl. He liked to have his wife come and light his pipe for him.

JB & IN: [Laughs]

JB: She had a sister who used to stay with them and visit. One time when she was there grandpa asked Catherina, as he called her, to come and light his pipe, and her sister said, "Never mind Cathrina, I'll do it for you." And she went and stuck a fire stick in the stove, got it lit, and she goes over and sticks it in his pipe and she catches his ears on fire. So he never asked to have his pipe lit when she was around, he did it himself [laughs].

IN: It was an accident, she wasn't...?

JB: No I think she did it on purpose [laughs].

IN: Really?

JB: She wanted to break him of that habit [laughs]. She didn't have the patience with him that my grandmother did.

IN: Was he a particularly demanding person?

JB: I think so, to a certain extent. Much more so than my grandmother. My grandmother was very, very easygoing. She did more than her share of everything.

IN: I think that may have been typical of women of that time.

JB: I think so, it was at that age. Women always did seem to do more than their share, and they did it without any fuss or bother.

IN: Do you ever remember them saying why they came to the US?

JB: Well, I do know that when my grandmother came over it was because she had an older brother and there was a war going on. I don't remember which country the war was between. But she had this older brother and the father was afraid that the boy was going to be drafted into the service. So they came to this country to get away from there. They landed in Chicago. And when the boy was about old enough for service anyways they came across here to draft boys who didn't have their citizenship to go back and fight for Germany. His father told him that he would pay... there was a \$200 dollar fee... if you paid \$200 you could exempt your son from the service. The father offered to do it, but the son said no. He would go back and fight for Germany. He did, and of course he didn't come back. He was shot over there.

IN: But the rest of the family stayed in Chicago?

JB: So far as I know... I only know of the two sisters. How many more there were I don't know. I have no way of knowing.

IN: So Catherine would have been fairly young at the time that they came then?

JB: Yes, I suppose about 13-14 years old.

IN: What about August? Do you know why his family came?

JB: No, I don't know any specific reason, if it was for the same thing or not. Because he was 17 I think when they came over. They landed in Blue Island.

IN: That's also in Illinois isn't it?

Unidentified Voice: Yeah, it's Chicago.

JB: He and his brother, they both had land there at one time... in Blue Island. But they didn't stay there awful long. About that time my grandmother's sister had married. She was older than my grandmother, and she had married. The man she married was a cook and a tailor, kind of a jack of all trades. He got a job to go to Cedar River and cook at a big boarding house. So they took my grandmother Catherina with them as a maid when they were at the boarding house. When she got there, that's where she met my grandfather. He had come to work in the mill and was boarding at the boarding house.

IN: So he had already come up here then?

JB: So they met there at the boarding house, and later they were married in Cedar River. Then they went back to Chicago for a time. I have no way of knowing just how long, but it seems... my Uncle Will was born in Chicago. Then they came back to Menominee and they lived there for a while. He worked in the woods until he got this land up here. He home stayed up there and got that land. In order to homestead land you had to work on it and prove it. He did that and built the house a little at a time so that they could move into it. Then he moved his family up there. After they had moved up there... I don't know just how many years they had been there... the sister of grandmother didn't have any children. She and her husband were going to go to Oregon, and they wanted to take one of grandma's children with them, because she had quite a few children. They were going to take the oldest one, but grandpa said no, because she could work on the farm. So they gave them the youngest girl at the time, my Aunt Caroline, and they took her to Oregon with them.

IN: So was she raised by them?

JB: Yes, she was raised by them. She married out there, raised a family out there. She's been back here visiting sometimes, but she's dead now.

IN: Did August ever say why he came to Cedar River?

JB: No, he never said, except that I know from the mill in Cedar River, when they were short of help they would often go to Chicago and try to get men to come up here. They would sometimes bring a whole boatload of them. I suppose that was the way he came up, I don't know. But they very often had men from Chicago and different places in Illinois that came up and worked in the mill. At that time that was a big mill. They cut a lot of timber.

IN: That's what I understand. Do you know if most of the people who worked there were Germans?

JB: Well, quite a good many of them. There was a mixture. I can remember there was a mixture. There were Germans, there were Polish, there were French, there were Swedes, there were Finlanders [laughs]. We had one handle of Cedar River they called "Finntown" that was all Finland.

IN: I guess that was pretty typical of a lot of the settlements up here.

JB: Yes.

IN: So they had been in the US then for quite a while before they came up here?

JB: Yes.

IN: Have you any idea how old they were when they married?

JB: No that I don't know.

