

Ken & Ruth Kurtz 2023 03 22

Alan: How did your folks get here, what was the reason for Sam Kurtz moving to the community?

Ken: Why he left Ohio, I do not know. But he came down to Newport News. He came down and he worked over at Oyster Point at a store over there for several years. Then he went back to Ohio. How long he was up there, I don't know if he was just up there. Anyway, the second time he went up there, he married his wife. Rebecca. And they moved back down to Oyster Point. Now, I don't know if they was courting her before and just went up there and got married and came back down. I really don't know that. And then he worked over there for a little while.

And then he wanted to get into farming. And so that's when they moved over here to get into where he was going to try his hand at farming.

Alan: Did they buy, originally buy this first farm where the home place is? Or do you know where they lived when they moved over?

Ken: No, I don't know exactly where they lived. And I don't have when they bought this place. I do have record when they bought the place back the road.

Alan: Who owned that when they bought it?

Ken: I think it was Clendenning.

Alan: Makes sense because they owned property on Carter Road.

Ken: Well, you know that road wasn't called Carter Road back then.

Alan: What was it called?

Ken: Blue Ridge.

Alan: (to Ruth) Do you know all this history too? Where are you from originally?

Ruth: Ohio. Wayne County, Wooster. Just north of Holmes County. I taught in Holmes County before I was down here.

Alan: These Kurtz men just love Ohio women.

Ruth: Yeah, actually Christie had one brother. And he and his family went to my church in Ohio.

Ruth: I don't know where the Kurtz's were really from.

Alan: Ohio, Pennsylvania then Ohio, Burnsville then before then.

Ken: Yeah, my great-grandfather moved out to Ohio, bought some land. I've got the deed. He bought some land there in Greene County. Not Greene County, Greene Township. It's outside of Orrville. He raised his family there, got part of his father's. His wife's father split the farm up between three people. He got the biggest part of the third of the land. And when he sold it, I guess it was before he died or after he died. He died up there. Her(Ruth's) grandpa bought the land.

Alan: Really? You start dealing with Mennonites and the connections between all of them is just incredible.

Ken: Yeah. (Looking at a folder of deeds & papers) There's one in here I don't understand where. This has got the Matthews.

I thought the Matthews only owned land up that way, but I don't know. So this might be this farm here. I don't know for sure. It's A.D. Wanger and A.A. Landis.

Alan: That makes sense because A.D. Wanger and A.A. Landis owned the land the church was on. Okay.

Alan: A.A. Landis was only here until about 1911 or so. But he was a builder and a land speculator all his life. Even after they moved from here to a Amelia (County, Va) and then back to Pennsylvania. So that makes sense that he and A.D. Wanger owned it because A.D. Wenger had a bunch of money. And this was in 1920. That makes sense.

Ken: And that was about the time that they moved over this way.

Alan: Was the house already there or did they build the house?

Ken: To my knowledge the house was there.

Alan: And it may be that Landis built that house because he built quite a few houses around here. He was a contractor. In fact, he had a farm but he rented it out. He didn't do any farming. Remember Deal's store?

Ken: Oh yeah.

Alan: He built that and the house next to it. So, if they moved here about 1920, if that was the time. Then it was Sam Kurtz and he had your dad...and what was his brother's name?

Ken: Irvin. There was actually four kids in the family but only two lived.

Alan: How did your dad meet your mother? I mean she's in Ohio and he's down here.

Ken: She came to this area... on visits. You know A.D. Wenger, he brought a lot of college kids in here to work his orchards and stuff during the summertime. She did not come down that way. And don't ask me how she got lined up but she actually took care of Governor Darden's kids in Richmond.

She was their, what do you call it?

Alan: Governess or nanny?

Ken: But she had moved. When she left home she moved to Pennsylvania, Allentown or Reading, Pennsylvania. And then her and her sister moved down to Harrisonburg, Virginia and she (sister) married a guy up there. But how she actually got in the community I don't know for the first time. But that's how they met.

One story she used to tell me was back then when these girls came around, the guys liked to take them out for oyster roast. But most of them didn't know what an oyster was. She made a comment that if you took a bite of it and held it behind your back then you could eat the rest of it. But she learned to like oysters. I don't know how she got here. She was with some friends, girlfriends, that came down here to visit. Who they were I don't know.

