

Ivan & Orpha Miller, 11-5-05, Second Interview

ALAN: Did you think of anything we should add to it?

IVAN: Yeah. Well, I told her, I've spent forty years leading singing down here at the church. I don't know how many years I led the chorus, but it was when Jane Burkholder left and I took over. And I don't know.

ALAN: What happened to the chorus? How come they stopped having it?

IVAN: It gets harder and harder. After a while, people get tired of coming out. You know. And there always was a problem. Some of them just wanted to come out when they had a program. You know. But we had probably about thirty. We had thirty in there for a while and we went up to -- when I was leading it, we went up to Harrisonburg a couple times and we went up to Greenwood, Delaware, one time on the bus. So that was a big part of my life, I guess.

ALAN: How old were you the first time you led singing down here? Do you remember or how it came about?

IVAN: Yeah. I really got -- I sang with the quartet -- Harold and Vernon and Francis and myself about 1940, I think. When I was about twenty. Let's see. '23, '43. I'd been -- must have been about '43; and somebody got married. I don't have any idea who it was; but Dan Smucker was singing with that quartet and he was in Harrisonburg and I was supposed to just fill in for him until he got down here he could take it. You know. But when he got down here, he said, "No. You been singing with them." He wasn't doing it. From then on, I was in I guess. So from about the age of twenty -- and I guess along about that time I started leading singing too.

ALAN: Where did you learn how to read music?

IVAN: Sam Kurtz had -- that would be Christie's and Irvin -- you don't even know Irvin I don't guess -- but Christie Kurtz's dad. He had a singing class for the older people, I'm sure. But I went along with my folks as a young teenager and learned to read shaped notes. I learned the notes and kind of the rudiments of music right there and that's the only music that I ever had. Then, of course, I played the mandolin a lot along about that time and just evolved, I guess.

ALAN: Is that where most of the people in the church learned how to read music was --

IVAN: I believe so. I think I heard Francis say that not too long ago. That he learned for -- of course, he went up to a six-week Bible term up at school and he learned more of the rudiments of music then. But I guess that's -- and, of course, as you grow up with it, why, it's a little more natural.

ALAN: I thought it was telling at the 100th Anniversary. There was nobody under forty who were singing or very few under forty who were singing.

IVAN: Give it another twenty years and it won't be any under sixty or whatever. That's right. Yeah. So, we got -- had the best four-part harmony music and they're dropping it. I mean they're -- it's leaving. They don't --

ALAN: Well, did they sing four-part harmony before Sam Kurtz taught the class?

IVAN: Yes.

ALAN: Other people knew it, he was just teaching the --

IVAN: Yeah. He come in here from Ohio. I guess he learned it from

somewhere.

ALAN: Did Kurtzes move in after your dad did?

IVAN: I don't know. About the same time, I imagine. Same time as Buckwalters and Millers and I think Sam Kurtz. Kurtzes would have probably come in a little later maybe but --

ALAN: And he bought the place and built the house beside the church there?

IVAN: Yeah. Uh-huh. And he also owned a little place up there by Uncle Chester Hobbs' place.

ALAN: Oh, really.

IVAN: How was that? They traded around some kind of way and -- I don't know. Harold Buckwalter could fill you in on that, I'm sure. But there was some trading there. Sam Kurtz traded Grandpa Buckwalter that place up there and probably Grandpa Buckwalter gave him some down here. I don't know what the story was on that.

ALAN: Didn't Grandpa Buckwalter have a broom business up there?

IVAN: Yeah. And he made brooms up there, I know. I didn't remember it, but I hear them say that he built -- that was his broom shop and that's what Chester and Naomi started with. That little broom place where he made brooms. And they kept adding on and adding on to it.

ALAN: Because Daddy had some of his broom-making equipment when I was a kid. I don't know what they did, but they were some sort of big tools and machines.

IVAN: Yeah, I remember. And I remember when he had it down here on Wenger Road then. He put it in that garage or something that they had in there and Harold Buckwalter -- I think he cut the end of his finger or they had a thing there that cut the broom straw; and they raised the broom straw. They just raised their own broom straw and made brooms. Harold knows a little about that too because he lived right next door there.