IN: Okay.

Unidentified Voice: They were married 36 years in 1900.

IN: Okay. Then I'll be able to figure out all of that kind of thing.

IN: What were his occupations then? After he had the farm what kind of work was he doing?

JB: Cutting timber mostly. They raised an awful lot on the farm and they sold more than they'd give them credit for. I think they made barrels of sauerkraut and hauled them into town. Then every fall they sold beef and pork, and they raised a grain of every kind; corn, barley, oats. They always took that to the mill to grind it and make it into flour.

IN: Did they sell a lot of those grains as well?

JB: I think they sold some of those grains too, yes.

IN: How did they haul the... what kind of transportation did they have down there?

JB: Well, when I can remember they had a team of horses. A real nice team of horses. But my mother said before that they had oxen.

IN: And some type of an old cart type of thing, or a wagon?

JB: No, they had a wagon. It was quite a substantial wagon as I remember.

IN: And you think that that one was the same one that they had used for quite a while?

JB: Well, yes it wasn't new. They had used it for a while or it was second hand when they got it [laughs]. I have no way of knowing.

IN: But you think he made most of his livelihood from cutting timber?

JB: Cutting timber, yes.

Unidentified Voice: And fish.

JB: Then he fished later on, yes. He fished. I don't know how many years he fished. I know that my father fished with him for a few years.

IN: When you say he fished later on, you don't think he was doing that say...?

JB: I don't think so no.

IN: Up till 1885 or so? You think that came later?

JB: Yeah, I think so.

IN: When he was lumbering and hauling timber, was he hauling that to sawmills? He didn't have his own mill or anything?

JB: No he didn't have his own mill.

IN: Did he haul it to Cedar River?

JB: Well, I imagine so. I don't know where else he would have taken it. Although later years they used to put it on their beaches and tugs would come and haul it to Green Bay and those places.

IN: Yeah, you're right about that too.

JB: So I don't know too much about that part of it.

IN: Can you remember all kinds of tools and things that he had around?

JB: Well, he had a thresh machine. When I can remember he had a good thresh machine. One load that was run with horse power... it went round and round in a circle.

IN: And he had that set-up on the farm then?

JB: But they used to be able to take that and... he used to thresh for other people. In the fall he would go from one farm to another where they had a lot of rain under their threshing pole.

IN: And he was doing that in addition to the timber-cutting and...

JB: Farming, at that time he was mostly into farming.

IN: I see. How many children did they have?

JB: Oh, I'd have to stop and think. I know there was one that died in-between. Anthony, and my mother, and Aunt Caroline, and Uncle Henry, and Aunt Annie, and Uncle Chris, and that one that died.

IN: So Chris was actually the youngest who survived?

JB: Yes.

IN: And Caroline went to...?

JB: Oregon.

IN: So that was a pretty substantial family still left in that little house?

JB: Mhmm.

IN: Chris was the last one to live there?

JB: Yes, Uncle Will left... I don't think Uncle Will was too old when he left to work in a tailor shop in Chicago. That's where he learned tailoring.

Unidentified Voice: Your mother lived in Menominee for a while...

JB: Huh?

Unidentified Voice: Your mother was in school in Menominee for a while, but she wasn't there for the census. The 1800's census. She was only eight-years-old then.

JB: They didn't have a little schoolhouse on the farm in those days.

IN: Okay, the schoolhouse was there when you were there, but it wasn't there...?

JB: It isn't there now.

IN: Do you know approximately when it was built there?

JB: No, it was built there after they lived on the farm that was for sure. But I don't know how long it had been there before.

IN: Do you think it had been there like... if you were there in 1900, say 15-20 years before?

JB: No. Probably 10 years.

IN: Now they settled there in 1874, is that correct?

JB: Well, practically. I would think that.

IN: I saw something to the effect... and I could tell in the picture, that August was very, very tall.

JB: He was almost 7-feet. He just towered above you.

IN: And she was very short.

JB: Yes, she was tiny [laughs].

IN: Can you describe them in any other way?

JB: Well he had a beard, kind of a reddish beard, and he had the long hair. He was very big built; he was very muscular.

IN: He didn't look fat in that picture at all.

IN: What about her? You say she was very short.

JB: She was short. You would think she was rather fragile, but she did a lot of heavy work on top of raising that many children.

IN: Can you describe their character? You started earlier saying that he was rather demanding.

JB: Yes, he was. He was the boss all around. She was very good-natured and easygoing I think.

IN: Was he severe with the kids.