Alan: Wasn't she related to Dan Smucker somehow?

Ken: Yes. Smucker's lived here. And that could be a very good reason why she got down here.

Alan: I came across a picture in my mother's trove of photographs of your mother and Dan Smucker and somebody else.

Ken: They were first cousins.

Alan: My first thought was, well maybe they used to be courting or whatever. So I sent it to Jeanie Smucker to ask her, do you know anything about this? She said, yeah, they're cousins and they were good friends.

Ken: Yeah, that could very easily be a possibility.

Alan: Did Sam Kurtz go into dairy farming right away? Was that about the time the dairies were coming along? Or did he just crop farm before he got into cows?

Ken: No, I think he got into cows right away, but he was a little different than the rest of them here. He had a route, but he only sold cream. He used the skim milk to feed to the pigs. He had a route in Norfolk that he would take cream around and eggs and sausage and stuff like that. But his bottling plant, what he bottled was cream only.

Ruth: Did he do it on his farm there?

Ken: Yeah, right in that building there, right beside the house there, what we call the old wash house. That was the old milk house. And that's where everything was done.

Alan: I think most of the farmers had sold milk either at the market or like them had a route that they followed until the government came along and said, well, it's got to be pasteurized. Oops.

Ruth: I don't remember us doing that. I used to milk cows by hand. I hauled manure and shocked wheat and shocked oats.

Alan: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Ruth: Five brothers and one sister.

Ken: This a top to one of his bottles. And I played with those things when I was a kid and I wish I wouldn't have played and threw them away. Of course, I know Ernest Miller came up here and took a slew of them because he run out of lids for his milk bottles. And he took a slew of them. That's where most of them got to. But that was his thing.

Alan: When did they stop the route? Was that when pasteurization came in?

Ken: Nope. It probably got stopped in...I was born in 1943. Probably got stopped in the early 40s.

Alan: So he did it for quite a while then.

Ken: Yeah, he died in 1946. There was a little bit of family thing going on.

I'll tell you the whole story and you'll know it. Uncle Irvin was on the farm. Dad was working for T.J. Wenger delivering milk, from what I had heard from Grandma and Dad. Dad would never talk about it much. It was just, don't ask me no questions. I'm not going to talk.

I found out a lot of my stuff from other places. He wanted to come back on the farm because he didn't want to be drafted. And if you worked your own farm, if you was on the home farm, you wouldn't get drafted. He wanted to come back. Well, I guess it was a fight between him and Uncle Irvin that the farm wasn't big enough or something. Anyway, so he got drafted.

He served his time up here at Luray the whole two, three years. He was only at one place. And when we came back to the farm, I mean, when he came back, he got out in 1945.

Mom and I lived in Harrisonburg while he was at Luray.

Alan: What year were you born?

Ken: '43. Sam, Grandpa, died in '46. So I really don't have much, I mean, since I wasn't around and I was young too. But we found out later whether it was against grandpa's will or not, but Uncle Irvin went in and signed up with Birchard Dairy to sell the milk there. And he did a few other things. By the time Dad came back from service, he was ready to leave to go to Ohio. So he moved back to Ohio.

Alan: How come he wanted to go to Ohio?

Ken: Well, the stories that I heard...just so happened, Ray Hobbs was working for Uncle Irvin. And when he Ray left, and then he went to work for Dad when Dad took the farm over. He mentioned that one time.

I asked him, why did Uncle Irvin leave? And I asked him about if it was anything on the milk. He said, no, he didn't think there was. But the only thing that Uncle Irvin could talk about was how much more money the

farmers would make in Ohio than they make down here. Selling crops, yes. Because the market was always figured on the price at Chicago. It cost us more to ship the stuff to Chicago. So it was true.

He never realized that (at the) Virginia Milk Commission, we got \$4.00 a hundred more than the federal. So when he found that out, he had to come back and try to get some more money. But yeah, and I've heard from the other side of the family that they felt like they was pushed off the farm. To my knowledge, they wasn't.

Alan: Families and inheritances and money can be fraught with all kinds of problems. Every family, the people that I've talked to, T.J. Wenger's farm. Even to my generation, there are ill feelings toward T.J. Wenger because of the way he treated Roy and Powell.