ALAN: Was there a store across from where -- well, beside Kurtz's where -- oh, shoot -- James and Mary live now?

IVAN: Yeah. I can remember -- well, your grandmother -- and I don't know about Grandpa Roy -- whether he lived there or not, but the rest of the family lived there. It was a big two-story red store. I don't remember it as a store, but I remember the building. It was out by the road and your folks -- or your grandparents lived in there. Your dad would have remembered it.

ALAN: Yeah. I've heard him talk about it.

IVAN: Then there was another one right across from where Paul Zook's house is. There was a little store there. I can barely remember that one. Lancaster. I think that was Mrs. Nash's parents. I think she was Lancaster. I guess that's how that come about that they -- but they had a little store there and then there was another one right at the end of Wenger Road -- Danner's store. I had to be in probably first or second grade. I remember going down there and waiting down at the store for the school bus to come by. They say the older you are, the further you had to walk to school. I walked from here out to Mt. Pleasant Road.

ALAN: Well, they had stores all over the place.

IVAN: Well, there wasn't one on every -- yeah. Yeah. You think of one on every corner now. They were in between because it had to be horse -- within horse and buggy distance. You know.

ALAN: Well, did the Swartzes -- Leslie Swartz -- his parents were the first ones to move down here?

IVAN: Yeah. And in that book will tell you that.

ALAN: And they -- his Dad built the house where he lived all his life?

IVAN: I don't know if that was an old house that was there or if they had it built. I was just kind of the opinion it was already there, but I don't know.

And then the Clendennings I guess came in from the same area of -- where did they say? Michigan, I think.

ALAN: Oh, really.

IVAN: I think them and the Swartzes all come in from Michigan.

ALAN: Did they know each other out there?

IVAN: I don't know.

ALAN: Or pure coincidence?

IVAN: I don't know.

ALAN: The Clendennings were Mennonites though, weren't they?

IVAN: I've read that too but -- yeah. I think they had some Mennonite lineage because -- and I understand that they had church service in the Methodist church for the Mennonites at different times evidently. Then -- let's see --

ALAN: Somebody was talking about that at the 100th Reunion that there wasn't a Mennonite church, so they just joined in with the Methodists until there were enough to have a Mennonite church.

IVAN: When they got enough then they -- and I'm kind of the opinion maybe the Swartzes just stayed with the Methodists, I believe.

ALAN: Yeah. Because she was still there until the day she died.

IVAN: Yeah. Right. I think -- I would guess Leslie Swartz was a member down here. Him and my Dad were real big buddies, I understand. They were about the same age, you know.

ALAN: I remember him at -- you know -- the guys used to go to Dwight Miller's on Saturday night -- or my Dad did anyway, pick up groceries.

IVAN: Do you remember going down there?

ALAN: Yeah. If you hid in the car and you made it all the way to the store without Daddy finding you, then you could stay and have a Pepsi; and you were there, so you could stay. I remember Leslie talking about when he was a young fellow he would ride his horse past -- is it E. R. Miller's store just as hard as he could ride it because he knew it would make E. R. Miller mad.

IVAN: Then he got cars, he did the same thing to Dwight. Yeah. That Saturday nights down at the store. That was about the only hangout around here for a

while.

ALAN: You could catch up on all the gossip for the past week.

IVAN: Oh, yeah. That was our TV. In fact, Dwight had a radio. Nobody had radios, but Dwight had one there in the back of the store. I can remember going back there as a boy and nobody else was listening to the radio. I'd go back there and get Nashville or country music. You know. It was toward the back of the store, so I didn't bother anybody I guess.

ALAN: This was on the old store or the new store?

IVAN: No. The old store. I helped build the new store. Yeah. I worked with my DAD when I first got out of school. And I don't -- I can pretty well remember who all worked on it. That was a big project now for an old country carpenter to build that big building. You know. And it was my Uncle Harvey Buch was down here taking care of Grandpa Buckwalters for a year or two, and he came down -- him and my Aunt Anna -- came down here and stayed with them. And he worked with my Dad as a carpenter on that store. And then there was Ruse Powers was a native -- the guy stuttered right bad -- and I don't guess he had -- well, him; and the other one was Luther Hewitt. Now, Luther Hewitt -- both of them were old country men from down here on Pocatoy Road. Neither one of them had any education, but Luther worked with my Dad for quite a while when we built this house. That would have been 1950 while he worked with my Dad, I know. Along -- a number of years on either side of that.