JB: He was quite severe, yes. If he demanded they do something they'd better do it.

IN: There was no backtalk [laughs].

JB: No, no backtalk.

Unidentified Voice: You should tell her about the time that you slammed the door.

JB: Well, I was about eight-years-old at the time in my room... we'd go there sometimes to... you know how kids are, we'd get to playing and we'd chase each other. I was chasing my sister and I slammed the door when I went out, and he said I should have had my nose slammed between the door [laughs].

IN: He just didn't approve of kids running like that?

JB: Yeah, slamming the door and making the noise [laughs]. Otherwise we used to run around quite a lot it seems to me. I remember I had a good dress one time and I tore it on a wood box because there was nail sticking out of the wood box [laughs].

IN: Did he have anything to say about that?

JB: No, just that I shouldn't have been there [laughs]. Uncle Preston, Myrtle, and I were playing hide-and-go-seek [laughs].

IN: And Catherine was very good natured. After August suggested you should have had your nose banged in the door, would she have been very comforting?

JB: Well, I think she would have. Only I think she was so busy I don't think she even heard what he said.

IN: If he had as many occupations, or if he was doing all the farming, lumbering, and things like that, he must have been pretty busy too.

JB: Oh yeah, he'd always get busy. In Menominee, before he took the farm, he used to go way up on the river bed to work on a logging camp. They'd come home on Saturday's, and that was when there were Indians yet into Western Menominee. At one time they were going back on Sunday afternoon, late, and they knew the Indians were out, they crawled under a canoe and the Indians must have thought they were under there or something because they were shooting arrows into the canoe. They didn't hurt them, after the Indians left they got up and went to camp.

IN: Now this was after he was married?

JB: Yeah.

IN: So he would go up to the lumber camp and then Catherine would...?

JB: Stay in Menominee with the children.

IN: Oh, okay.

JB: That was before they had the farm.

IN: Before they had the farm, alright.

IN: Did he ever do that after they had the farm?

JB: No. There was no lumbering.

IN: Can you think of any particular skills or talents that they had? Like did either one of them play a musical instrument? Were they interested in dancing or anything like that?

JB: They both would have liked to dance I think, my grandmother especially.

IN: Were there many opportunities for things like that?

JB: Not too much. Once in a great while out in Larium there'd be dances or in Cedar River they had a town hall maybe, but they never went there.

IN: You say they didn't go into the dance hall, or they didn't go to Cedar River?

JB: They didn't go to the dance hall. Grandma went to Cedar River once a week. They always used to take butter and eggs and things down there to sell them.

IN: Door-to-door?

JB: Mhmm.

IN: Was she doing that when you were a child?

JB: Yes.

IN: Do you know if she had done that for a long time?

JB: I don't know how long she'd been doing it then, because there were quite a few people living in Cedar River then. There weren't too many that were bothered bringing in fresh eggs and fresh turned butter, buttermilk, things like that.

IN: She must have been busy.

JB: Yes, she was. Then they made barrels of sauerkraut. They had a great big garden. She sold things from the garden when they were in season, like carrots, rutabagas, turnips, and things of that sort.

IN: Now those things she would take into Cedar River, but the sauerkraut they took to Menominee?

JB: To Menominee mostly, because that was all ordered ahead of time. They just had to deliver it.

IN: I see. They took them in barrels rather than crocks?

JB: Yes, it was an awful lot of hard work. I think everything was done the hard way. When they first started they didn't have mowers like they have now to go out and cut the grain. You had to cut it with what they call a "cradle", a plow with some extra tine to it. Even the girls had to handle those cradles to cut grain.

IN: So the children did a great deal of the farming as well?

JB: Mhmm. At one time while my mother was growing up they had maple trees in the back. They used to tap them and make maple syrup.

IN: Was that to sell also, or was that for their own use?

JB: I think it was mostly for their own use. My mother said it was her fault they didn't continue. They used to have a big kettle they'd boil over. That would go down on the coals and it would harden and be like candy. They had a habit of going there and just picking those out. They could get them before they got too dirty. She did that and she stirred into the coals, she didn't know they were live coals in there, and that night the house where they cooked the sap burned down. So that was the end of that [laughs].

IN: Do you know approximately when that was?

JB: No, I don't know. It was when she was about 16-years-old.

IN: No one was hurt?

JB: No, it was quite a ways away from the house when it burned. It had excitement too [laughs].

IN: Right, I'm sure.

IN: They made so many of their own food products and things, what about the clothing? Did they make their own clothing?