Ken: They can do it, they can do it.

Alan: Now, your grandpa bought farms other than what he wound up with, right?

Ken: Yeah, I have heard, I can't prove it The farm across the road where Stutzman bought, that was bought off of grandpa, from what I understand.

Alan: Well, the story, and I was going to ask you about this, the story Harold Buckwalter tells is that your granddad owned that farm and sold it to Grandpa Buckwalter. And that Chester Hobbs and Naomi, who was Buckwalter's daughter, lived on the farm and made payments on it.

The deal was that once it was paid for, it would be their farm. But apparently Sam Kurtz didn't trust Chester by himself, so he had Grandpa Buckwalter actually on the deed, or involved in the deal somehow. And Chester was working at the Ford plant making good money, so there was no problem, until the Depression came along and he lost his job.

Well, now he couldn't make the payments. In fact, if it happened the way Harold tells it, it really raised your grandpa's standing in my esteem. Because if he couldn't make the payments, your grandpa could have just foreclosed or took the property back or whatever, that was it, you know.

But instead, what he did, because they had been making payments, he thought Hobbs and Buckwalter had some equity in it, he took the farm back, and for the equity he gave Grandpa Buckwalter three or four acres that had joined his property on that side of the farm, on Wenger Rd. And Grandpa Buckwalter gave Chester and Naomi that little piece of land where Sissy is now, because it was just a broom...a little shack where he made brooms. And Hobbs moved in there and fixed it up.

Then several years later, the Stutzmans came to town, and your granddad sold the farm to the Stutzmans for less than he had sold it to Buckwalter because the Depression was on. The land values weren't there. I haven't been to the courthouse yet to look up the deeds and so forth to see what the transfers were.

Ken: Well, when you do that, if you can make extra copies, I'd appreciate it. I will. Now, what you said, so is that the farm that the Stutzman's bought?

Alan: Yeah.

Ken: Well, it wouldn't be over here, would be across the road.

Alan: Right. Across the road, but when your grandpa took it back, to pay them back the equity, he gave Grandpa Buckwalter, I think it was 3 or 4 acres, from the backside of his farm.

Ken: So would be over on Wenger Rd. Where Richard (Kupart) lives?

Alan: Yep, because that was the Buckwalter home place.

Ken: So the farm could have went all the way over there at one time.

Alan: There was a little bit of frontage there. Most of it John Buckwalter had. Well, John Buckwalter and Abram Wenger had. But your granddad had a little bit of frontage, apparently, 150, 200 feet, whatever it was, it's between where Abe Buckwalter's house was and where Harold Buckwalter's house was, was your

granddad's property, and he gave it to him in compensation for what he felt was equity in this property over here, which was pretty big of him.

Ken: Well, I knew, like I said, of everything Dad went through, he just wouldn't talk much about it. But he did tell me that Grandpa owned that property across the street. And he did tell me that. And I don't know if I got anything in here kind of containing to that a little bit or not, but all this stuff is old. I'm sure glad, yeah.

Roach. We eventually bought the Roach farm, or Dad actually eventually bought the Roach farm.

Alan: Which is the Roach farm, where is that?

Ken: Well, that is back behind the Tenefoss farm, the old Tenefoss farm, the old Schloss farm. And I'm almost positive that the Schloss place used to be in the Roach place, but I can't prove that.

Because some of these deeds we talk about, like the deed on the place back there at the corner of Maxwell and Bedford. The deeds keep talking about Roach, and the Clendenning farm or the Schloss place never comes up in the records that I have. I probably don't have all the records, but anyway.

But it keeps talking about the farm that we bought back there borders the Roach place on the south side. So, either the Schloss place came off of that, or something, I'm not exactly sure what happened there. But Dad bought the rest of the Roach place probably back in the...I was a kid...probably in the late 50s.

Alan: And did that include all down Bedford Street up to the Tenefoss place and behind the Tenefoss place?

Ken: Yes, it was behind the Tenefoss place. It butted up against Abram Wenger's farm in the back. On the south, on the west side, it butted up against Abram Wenger's farm. And on the north side, or the south side, it butted up against Creekmore farm. And it went all the way down to Carter Road.