ALAN: I can remember Luther barely.

NEADY: He used to come to our church when I was a little kid, and bring the grandchildren.

IVAN: Well, I don't know if Luther came but --

NEADY: Yeah, he did. He was the one that brought Kay and Lee and Wayne and Thomas and Keith.

IVAN: Besides those two, it was -- let's see. It was George Brunk helped on it, and myself and my Dad. Now, I don't know who -- let's see. No, I can't remember any others. There was probably -- might have been a couple others, but that was a big project. At the same time, when we got it up to the first floor, up to the second floor, we put the floor down; and then we could -- when we were working up there, we had a good view-- they were building the airport and we'd watch these big old pans and big equipment that none of us -- we had never seen that kind of equipment -- you know -- and we'd get a big kick out of that.

ALAN: Had they already changed Mt. Pleasant Road then to cut off that part?

IVAN: Well, they did that when the airport took over. When the airport bought their property -- that property. Then they run Mt. Pleasant Road back along the swamp on the high ground right next to the swamp.

ALAN: Okay. I'm talking about between Carter Road and Dwight's store. Because there was a time --

IVAN: That was the old Mt. Pleasant Road. I guess they called it Mt. Pleasant Road. They must have changed it.

ALAN: It was there in your memory? As long as you remember, it was there then?

IVAN: Yeah. It went to the store. The old school house store. And

there's -- there was -- he had what they call a gristmill on the other side of the road over where those big oak trees are and he ground corn.

ALAN: Okay. But the part of Mt. Pleasant that runs past Olin's place and the first place you had -- that wasn't there then?

IVAN: No, no. It went down -- well, past the store, down past Mt. Pleasant Methodist Church, right straight on through, right on past Francis's.

ALAN: I can remember that.

IVAN: But the other road -- the road going straight through by Olin's -- there wasn't no road there.

ALAN: When did they put that in?

IVAN: It had to be when they built the airport when --

ALAN: It's been there all of my memory.

IVAN: Is that right? Yeah. It would have been -- let's see. I'm trying to think when I worked with Dad on that building. It had to be in the early forties, but I don't know what date. But -- yeah -- that went right down by the -- that what we know as the Coke-Cola Farm there past the Methodist church.

ALAN: How did it get that name?

IVAN: Yeah. The guy that owned it was some rich guy with Coke-Cola that owned it and it was quite a show place for its day. Big brick house.

And then as you get down past the church -- Methodist church -- and you go through kind of a little ravine. On the right-hand side was a convict camp that they had there. Then later it was the CCC Board Camp, but that -- they put that there when they were building Mt. Pleasant Road. And they had them convicts to do the heavy work. And on the other side of the road across from that later then was Keely Miller's store. That was the hangout later. You don't remember that one?

ALAN: Don't remember Keely Miller's store. Remember the name.

IVAN: So did Orath Miller's Blacksmith Shop.

ALAN: Orath Miller and Reon I remember, and that big junk pile beside Oris Miller's place.

IVAN: Right. Okay. Well, when the navy bought all that land, they pushed him out and put the road behind it.

ALAN: Where was Keely Miller's store?

IVAN: It would have been just -- let's see. You had -- well, you said you remember Reon's.

ALAN: I remember Reon's. Was it right there at that intersection?

IVAN: Yeah. Well, it was next -- probably just a few hundred yards on down east of Reon's. And then go on down past that. When you get down to what's the intersection now was Lewis Mercer's store -- bootleg joint. Our Uncle Abe -- at that time he wasn't -- he wasn't in the church at all. He wasn't a good Christian at all but -- and he worked for Lewis Mercer.

ALAN: Oh, really?

IVAN: He can tell you some tales about --

ALAN: I know Elsie Mercer -- Elsie -- I forget which one she was married to -- one of the brothers. Elsie Mercer sang in the choir at the Methodist church.

IVAN: She married Elmo. Elmo Mercer.

ALAN: She can tell some stories too.

IVAN: I bet. Yeah. Now she got it firsthand. Yeah. Yeah.