JB: Grandma did sew quite a bit. Grandpa always bought what they call "buffalo flannel". I don't know if you know what buffalo flannel is. It's a small check of heavy wool flannel. She used to buy that and she made shirts. She made skirts for herself too I think with that flannel.

IN: Did he buy that by the bolt in Menominee?

JB: No, I think he sent for everything to Montgomery Ward's. I don't think he bought very much in Menominee.

IN: Oh I see.

JB: He was always ordering from Montgomery Ward's.

IN: And it was Wards, not Sears.

JB: Not Sears, they were Wards.

IN: That's interesting.

IN: Can you think of anything else they bought from Ward's other than the fabric?

JB: Well, I think that that stove that they have in the kitchen came from Ward's. We tried to find a picture of it, but we couldn't find a Ward catalogue. The picture we've got is exactly like it. I don't know where they got the stove that was in the living room. The kitchen table I know was homemade.

IN: By him?

JB: By him. They had some chairs... some of them they must have moved from Menominee when they moved up, but I think a lot of them were homemade.

IN: Can you think of anything that they had in the house that they had brought with them, or that their families had brought from Germany?

JB: That must have been some of those old-fashioned pipes, because I haven't seen them around here.

IN: But none of the furniture or anything.

JB: No.

IN: Of course I suppose if his family and hers were still down there, anything that they would have brought they would have kept.

JB: Yeah, because his mother and dad died down there in Blue Island. They're buried down there. His brother took all that was left by the father, except some portion of the land; that was kept for my grandfather. That was what my mother and her sister inherited afterwards. Her younger brother got the farm because he was the last one to be home.

IN: I see.

IN: Did Catherine ever do any kind of spinning or did they have sheep or anything that they made wool out of?

JB: There's been an argument about that. Someone tried to tell me that they had a spinning wheel, but I for the life of me cannot remember. I know on my father's side that they did have a spinning wheel and that they did have sheep, because I saw them shear them. But I can't remember that Grandma Reichert ever had sheep. I think Walton did afterwards.

Unidentified Voice: Yeah Walton did. I know that.

JB: But I can't remember if they had sheep. I know that they had pigs and they had cattle. They always had a bull around that we were scared to death of.

IN: Did you have reason to be scared of it? Had it ever chased anyone?

JB: It tore a dress of mine to pieces that was on the clothes line one time, a red dress [laughs].

IN: I guess that's warning enough.

JB: And it chased a neighbor man that lived near us at that time. He was going to Cedar River to go to work in the morning and the bull came after him. He turned around and ran back home, got his gun, and when he got out there the bull came after him again and that was the end of the bull, which was kind of bad, but...

IN: I imagine that getting animals or things like that out there was probably a real expense wasn't it?

JB: Well, I suppose so, although there were other people that had... I don't know if the other neighbors that were right next to him if they did or not. I never heard very much about what they did. They didn't have a great deal of land I know. The Williams, I don't think any of them went in for cattle or farming, but some of them on the Cedar River Road going to Stevenson, they had big farms.

IN: So was the Reichert farm probably the biggest farm around there?

JB: It was at that time, yes.

IN: Were they religious people? That you can remember?

JB: I think my grandmother was to a certain extent, yes. They didn't know what to get us for Christmas, so grandfather ordered us each a pair of shoes for Christmas, those shoes with felt tops, you know? Those ones they used to wear years ago. The leather shoes with the felt top. Mine were a little bit too small, so I gave mine to my sister Myrtle and hers went to my brother Henry and so on down, and then they had to get a different pair for me [laughs]. There was the five of us, and then there was three of Uncle Will's children, and my cousin Viola. We all got shoes for Christmas.

IN: That must have been quite an expense at that time?

JB: Yeah, he probably got them for a dollar and a half or two dollars a pair. Even that was quite a bit at that time. He ordered them without asking us our sizes or anything, so he did pretty good at that [laughs].

IN: That was a good guess.

IN: Speaking of buying things like that, were they pretty prosperous people? Can you...?

JB: Do you think that they had money?

IN: Right, or certainly enough to keep going sort of thing.

JB: They had enough to keep going. I don't think they were ever really hard off.

IN: Even when they first started out?

JB: Yeah, they were too economical to ever really be hard off I think. They had hard luck when they first came to Menominee. I have no way of knowing just how many years they stayed there. Aunt Minnie was born there when my mother was. My mother was two-years-old when they moved to the farm. When they moved it was late in the fall. They took what they could haul with an ox team, a wagon, and they said they'd come down in the spring with a boat and take the rest of the furniture. It was right on Fourth Street, just north of what used to be the brewery, and before spring came... before the bay opened up so that they could get down there with a boat... the ice ship shoved the house all to pieces and they lost the furniture within it.