Alan: It's hard to get a grip on some of these things. I mean, I haven't, I've kind of waited to the end, so it'll be another few months before I get to the courthouse, where I want to look up all these old deeds, because you can search the deed by name and see who transferred to who and where was it, and see if I can at least get a better feel for some of this stuff. I mean, like one of the things was the Carter farm. Do you have any idea where the Carter farms were?

Ken: No.

Alan: That was who Carter Road was named after, but they lost them all, you know. Back in before the 1920s, they lost them all.

Ken: This area from my understanding, this was originally the Herring plantation.

Ken: Carroll Herring and Calvin Herring.

Ken: Yeah, and some of their graves are right down there at the corner (of our farm.)

Alan: Are they really? Because others are...there's a private graveyard near Centerville Baptist, and some of them (Herrings) are out there.

Ken: Yeah, Carroll's been here at least once, if not two, three times. He came in here, seeing that we were keeping it mowed, so then he decided he didn't need to come back no more.

Alan: How many graves are out there?

Ken: I think there's more than what's marked. There's about three or four marked. But to my recollection, there's more graves in there than that.

Alan: Yeah, we've got a graveyard in our backyard, but there are no markers there anymore. There were a couple of pieces of concrete that you couldn't read anything on, and they'd been broken up. Acey Swain...the

story I heard was that the graveyard was bigger, but every year it got smaller when Acey would just plow another row into it.

Ken: Well, that's basically what happens. I mean, down here, it was...well, we actually took a little bit of it. We moved a tombstone a little bit; probably instead of being at the head, it might have been at the feet, to get into some of our buildings, but outside of that, we haven't done anything. But there was a graveyard right across from Phillip's (Miller) house over there, and that finally disappeared altogether.

Alan: And no telling who's there. And sometimes there's nobody. Dave and Marvin Zook's father has a gravestone over here in our cemetery, but he's buried in Floyd, Virginia. But his first wife was already here, so they just cut the stone and put his name on it as a memorial, but he's got another stone with his second wife up in Floyd. I could not find...his name was on the stone but I couldn't find out where he was, but we've got a stone with his name on it. I found out yesterday why.

Ken: Well, one thing I found out about my grandpa in Ohio, they, they would bury...his wife died first, and she was buried out there Oak Grove. Oak Grove....

Ruth: Oak Grove Mennonite Church.

Ken: So I walked out there and looked at the tombstone one time, and her name was out there. I could never find a tombstone for my grandpa. So I went down, and we went down to the, what's that place called in Ohio that's got a...

Ruth: Oh, in Berlin there?

Ken: No, it's outside of Berlin.

Alan: Bunker Hill? The Amish Mennonite Historical thing?

Ken: Yeah, that thing. Well, I went in there one time, and they have ancestries in the back, and the man, it happened to be an Amish man in the back when I was in there, and he said, "oh yeah, he's, he's buried out there at Oak Grove too." So, he pulled up a picture of the tombstone, and they went in and done something to the tomb, from the tombstone, and then they took pictures of it. So under, down at the bottom, he says that he is actually buried here too, but they buried one on top of the other.

Ruth: We spent some time at Wooster after going through. Wooster is the county seat for Wayne County. We were there quite some time, one day especially.

Ken: Well, there was, there were two stories out there, one that he lived at one place, and for some reason, I didn't quite agree with that.

Alan: This is Sam Kurtz' father?

Ken: Yeah. And so anyway, I went down to the, to the county office down there, pulled up the deeds, and I showed the deeds to some of the people who didn't quite agree with me, and he just sat there and looked at it. They're trying to tell me it was at a different farm. Well, I think I know where the mix-up is, because the guy that owned the farm before, or not before, but later on, when they come in, came in knowing, they said the Kurtz's lived on Glenn Zimmerly's farm.

Well, see, his farm is up there, but the farm was originally, was not in the Zimmerly family until my grandpa sold it to her grandpa, and not many people know that up there. So when they talk about this, this other Zimmerly up there, they all think, well, that's the place.

Alan: But it's not. One of the first people around here was, oh shoot, this is a young man's game, because I can't remember, unless I've got it written down in front of me sometimes...the first bishop that was here, and preacher Wirt, J.D. Wirt. Do you know anything about him?