ALAN: Well, wasn't there a store down there? Melson's store?

IVAN: Yeah.

ALAN: Back up from Francis's?

IVAN: Where Carson lives.

ALAN: Okay. I thought there was another store that I remember when I was coming up, just a youngster, was back just this side of Francis's before they moved the road out into the swamp when there was still a road there. And it sat kind of in the middle of the field. Just a little dinky store.

IVAN: That would have probably been Lewis Mercer's store is the only one I know of would have been there. Of course, the road didn't make that jog. It went right straight through from the church right on past Francis's. And Francis built his house about the same time we built this one, so the airport would have already been there, I guess.

ALAN: Yeah. I remember when you bricked this one.

IVAN: Is that right?

ALAN: They were laying bricks.

IVAN: Harold and Abe. Yeah.

ALAN: I was only about six. Five or six years old.

IVAN: We lived in it a year with -- wrapped it up with tar paper. Lived in it a year like that and then put the bricks on it.

NEADY: So you were ahead of Ray Hobbs? How long did he live in a tar paper house? Wasn't it a long time?

IVAN: Yeah, he stretched his out a little.

ALAN: Didn't Milan Hochstetler have his tar-papered too for a long time before he bricked it?

IVAN: I don't remember. He built this house down here, but I don't remember that. A lot of people did that. Out in Ohio, they built a cellar and lived in that, but around here you'd drown if you had a cellar. So we did that. There wasn't no law against it at that time. Didn't have to have a permit or anything. Just built a house.

ALAN: I can still remember Milan and Martha living in that old converted bus.

IVAN: Yeah. Had a bus there.

ALAN: A city bus he converted. I was just real little. I remember we were back there visiting and I was with Mama and Martha was showing Mama a sewing machine she had. She got this for a song. And I was thinking, "And Martha went to the store and sang a song and got a sewing machine." I just couldn't imagine that. That Young. You don't know anything. You know.

IVAN: It's like Dad tells about the guy that up in Pennsylvania. He was just a kid. Well -- you know -- they were having dinner and wanted to know if he wanted any gravy. "Oh, my middle name is gravy." That was the strangest thing he'd ever heard. Named him gravy.

ALAN: What's the biggest change that you've seen in the community over your lifetime you think?

IVAN: Oh, good land. Well, I was born in 1923 and the machine age was just coming on good along about then. 1923. Well, give me a couple years -- to say 1928 or '30. And our first car that I remember was a 1928 Model A Ford. And then airplanes. You know. Airplanes. Whenever you see an airplane. I remember running from here over to Harold Clendenning's. He lived there where Kathy Silsley or where Judy lives now. That's where Harold Clendenning -- the Clendennings used to all live along in there. And I remember an airplane -- you know -- just a single-engine Cub or something came down. I don't know. I think he had a little trouble or something and he come down in a field somewhere on the airport. There was no airport there then. Man, that was the highlight of the day. Get that close to an airplane.

ALAN: They had more people stationed at the base during the war than they do now?

IVAN: Yeah. There was a bunch. Yeah. There was a bunch of barracks. And, yeah, they had quite a contingent of men and they kept airplanes there. They took off from there for practice and --

ALAN: Was there much interaction between the boys at the base and the folks in the community or --

IVAN: No. Not really.

NEADY: How about the girls in the neighborhood?

IVAN: Get Dorothy Wenger involved in that one. And there was -- Melvin. He interacted with them and he'd go down there. And Kuykendall was the chief down there. He was the head man. Yeah. Navy chief.

ALAN: I didn't know that.

IVAN: Melvin would go down there and watch TV. Melvin -- he's -- or they -- he'd go to sleep and they'd go to bed. In the morning sometime, Melvin would wake up and head on home I guess. Maybe in time for chores but --

ALAN: Is Homer about your age or younger?

IVAN: He's a little bit younger. Let's see. Johnny's just a little bit older and Homer is just a year or two -- maybe two years younger than I am. And Herbert's Harold's age. Would be almost ten years younger.

ALAN: I didn't realize you were that much older than Daddy. You were what? About five years older than Daddy?

IVAN: Yeah. Yeah. I can remember I was -- when he come back, he stayed at our place there for a year or two.

ALAN: Oh, really.