IN: So whatever they had then from the house in Menominee on the ox cart was what they had with them. Did she ever tell you what they had?

JB: No, it was just what that had.

IN: I don't imagine it was very much though.

JB: No, they couldn't, because they had... well they'd had three children and...

IN: Boy, that's amazing.

IN: So they moved to the farm in the fall then?

JB: Yeah, late in the fall it must have been.

IN: He must have started building though before that?

JB: Oh yes, he had building for quite some time. I think he put up just a barn or something at first. Of course he built a little shed so he could stay there anyways so that he could stay and work at the house. It took some time to dig out that basement and then build all that stone for that big stone wall. Then on top he had to cut all those logs and have them dragged up with the oxen.

IN: Did he do all that work himself? Do you know if he had somebody else helping him with the digging out of...?

JB: Not that I know of. He may have, but I don't know.

IN: What a job. That's amazing.

JB: Those days everybody worked for themselves.

IN: And I suppose he'd had experience in lumber camps and things like that with building?

JB: Yes, he'd had some experience for when they made ties and did things of that sort. There was a good bit of building being done at that time with logs and spare timber that you could find. You could get ideas that way.

IN: Well, I think that that should certainly do it. You've been an excellent, excellent...

[AUDIO SKIPS]

IN: Do you know when they put the addition on the house? You said there was that metal shed...

JB: No, I don't know, but it was after my grandfather was dead.

IN: Oh, okay. So way the house is now is the way it was?

JB: The way it was, yes.

IN: Can you think of any other illnesses or diseases in the family? Any major things like smallpox or anything like that when the kids were young?

JB: No, I can't right off hand... No.

IN: So they were a pretty healthy crew mostly?

Unidentified Voice: What did the two die from? The two that was 18 and 22. That was pneumonia wasn't it?

JB: Well, Uncle Henry had blood poisoning. He was working with stakes and the point of a stake went into his ankle. He got blood poisoning for one thing. I don't know what happened after that, but he got pneumonia on top of it. And Annie died from... I really don't know. She had been sick for some time. Dad had her in the hospital in Menominee and when they brought her home she died at home.

IN: That was after you were born? You can remember her?

JB: Just barely remember.

IN: Do you remember what kinds of things they liked to do for recreation? You say your grandmother liked to dance. Would she dance at the house or anything?

JB: No, I don't think she danced at all.

IN: Did they read or anything like that?

JB: No, I think when she got her day in she was too tired. She used to knit. She used to knit a lot when the children were younger especially. She knit all the stockings.

IN: Do you know where she got her yarn for that?

JB: Right down at Ward's.

IN: That was ordered from Ward's too?

JB: My mother said she could knit in the dark. She'd go in the living room and shut the door and she would knit. Well, they figured that's what she was doing, but they weren't sure. She made them each a pair of stockings for Christmas and they wouldn't see them.

IN: Just by feel?

JB: Yeah.

IN: That's amazing.

IN: Can you think of anything else they did? Did August have any type of recreation type thing other than the pipe?

JB: He liked the beer [laughs].

IN: Did they make their own? Did they have hops or anything on the place?

JB: No I don't think so. At least I never heard of it.

IN: What about... did they have neighbors in or anything?

JB: Well, there were neighbors that were not too far from them that were there quite a long time. My mother couldn't have been too old when they moved in. There's a house there now just to the north... the old house was in that same place, but it burned down in later years.

IN: Do you recall if they ever talked about visiting those people or anything like that?

JB: Well grandma went out more than grandpa did amongst the neighbors. She went to the Brailey's and I think she went to the Kramer's a good deal. She acted as a midwife to the whole neighborhood to a certain extent as she got older. Her daughter-in-law became having children, the youngest one, and she would call on her to help her. That was the end of her... she wouldn't go out

IN: Why wouldn't the daughter-in-law call on her mom?

JB: Well, I don't know [laughs]. She probably just thought grandma was getting too old [laughs].

IN: Did she have any special equipment or anything set aside for that?

JB: No, not that I know of.

IN: She must have helped deliver quite a few babies though.

JB: Yes, I think she did. I'd meet her while I was downtown every once in a while and she'd say, "Your grandmother helped bring me into the world." I remember once in March she said, "March is an awful month. I always say that because that's the month I was born. It was a big [inaudible. My Uncle had to and get your grandmother."