Ken: No, I do not.

Alan: Okay. You wouldn't have remembered for sure, because they left here in 1911.

Ken: Yeah, Brunk was over here. I don't know of anything.

Alan: Yeah, and he died in 1935. So, but some of his effects stayed, because he was married to A.D. Wenger's sister. And so between A.D. Wenger, and Timothy Wenger was a brother, and Abram Wenger, a nephew, they really had the community under control, because they were the deacons and the preachers and the bishops. And they were all very conservative, much more conservative than some of the other areas. And then they were succeeded by, or Brunk, by Eli Kramer, who was still Amish, really. He just put a Mennonite on his name.

Ken: Yeah, I remember him alright.

Alan: Whaddya remember about him?

Ken: Well, there was a couple things. He, you know, he was, he was pretty strict. Your dad and him had, they had some conversations.

Alan: Over a necktie.

Ken: Right.

Alan: I was old enough to remember that.

Ken: I guess the main thing that really stands out in my mind is that we had revival meetings over here one time, and he stood up and confessed that he was wrong, and asked the church for forgiveness. He did. Right over here at Mount Pleasant Church.

Alan: And that was Eli?

Ken: Yep, a bishop. His main thing was that he felt like God did not want him to be bishop, but he wanted to be bishop.

Alan: So, they didn't draw him by the lot?

Ken: It could have been. I don't know. Probably, most likely, they did everything by the lot back then.

Alan: Well, not really. They did a lot, but like Clayton Bergey was not by the lot. It was by an acclamation. Everybody kind of agreed, okay, he's the best person we had to be a preacher.

Ken: Yeah, but that, but yeah, that stands out in my mind.

Alan: Him making confession?

Ken: And he took me to Ohio one time to see my cousins up there. And we were there going down 460, and the train was going down beside 460 up there. He wanted to see how fast the train was going. I mean, that's the fastest I've ever traveled in my life.

He was on the conservative side. And the split over at Deep Creek was mainly because he took his people and left.

Alan: Between that and the Nike base, that put Deep Creek pretty much, eventually out of business. I spent the day with, or a good part of the day yesterday with Marvin Zook. And his memory of where people lived and what happened was, is incredible for as old as he is. So that was interesting.

Ken: See, all the Masts over there, that's the reason they had left and moved to Amelia, because the government came in there and took some of their land. And put those Nike sites on there. And see, they're, they're my cousins too.

Alan: Oh, really?

Ken: Yeah.

Ruth: And we're, yeah, almost his first cousins.

Alan: Okay, have you read the book that they put together, The Mast Family?

Ken: Probably not.

Alan: I came across it in Mama's stuff. It's from 2002 or 2003, I think. And basically, it's recollections and family stories. But interesting. I came across it in Mama's stuff, because the rest of the family could care less. So I got all of her pictures and all of her literature, going through it and copying in. And I got a hold of one of the Masts to ask, could I copy it and put it on the website. There are a lot of references, even though it's mainly about Deep Creek and Amelia, there's still a lot of references to Fentress and to Warwick County, Warwick River. Because they were there and they had connections with people there. And the Smuckers and the Masts. Virginia was related to them too, or rather, Norman was. Well, Virginia too, but she was a Smucker.

Ken: I don't know if they were related on the Mast side or not.

Alan: Maybe they were.

Ken: They were, okay.

Alan: They mentioned Norman.

Ken: Okay.

Alan: And I haven't made all the ties yet. But so far, of all the members of Mt Pleasant Mennonite are, somehow. What I'm putting together is really trying to do a little biography on every newcomer to the church. And I've been doing research for the last year and a half.

So far, I have not been able to find a single member of Mount Pleasant, who came from somewhere else in the Mennonite community...not somebody who was converted, but came from somewhere else, who is not related somehow to everybody else, without exception. The one that was the furthest was Junie Miller's family. They're related to the Hocstetlers from the original Hochstetlers, the Hostettler Massacre. One of the sisters is one of Junie's family's ancestors. You have to go back a bunch of generations, but somehow there is a relationship.

Ken: The house that you had on the pictures, the Francis Miller house, who, as far as I remember Francis Miller was Junie's dad who lived up in that house. Was there any other Francis?