IVAN: Yeah. When they kind of boarded them all out.

ALAN: They were all over the place.

IVAN: Grandpa Roy couldn't -- wouldn't support them and I don't know if he was even around then. So they decided to put them out and Johnny stayed at our place. And I forget who stayed at Harold or Abe's place.

ALAN: I just know they lived all over the place for a while. Grandma was -- because -- how did they put it? Granddaddy was in Huntington living with somebody we just knew as That Old Bat. Quote Grandma. Well, that was the only name I ever heard her called by in the whole family. If anybody ever referred to her, it was That Old Bat.

IVAN: He was different. He -- I'm sure you didn't learn to know him.

ALAN: Yeah, I did. He was absolutely the most argumentative, dumbest man I ever met in my life.

IVAN: Exactly. Yes, sir. If you were on one side, he'd be on the other.

In later years -- first of all, I don't think he even owned a car for a long time -- but, anyway, he rode the railroad because he could ride that free. But he had a car in his later years, probably after he'd retired; and he'd drive. One thing is a story that I always remember. I wasn't there, but he drove up to Pennsylvania, to Lancaster, to Ephrata where Aunt -- some of the Sommers and those lived. And Clate Sommers -- would have been my Aunt Mary -- my Aunt Mary and Clate Sommers -- they were the same age as my parents and Leroy Keffer. But, anyway, they went up there and he always had that dog. And your dad puts in his book about the dog.

ALAN: Tootles.

IVAN: Goes in there and in his own way and throws the dog over on Clate Sommers' lap. He's sitting there. Well, you know Clate Sommers. Dogs probably were low priority to start with. Leroy Keffer wasn't any better. And -- oh, he says, "Here. Go to your Uncle Clate." Boom! Good night I reckon. "Don't call me an uncle to no dog." I'm sure there was a lot more said than that.

That always impressed me. I don't know why.

ALAN: It would make Mama mad every time he came to town. She'd get fired up. In fact, when he had that dog, he wouldn't come in the house. Mama didn't let dogs in the house. "If it's not good enough for my dog, it's not good enough for me." That was fine with her. He'd stay outside.

IVAN: He'd go to a filling station and get a drink. You know. His little kids -- your dad and his siblings standing around him. He wouldn't give them any. No. He was different. I'll tell you what.

ALAN: Quite a character.

Francis was telling us about -- oh, shoot -- Tim Wenger's brother-in-law. Was it Dan Brunk? No. Sam Brunk.

IVAN: Sam Brunk would have been his son-in-law.

ALAN: And he was appointed bishop here for a while?

IVAN: No. He wasn't a bishop, but he was a preacher. I don't know if he was kind of -- seemed like he was a preacher somewhere else and he --

ALAN: Yeah. That's what Francis said.

IVAN: George R. Brunk, Old Man George. Not the tent man, but his daddy. He was a -- man, he was a dictator I guess. You know. But, anyway -- but, anyhow, he tried to push him in here as preacher for our church. A lot of them apparently didn't take lightly to that. Anyhow, he finally moved back over to Denbigh. I think they say he come in here from South Boston or somewhere.

ALAN: That's what Francis said.

IVAN: Okay. But I know scared the daylights out of me.

ALAN: How so?

IVAN: He had epilepsy.

ALAN: Oh, really.

IVAN: Had epilepsy and he'd have them spells every now and then. Even when he was up there preaching. Or maybe he wasn't preaching. He was there, but he'd get just as rigid as a -- and two guys would get ahold -- one on his feet, the other one on his head -- and march on out of there in church, put him out in the anteroom and get him straight. And Molly, would have been his wife, and she had been Tim Wenger's daughter. Anyhow, she'd go out. But, man, that would scare a kid. Gracious. What's going on now?

ALAN: Were the Dickersons here?

IVAN: No.

ALAN: Is Doc the oldest of the Dickersons?

IVAN: I guess he is. Yeah. Yeah. He must be the oldest.

ALAN: He or one of the girls. Were they here when you were growing up?

IVAN: No, no. They come in probably after we were married.

ALAN: Oh, really?

IVAN: I would think. Yeah. They hadn't been here that long.

ALAN: That's right. Because they were from Ohio because Doc remembers Ohio. Canton, Ohio.