IN: And she'd go in any weather.

JB: It sure seemed that way.

IN: So she must have been pretty confident that other people would have...

JB: Yes, they depended on her.

IN: Boy, with everything else she had to do. That's amazing.

IN: Do you know if they got into Menominee very often?

JB: Oh, she didn't. Grandpa got in a couple times year I think.

IN: Just to take the sauerkraut and things?

JB: Mhmm. Well, it was during the summer. I don't know what he went in for, but he always went in during the summer.

IN: Did he buy any supplies there?

JB: Oh yes, I think he bought some things when he went in. He almost always brought something home.

IN: But almost anything else that they could they would get from Ward's?

JB: Ward's, mhmm.

IN: What about seeds and things?

JB: I don't know where they got their seeds from. Some of them, like for the grain and that, I think they used to go to Stevenson. They'd get them at the feed mill there in Stevenson. That's where they would take their wheat, and rye, and barley, to have it ground.

IN: Did they usually speak English at home?

JB: Always if there was company around, yes.

IN: But to each other it was German most likely?

JB: Yeah.

IN: Do you know if they corresponded at all with people in the old country?

JB: Not that I know of.

IN: How about with their families down in Illinois?

JB: They must have kept some contact because in later years Anise came up from Chicago. I remember she came up two or three different times when her children were younger. One of her children came up a year ago... last summer. She's still living down that way.

IN: Do you ever remember August and Catherine making a trip down...?

JB: Never together. Grandma and Uncle Chris went to the World's Fair Chicago the year I was born. That's the only time I know of them making a trip.

IN: And as far as you know August never did after they went back there.

JB: Not that I know of. No, I don't believe he even went to Blue Island for his brother's wedding or his father's funeral.

IN: Probably because he was too busy?

JB: Too busy or it was too inconvenient.

IN: If they travelled to those places was it by boat or by train? Can you remember? When they went to the World's Fair... well you wouldn't have remembered when they went to the World's Fair obviously, but did they ever talk about taking any trips on the lake or by train?

JB: [Long pause] let's see...

IN: What kind of furniture did they have in the house? You mentioned the stove and the table.

JB: Well, that table in the kitchen was homemade, and there was two benches and a couple chairs. In the living room there was a... they called... they had a bureau. They had an old fashioned clock. Then I remember when they came back from the World's Fair... I couldn't remember it then, but I remembered it later years... it was a bank made of iron. It was a dog and a little girl with a paddle in her hand, and if

you put a penny on the paddle and you tapped the dog's tail she'd throw the penny in the dog's mouth. We were always begging our mother for pennies [laughs].

IN: That was their big souvenir of the fair?

JB: That was there big souvenir of the fair.

IN: What about a couch or things like that?

JB: They didn't have a couch. I don't even know if they had a rocker. I remember us kids used to sit on the floor.

IN: So it wasn't a tight with furniture type of thing. They had the chairs and the bureau and that sort of thing. Can you think of any other...?

[AUDIO CUTS OUT]

JB: Wash bag in front of the window and a place to hang our clothes in front of the bag. That was about all you could get in there. I had to sleep with the teacher [laughs].

IN: Oh [laughs], from the little log school, right.

IN: Can you remember what was on the bed? Did Catherine make quilts?

JB: Yeah, she made quilts.

IN: Can you remember any of the designs?

JB: No, I can't remember any of the designs.

IN: But that would have been scraps probably from her sewing and that type of thing.

JB: Yeah. They did have blankets though too. They must have got those from Ward's. Everyone did.

IN: What was in the kitchen besides the table, chairs, and stove?

JB: There was a wood box and a bird cage with a little yellow canary by the window.

IN: Do you think she had had a pet like that for a long time?

JB: Oh yes, grandpa took care of the bird.

IN: Oh, it was more his pet then?

JB: Mhmm.

[AUDIO CUTS OUT]

IN: And what... like metal... smoke sort of?

JB: Yeah.

IN: Higher than it was?

JB: Mhmm.

IN: And as far as you know they had had that long before you were born?

JB: Well, I don't know how long they had it, but it must have been a long time because I can't remember the kitchen without it.

IN: Did she have more than one set of dishes? Did they have a good set and an everyday set?

JB: No, I think it was all one set of dishes. They were mostly something like the blue and white ware. Something like that. There was quite a lot of white plates and White China.

IN: Presumably all from Montgomery Ward's also?

JB: Most likely.

IN: What about in the pantry, do you remember what was in that?