Alan: No, he bought that. And I forget the name now, because I haven't done all the research on that. They moved from Kempsville over here and rented the house for a while and then bought it from the widow lady that owned it. There were Miller's here before they came but they weren't closely related.

Ken: I was thinking you showed that house and had, was he, did you put Francis E. Miller on that?

Alan: Francis B. Miller.

Ken: Francis B.

Alan: And John Miller, who's there now.

Ken: Yeah, okay. Probably read that wrong.

Alan: I could have had a typo. I go back and look sometimes and oh shucks... got to fix that.

Ken: Yeah, I've looked at, I haven't looked at everything, but I've looked at some of the stuff that you put on.

Alan: Now, if you looked at everything, your eyes would water. It just not, well, it's not really intended to be interesting. It's intended to be a resource for somebody who comes in the next generation and gets curious. They don't have to do some of this work all over again.

Ruth: He had lots and lots of pictures. We looked at pictures one time. He said, I'll look at the pictures.

Ken: Well, one time, one thing that was, one of the first people that moved in here, I don't know if it was Leslie Swartz or someone that came in after that put a something out on, I don't know if it was a budget or where, but they advertised this place as a good farming country.

Alan: A couple of them did. E.R. Miller did and J.D. Wert did. And when they got here, A.D. Wenger did. So, there were several of them. It was in the Budget and then in the Word ... There were three Mennonite newspapers at that time. Word of Truth, I think, was one of them. But yeah, they really played it up. This is a great place to be. And they didn't get a lot of movement here until 1908 to 1910. And that was primarily because there was a panic in 1907.

Farm prices went pot and there was a big impetus to, uh-oh, we got to go somewhere where we can make a living. And it's, you know, one of the things that's been interesting is to trace the relationships. Okay, so-and-so moved here. Why? Who did he know? He knew somebody. And eventually he found out, yeah, okay, he knew... A. A. Landis and the Buckwalters lived in the same town and were friends. A.A Landis was also friends with J.D. Wirt. I can't find out if he was friends with J.D. Wirt before he moved here or after they moved back. But after they moved back to Pennsylvania, there were several instances in the newspaper and in *The Budget* about so-and-so. They visited each other.

So there were connections and ties there. And he left about the same time J.D. Wirt did, along with several other people. And so you can see, okay, there was a faction there, you know. And so when they-it wasn't really a church split. It was, okay, if he's leaving, I'm leaving, type thing.

But it's been fascinating. And every now and then come across stories or things that people write, or you see something in the newspaper. Like Maggie Buckwalter. In the newspaper there when she was 16 years old, came home from work one day. Was working at a factory or something in Pennsylvania. There was nobody else home and she went inside and she found somebody in the house. And he hit her upside the head and knocked her out. And she came to. She was in her bed. And that's all it says about her, whether she was raped or not, who knows.

But they thought they knew who the guy was. But then I never could find any more about the story. And nobody in our generation had ever heard that story. Those are interesting to run across.

Nina says she remembers there was a...somebody drawn by the lot in the church down here. And it was a very sober occasion. Do you remember it? I can't think who it would be unless it was a deacon, because the preachers were.

Ken: What did she mean by sober?

Alan: It was very serious. And everything I read about the drawing of the lot, it is serious business. Because, you know, if you're chosen by the lot, then in the Mennonite tradition, you have no choice. You may not want to be a deacon. But if the lot falls on you, you're a deacon. And there's a story, that Mast you talked about was a preacher. And there was a story in his book. Just read it this morning. That when the lot fell on him, his wife just started bawling. Because she just...this is terrible. She's going to be a preacher's wife.

Ken: Must have been Harvey.

Alan: They didn't get paid, and they had to do all the work.

Ken: Yep. Well, he had a big enough family, he didn't have to work.

Alan: There were a few of them, that's for sure.

Alan: Do you remember when they still had a council meeting here?

Ken: Oh, yeah.

Alan: I think I they stopped it, I think, shortly after I joined the church because I don't remember going to one. Do you remember John Buckwalter at all?

Ken: No.

Alan: How about T.J. Wenger?

Ken: No.

Alan: Do you think the church over here is going in the right direction? Or the wrong direction? Or what could they do to improve? Or...