IVAN: Yeah, yeah.

ALAN: But the Lehman were all here? Jake Lehman?

IVAN: Ben Lehman.

ALAN: Ben Lehman was Jake's dad?

IVAN: Yeah. Ben Lehman -- and her name was --

ALAN: Was Arthur Lehman his brother?

IVAN: Yeah.

ALAN: He was married to Lulu?

IVAN: Lulu Lehman, which would have been another one of Tim Wenger's -- Tim Wenger had a whole mess of girls.

ALAN: That was Tim Wenger's daughter?

IVAN: Yeah. Uh-huh. Yeah. And like I said, he had enough to go around. I was trying to think. Lulu -- oh, Ernest Miller's wife, Etta, was one.

ALAN: I think I knew that, but I had forgot.

IVAN: And Merlin Miller's mother was one. Married Marvin. Then she died and he remarried.

ALAN: Oh, I know. Clayton Bergey. Titus was not Maude's son. Right?

IVAN: No, no. She would have been a stepmother. That's kind of a story with that. Because she's about fifteen years younger than Clayton Bergey. Maude. His second wife. And she'd been nearer Titus's age -- you know -- and the story goes that old Bro. Bergey, after his wife died, asked Titus, "What would you think if Maude lived here with us?" or something to that effect. Titus said, "You don't expect me to marry her, do you?" He said, "No. I'll take care of that." So the old man did have his points.

ALAN: She was the only daughter for E. R. Miller. Right?

IVAN: I believe -- let's see. He had Ernest and Marvin and Dwight and Clarence. Yeah. Maude would have been the only daughter. Yeah.

ALAN: And Clarence's wife came from Oregon?

IVAN: No. She come right up here. Her name was King. K-i-n-g. And lived right where Kiff lived in that little white house. Well, that was the -- of course, there was nothing at the corner there. And I can remember an old red barn that the Kings had there and he had a number of kids. Let's see. Carrie. But the Oregon part comes when two of Carrie's sisters moved to Oregon with the old man when their mother died, I think. Carrie never went out there. But the others stayed out there and I've seen them -- not now anymore, but Ada and Myra. They were Kings from here and they married Krups out there in Oregon.

I seen them when we go out visit Loren we'd see them too, but it's been quite a little while ago now because they died off.

ALAN: Now, Leona was a Miller. She is -- her dad was Roman? Roy?

IVAN: Merlin R.'s wife?

ALAN: Leona and Junie and Phil. Their dad was -- oh, Francis Miller. Okay. But they -- did they grow up here too?

IVAN: No. They moved in here when I was a teenager. And Phil -- he's about two years older than I am. When they come in here. And we'd run around together right much back in those days.

ALAN: Where did they come from?

IVAN: Indiana. But he homesteaded. Old Man Miller homesteaded out in Montana.

ALAN: Yeah. I've heard that. He's told me that story a couple times.

IVAN: You wouldn't have to be around him much, He'd told you. But then they moved back. I don't know how. They come here from Indiana.

ALAN: Was there anybody in the community that died during the flu epidemic of 1918?

IVAN: Not that I know of, but they could have. I don't know. What year was that? '18 you say? 1910 was basically when the church took off, when they built the church, so there wasn't too many here at that time to start with of the Mennonite people.

ALAN: When I was working in Suffolk, there was an old man out there. He used to come by the store a lot and he would have been -- I guess he was an early teenager in 1918 and he talked about driving the dead wagon through Suffolk. People would bring bodies out and put them in the wagon and take them off to the funeral home.

IVAN: Good land. That must have been pretty tight. This old grave -- I suppose there's some old graves here before the Mennonites had that cemetery. And I think some of those date back about that time. Fentresses mainly there, but there were some others there.

And I don't know if this is noteworthy, but of course used to -- Mennonites all -- you'd get together and dig the grave, then throw the dirt back in there when you're done with it. But I helped dig some of them and I know on a couple occasions we'd dig into an old grave.

ALAN: Oh, really.