JB: Well, the pantry never got completely finished. There were never any shelves put up. She used to take these crates, like orange crates; she'd put them down on the side and lay boards across and put another crate on top. That's the way she had to build up.

IN: Oh, I see.

IN: Do you remember what the crates were? Do you think they were orange crates?

JB: Well, they were something around the order of orange crates. They were just ordinary boxes.

IN: Why do you think the pantry never got finished? Did August have too many other things to do?

JB: Well, we just didn't have the proper boards and because she stuck those boards in there... you know?

IN: [Laughs] Did she do a lot of canning?

JB: Yes, in a different sort of way than what you think of canning today. She had an awful lot of blueberries, blackberries, and raspberries, and they used to put them up in gallon jugs. You'd cook them and you'd put them in these gallon jugs without sugar, you'd cork them, and then you'd seal them with heavy sealing wax. Then you'd put them in the basement and when you'd want one you'd bring one up, and then you'd bring it to a boil and add the sugar to it.

IN: So they didn't use the sugar then for preservative?

JB: No.

IN: Did they grow the berries or did they pick them from a field?

JB: No, they'd pail them all.

IN: That must have been quite a ritual then if they had enough to put them in gallon jugs like that, they must have had loads of them.

JB: They'd have plenty of them.

IN: Can you think of anything else that she canned? Anything from their own garden?

JB: It didn't seem to me they canned too much because they had a very good basement and everything would keep very fresh.

IN: So they were actually root cellaring more?

JB: Yeah, that was a thick stone wall and it was real cold and dark. Everything kept real cold. They had rutabagas, and carrots, and turnips, and things like that year-round. They didn't bother paring peas and beans like we do; they'd let them get ripe and they had the ripe beans and the ripe peas.

IN: Can you think of what other crops they raised? You've named quite a few things. Was there anything else they might have had? Did they have squashes of some kind?

JB: They raised squash and pumpkin, horseradish galore, rhubarb.

IN: How did they use the rhubarb?

JB: In a sauce. She sold some of that too.

IN: So would she just have eaten the sauce fresh then? She wouldn't have put up any of that.

JB: No, she just used that.

IN: Any pickles that you can think of?

JB: They made dill pickles by the keg. They had kegs and they sold some of those too.

IN: They must have had a giant garden if they had enough to put up their own plus sell.

JB: They did.

IN: What other meats can you think of? They smoked their hams and their bacon?

JB: They smoked their ham and bacon. They had chicken between times, fresh pork and beef in the wintertime when they could keep it fresh.

IN: Did August or any of the kids hunt? Would they have had venison?

JB: Oh yes, they did hunt. Grandpa hunted too.

IN: Did they ever use anything like squirrels or that sort of thing?

JB: That I don't know. They did partridges.

IN: So they had a big variety then for eating?

JB: Yeah.

IN: Do you remember anything for the slaughtering and the canning? She must have had some awfully big pots and pans, and kettles, and that sort of thing.

IN: Yes, they did have some big ones. They had a great big pan that they used to put in the oven that they'd fill with the lard, tallow.

IN: Did they use that then for making their own soap too?

JB: I think so. They made their own soap also.

IN: What kind of lighting did they have in the house?

JB: Kerosene lamps, the kind that would fasten on the wall.

IN: Can you think of any toys and things that were around there that might have been from the early years of having kids?

JB: I can't remember any, no.

IN: Can you remember the kids playing with toys or were they working hard enough that they weren't able to?

JB: Well, I remember Uncle Chris was seven years older than I was, so by the time I was old enough to remember the toys were put away if there was any [laughs].

IN: Right, there wouldn't have been toys around then.

JB: He used to love to chase us kids around I know.

IN: Can you remember any games that he talked about, or that your mother talked about, that they'd play?

JB: No. I don't think they had time for playing much. When they got through with a day's work they were ready to go to bed.

IN: Did the kids all go to school though? You say your mother went for a year in Menominee.

JB: Yeah, she started with that, but she only got three months in and that was the end of her school. The teacher she had was younger than she was and they didn't get along, so that was the end of that.

IN: Did any of the other kids spend much time in school?

JB: Uncle Chris spent about the most. I don't know how far he went. He didn't finish grade school, I know that much.

IN: Do you know if August and Catherine had much school?

JB: That I don't know. I don't know how much schooling they had.

IN: As far as you know they both read...

JB: They both could read German and they did read a certain amount of English too, because they did get an English paper.

IN: What paper did they get?

JB: I don't know what you would call it then, but it was the Menominee paper that came out there.