Ken: I basically feel they're going in the right direction. We joined a conservative conference, so is that a step backwards or a step forwards?

Alan: Well, when they started joining, Dale (Keffer) suggested that I read the history of the conservative conference. And I did. And it's kind of eye-opening.

The conservative conference is not really conservative much anymore.

Ken: Yeah, I know it's not.

Alan: It's changed, and it seems...and I've seen that in all the histories I've read...that when a church begins doing mission work, begins reaching out, it becomes more liberal almost automatically. And it comes from the people who have to deal every day with ordinary people who are not Mennonite or don't have a Mennonite background. And that seems what has happened in the conservative conference. That they became much more evangelical or much more concerned about missions and reaching out, then the insular...you know the Amish don't reach out...we'd just as soon you not come...it's not part of their ethos.

Ken: Yeah, I spent 12 years on the Virginia Mission Board, and I knew. I mean, you can hold your ground, but at the same time, you've got to make...you just can't hold on to everything, how everything was done in the past. And it does make...you have to move along. I know my grand...I had an aunt that was a missionary in Africa, and her main thing was over there was, you know, church used to be no divorce, no remarriage. That was a no-no. She said, over there, people come to know the Lord. They might be in their second, third, fourth marriage. What are you going to tell them to do, to go back to the first?

They got to leave their husband or wife to who they're with right now? No, I mean, it's- You need to move on from this spot and not go back.

No, I feel like, you know, I'm very much against homosexuality. And so, from that standpoint, I think if church made a...I wasn't really, not really happy about leaving Church USA because I kind of like to be in a thorn in the side. (laughter)

Alan: Somebody had to keep their feet to the fire. Might as well be you, huh?

Ken: Ruth and I both had experiences. We went to Church USA's convention one time.

Ruth: Yeah, we were delegates several years.

Ken: That's right. And a guy come to the table and sat down, and he had us, the leader had us going around the table, and the guy talked beside me. He talked about homosexuals and how they are... I don't remember all the comments he made.

But I was the next one to talk, and after I introduced myself, I said, the Bible that I read, I don't read the same thing you read in your Bible. And I really came down hard on him. And after they dismissed, the leader of the table, come up, do you know who you was talking to?

I said, no. He said, well, he's one of the main leaders in the homosexual group. I said, so be it. I told him how I felt about it.

Alan: With authority to back it up.

Ken: And I'll have to say that through the rest that happened on the first day, and we sat side by side the rest of this conference.

Alan: One of the things that I appreciated about being in the Methodist church for 30 years, it doesn't seem like it, was that there just seemed to be this ethos, even if it wasn't stated, that as long as we believe and agree that salvation is through Jesus Christ, and I've accepted that, we can disagree about everything else. It won't matter. We'll still be friends.

Of course, at that time, they weren't dealing with the homosexual question the way they are now, so.

Alan: What happened with Sam here, from your perspective? Shucks...Sam...preacher Sam.

Ruth: Sam Scaggs.

Ken: He, he was a good preacher. And he could really come across from the pulpit really good. He was not a pastor.

Alan: For instance, how do you mean?

Ruth: He was a preacher, but not a pastor.

Ken: He would, if you did not agree with everything, and there was quite a few instances that came up that if you disagreed with him, he kind of shunned you and would have nothing to do with you anymore. We had, we had one lady that he was at odds with.

Alan: Who was that?

Ken: It so happened to be, well, he had, he had a few. But this one was.

Ruth: Aunt Marilyn.

Ken: Yeah, Aunt Marilyn. And she, she came back and wanted to apologize and make things right. And he said, no, I ain't, I'm not going to talk to you. I have no business talking to you. That did not set too well. We had another guy right in the meeting, and it's, it happened to me.

Ruth: Well, you're on this, well, you're on the board.

Ken: But, you know, I can still see him walking down through the fellowship hall, holding his phone up there. I answered this phone every time it rings. I know it's not right because he didn't answer my phone calls. But he criticized the other guy because he criticized him that he would not try to call him and he wouldn't answer his phone. Well, that's, yeah, and that's true 'cause it happened to me. I know it's true. But no, I answer my phone.

And the other times, being on the mission board and stuff, I had to go to Sam and talk to him a little bit.