IVAN: Of course, wasn't nothing there. But you'd get -- some of them old coffins had glass. Of course, that didn't deteriorate. Glass was there and the brass handles on the coffin. They didn't deteriorate. And you could see the outline of the -- because they didn't have no vaults. You could see the outline of the casket, black outline where it was. Of course, it was all filled in. And a few bones, but you'd be -- something that kind of amazed me. Hair. That don't deteriorate. Not like the rest of you. They say it keeps on growing a little bit after you're dead. I don't know. We just heard that the other day.

ALAN: What really happens is your skin recedes just a little bit and looks like it keeps growing.

IVAN: But they say -- what was the question? We were watching TV the other night. What three parts of your body keep growing? In other words, not necessarily after you're dead, but grow from childhood on. They never stop growing. What three body parts?

ALAN: Hair, fingernails. But I don't know what the third one would be.

IVAN: I think they said hair and ears.

ALAN: That's right.

IVAN: Your ears will get bigger. You can cover your ears up with hair. Ears and hair. What was the other one? Oh, nose. They said on TV the nose keeps growing.

ORPHA: And feet. Your ears, your nose and your feet.

IVAN: They didn't mention hair. I believe they did say it keeps on growing. But, yeah. I dug some graves down there that struck where the old grave was. Because when the Mennonites took it over, there wasn't any stones. It was old wooden stake or something. You know. And first thing, it's all gone.

ALAN: What did they do when they hit one? Just keep on going?

IVAN: Oh, yeah. It was very -- hardly visible. But if there was anything like glass and stuff, just put a little hole in the bottom and drop it down in there.

NEADY: Aren't you still the cemetery custodian?

IVAN: It's kind of a lifetime --

NEADY: It must be because I think you're the only one I've ever known.

IVAN: Well, Francis had it before I did. When he started doing all the traveling, he said -- I got it. It's kind of a thing they don't want to just turn it over every year to somebody else. You know. I've got the plat here and --

ALAN: How many more grave sites do they have up there?

IVAN: I don't know. I guess if you -- it's hard to tell how many it is, but there's -- of course, a lot of them are taken -- reserved. People will put their name in and reserve this one for me. If you want one, I'll put you down. I didn't have till -- I don't know -- not too long ago, a number of years ago, that I staked off a couple or just put them on paper.

And there where that -- right in the middle of the cemetery, there's a cedar tree. My Dad planted that cedar tree and now his grave is on one side of it and my mom's on the other. Yeah, yeah.

ALAN: Didn't plan it that way?

IVAN: I'm sure he didn't have that in mind when he put it there.

ALAN: Was he in charge of the cemetery before Francis had it?

IVAN: Not necessarily. No. I don't know if he -- I don't know. Back in those days, I don't know.

ALAN: Did he plant the other cedar tree? The one that was up by the church that they cut down years and years ago?

IVAN: Yeah. Francis says -- what did he get out of that? There was a hitching post. Tree kind of grewed around that old hitching post there. And seemed to me like he got the post or something. I don't know. Have to ask him. But, yeah. They -- I think my Dad planted that one. I'm not sure about that. I know he planted the other one (in the cemetery).

ALAN: There's four big trees -- I think there -- what kind of tree did Zacchias climb?

NEADY: Sycamore.

ALAN: Down at the Methodist church and you can still see -- they're almost completely covered up now, but you can still see the iron hitching post in those trees. Been there a long time.

IVAN: Oh, yeah.

ALAN: Were you around when Roy Miller's three children were killed in the fire?

IVAN: Uh-huh.

ALAN: What's the story there?

IVAN: Well, the kids were playing with matches. It was an old big, big barn there in the corner.

ALAN: Where was it?

IVAN: You know there's a white church -- colored church right there at the corner of Long Ridge and Land of Promise. Yeah. Okay. Now the church is on -- been on the west side of Long Ridge and this was just across the road on the east side of Long Ridge Road. And there was a big barn there and kids were out there playing with matches. Yeah. Boy, that was -- and it seemed to me like I think -- naturally, nobody wanted to -- I think a couple of those children were kind of like Maynard.

ALAN: And Martha?

IVAN: I believe.

ALAN: Were they the oldest children in the family? Were they older than Jean and Joe?

IVAN: I don't have any idea. I don't know. I don't know.

ALAN: Was Melinda a Troyer?

IVAN: Yeah, yeah. She's Edna's sister. Edna and Fannie.

ORPHA: And Mary Bergey?