IN: Can you think of anything else? Did they get any farm papers or things like that?

JB: Yes, he had farm papers laying around there, but I couldn't tell you what the names of them were.

IN: So he was interested in keeping up with what was current?

JB: Oh yes, he was interested in keeping up with the times to a certain extent.

IN: Do you remember any other books or things around?

JB: No.

IN: The reading you would say was strictly practical then?

JB: Yes.

IN: Did they become US citizens?

JB: Yes, as far as I know. He did vote. I think he even held an office in the township of Ingallston.

IN: Could you remember that or was that before you were born?

JB: Yes, that was after. But for how long he had been a citizen then I don't know.

IN: Do you remember whether they were Republicans or Democrats?

JB: Democrats!

JB & IN: [Laughs]

IN: Do you remember him talking politics?

JB: He would talk politics if there were men around that were interested in it. He would get in an argument with them. Oh yes, very much so.

IN: So he was pretty determined then in his views?

JB: Oh yes, he had his own ideas of what should and shouldn't be.

IN: But he only talked about that kind of thing when other men were around?

JB: Mostly, yeah. Not with his own family too much. I suppose if he was going to go and vote and they asked him something about it he would tell them in short order and be done with it. He wasn't a man of a lot of words. When he had a couple beers he would sing to us in German [laughs].

IN: Oh? Did he have a nice voice?

JB: Yes, he had a good voice.

IN: Do you remember any of his songs?

JB: [PROCEEDS RECITE GERMAN LYRICS]

JB: That's "going home", but I can't tell you what they rest of it means.

IN: So in spite of his determination and his firm views he must have been a pretty good natured person.

JB: Well, I suppose he could have been worse. I've seen worse [laughs]. He wasn't a man that would go out and drink and come home and raise heck or anything of that sort.

IN: But he enjoyed his beer at home?

JB: Oh yes, he was superior, and what he wanted done, he wanted done.

IN: Did Catherine ever take beer?

JB: I don't remember having ever seen her drink a glass of beer. She may have, but I don't remember.

IN: What kind of thing would she drink?

JB: They drank coffee mostly. They used to buy their coffee and they made it go a long ways by roasting barley and mixing it up with the coffee.

IN: Oh, so they'd buy their coffee beans and then they had a roaster there?

JB: They had a roaster there and they'd roast the barley and mix it up.

IN: Do you remember what kind of proportions?

JB: No. I haven't the slightest idea.

IN: Have you ever had coffee like that?

JB: Never since! [Laughs]

IN: Did she raise any flowers or anything like that?

JB: She did have lilac bushes galore. She had some other flowers out in the front there too. I can't remember what they were. They planted some shade trees out in the front. They shaded the flower beds so the flower beds didn't amount to anything.

IN: Are those the big cottonwoods that are there now?

JB: Mhmm.

IN: They weren't there then when you were a child?

JB: No, I was about six or seven-years-old when they were planted there. I can remember my father saying, "They should never have planted those trees so close to the house. They'll be too big." And they sure did.

IN: Were there other trees around there that have since been taken out?

JB: They must have taken a lot of them out, because that was all woods at one time. They must have taken a lot of trees out.

IN: Maybe to clear for a building app.

JB: They planted quite a few apple trees.

IN: Oh that's right, there's an orchard there now. What did she do with the apples mostly?

JB: Well, they sold a lot of them, they ate a lot of them, and they made apple kuchen—a German apple cake that is [laughs].

IN: Did they ever make cider?

JB: Not that I know of, no.

IN: Did she cut the flowers in the yard and have them in the house that you can think of?

JB: No, I don't think so. She didn't have time.

IN: Did she have any other decorative touches that you can think of?

JB: No, everything was plane and easy. It had to be.

IN: And very utilitarian.

JB: There was no time for other things.

IN: I imagine earlier even, like between '75 and '85, there would have been even less time when she had all of those youngsters as well.

IN: Well, I can't think of anything else right now, but I'm sure after listening to the tape I will come up with other things, so if you don't mind I would like to talk to you again. I would like to go out to the house with you if we could set-up a meeting for that so that we can walk around and find out where things were. At that time what I'll do is bring along a drawing so that I'll have a scale-drawing of the house, and we can locate where furniture was and things like that. That would be handy. If you can think of anything else either along the lines of what we talked about today or other things that you think would be helpful... if you want to just jot them down or something we'll talk about them again. Can you think of anything else we should cover?

Unidentified Voice: Did you give her that picture of the stove?

JB: No.

[END OF RECORDING]