IVAN: Oh, yeah. Mary. Yeah.

ALAN: Who's the oldest one there?

IVAN: Well, Melinda would have been the oldest.

ALAN: Oh, she is?

IVAN: Was.

ALAN: Oh, okay. Was.

IVAN: Well, all the rest of them are still living. It would be Edna, I guess. Yeah. Edna, then Fannie and Mary.

NEADY: Where's Lizzie?

IVAN: And Lizzie would have been --

ORPHA: Older than Edna.

IVAN: Older than Edna.

NEADY: Were you ever robbed on the route?

IVAN: No. Back in those days, nobody had much. Pretty safe out there. But as I got older, before I left there, it was starting to be -- you know -- kind of questionable. I know one guy -- he -- well, Reid Broadwater, somebody run him. He was running around and around the truck a time and how was it? Oh, Reid jumped in the truck and pulled down on the handle and shut the door on the guy's arm. That made him pretty mad. Anyhow, then Reid -- but the guy got in, pulled the door open and Reid went out the other side. And finally ended up on somebody's porch -- Reid trying to get their attention, but nobody come out. It was downtown there. And that was the only one while I was there.

ALAN: You worked at the bridge for the city, didn't you?

IVAN: That was after I left the dairy. Hey, I'm still collecting from the City of Chesapeake for that one. I worked there about seven years and I got a retirement. About \$200 a week -- I mean a month. Yeah.

ALAN: Worthwhile then.

IVAN: Tell me about it. I could hardly make it if I didn't have that. Steel bridge. That was the newest and nicest bridge they had. Yeah.

ALAN: Did you ever work the high-rise bridge?

IVAN: No. I never worked any other bridge. Vernon worked up here at (Centerville) Turnpike and he left there for Florida about the same time that I started at the steel bridge. That was a snap after beating that old concrete all them years, I tell you. And she thinks I ought to still be working there.

ORPHA: I said he could work until he's 100 years old. Got to thinking about this Social Security. If he quit, why he'd get almost as much there as he made from the bridge.

IVAN: After you work there five years, then you qualified for retirement and get paid for retirement. And with what they were paying me -- which wasn't a great lot -- and my Social Security, I made about the same amount by not going out there. Well, it was an easy job, but it wasn't that easy. I mean, after all.

ALAN: You did have to be there.

IVAN: Yeah. You're supposed to be there. Had an awful lot of time off. It was a good job.

ALAN: Where did Roberta come from?

IVAN: Harrisonburg.

ALAN: She was from Harrisonburg? Uncle Abe met her in Harrisonburg?

IVAN: No. He met her down here. A. D. Wenger was one of the first or maybe the second president of Eastern Mennonite School at that time. High school, then college. And he had this -- and he was a preacher here -- A. D. Wenger. And they had this vineyard. He would bring some of the kids from up there at Harrisonburg down here to work in the vineyard in the summertime between school and no school. And she come down. I understand that she came down with the Wengers. Now, I don't know any more details than that.

ALAN: That's usually all it takes is just being in close proximity.

IVAN: That's what I said. Was it our 50th Anniversary or one of them down

here at the church. I was supposed to say something. You know. Didn't know what else to say, but I said, "What are the chances of a kid down herein the south, right down here in the very southeast corner of Virginia, meeting up with some girl from Ohio by way of Harrisonburg?" I said, "It's like winning the lottery and I thought I had."

NEADY: How long have you all been married now?

IVAN: Sixty-two years. In January it was sixty-two. But we didn't meet in Harrisonburg. See, they lived -- I give the old man credit. He was a Mennonite and education wasn't a real great thing back in those days. But he moved from Ohio --

ORPHA: I think you told them that the other time.

IVAN: Did I? He moved down from Ohio to Harrisonburg.

That's something you'll do when you're older. You repeat yourself.

ALAN: What else should we put in there?

IVAN: I don't know. I think we've covered the bases. We got five -- four children living right on this Bedford Street. That's kind of a record for a family of all of them living right on the same street.

ALAN: All your grandchildren children are here except for Lorens.

IVAN: Except Loren's. Loren is out there in Oregon oldest boy's got his driver's license and so it makes him about seventeen now, I guess.

ORPHA: Uh-huh.

THE END