And Sam would not pick up his phone and call me. He always had Sharon call me. And, well, he wants to meet with you. When will it suit you? Well, then I'll have to see if it suits him. And it was just back and forth, been a whole lot easier. Sam came from a church where the preachers were pretty well in control.

Ruth: Oh, up there. Virginia.

Ken: One thing I would admire Sam for is when he was, when his daughters, or one of them at least, didn't do right. He was told up there that he had to do such and such with his daughter.

Alan: What church was this?

Ken: Cornerstone in Bridgewood. In Broadway.

Alan: Oh, I'm not familiar with anything he did up there.

Ken: Main thing, he was under Showalter. Showalter told him he had to put his kids out of the church or something because of something they did. And he wouldn't do it. He up and left. So, I admire Sam for that. But

then it looks like he learned his lesson when he came down here. Every church he's been to, he's not lasted. It's just because he's a good preacher and all that. But he just doesn't, didn't have the skills to be a pastor. It wasn't his gift.

Alan: Why do you think there was such a reaction and the church lost so many attendees when his contract wasn't renewed? We went from talking about expanding the church to glad we didn't.

Ken: There was a lot of people that left while he was here. More people left while he was here.

Alan: Oh, really?

Ken: Yes. Then, then left when he left. The main, the people that left were pretty well, uh, Judy Leder back here. She left because she felt like he was converted during Phil's time here and she felt like he was running somebody off from Mount Pleasant that was converted under my dad. That was her talk. Hmm.

Phillip and Martha was very good friends with, with Sam. Actually, their daughter Maria stayed at Sam's family, stayed in Sam's house when they went to, when she went to EMSH, the high school up there. So, they had good ties there.

Uh, what was the girl that used to lead singing, with the guitar and stuff?

Ruth: Oh, Ruth.

Alan: Ruth Kassburg.

Ken: Yeah. She had odds at Mount Pleasant before that, too. And she was good friends with Sam.

Alan: Wasn't one of her disagreements with Mount Pleasant that they just weren't charismatic enough? I mean, she was more of a... and probably wouldn't have been here...my impression was that if Sam hadn't been here she wouldn't have been here anyway.

Ken: Most likely, yes. And well, when, you know, Linda and Paul (Overholt) left for their kin folks and they felt like Sam got treated wrong. And why people like Paul Overholt, not Paul, but Paul Zook left, I don't know. I think they was pretty good friends of Sam because Sam would go use their swimming pool to baptize people.

So, I think it there were more people left before, while Sam was here, than left after.

Alan: I didn't realize that.

Ken: And it was, that was one of the reasons, I think one of the reasons this stuff kind of came to a head. Well, I guess one of the reasons, I'll take the blame for it. One of the reasons, our overseer at that time was Randy Koblenz and I was very good friends with Randy.

Alan: He was in a tough position.

Ken: I was not on church council at this time when this was happening. But, I knew he was very good friends with Sam too. And when Nina told me that... well, I guess I was on, I guess I was on the church, church council at that time...that he had put out a letter that they were pretty well pushing Nevin back and this other guy that was an ex preacher from Huntington, I can't think of his name. That's just old people stuff. I can't keep, keep people...

Alan: I know exactly what you mean Kenny.

Ken: He wanted him in there with him instead of Nevin. So, and he put out a letter that with the leadership council and the administration council, both approved this move.

Well, Nina confronted him because it was never brought up before the administration committee. And there were some words exchanged, pretty harsh. And I called Randy up and told him, I says, you know, you don't know what's going on over here.

I told him what I knew. And it was a fact because I was on the church council and I know it, I was on the, you know, administrative part of it. So, I knew it was not brought up too. And that's when it started hitting. Randy was given bad advice by the conference minister.

Alan: How so? What was he advised? What kind of bad advice?

Ken: The way he went about, the way they went about. Uh, people talking, people talking about Sam. They had meetings and he encouraged people to come and discuss it.

Ruth: Each people, one person at a time got in the front and talked.

Ken: And that should, that should never happen.

Alan: You're talking about this mass meeting they had over here? That was a disaster. That should have never have happened.

Ken: Yeah, absolutely right. I agree. And he, but he, that's the advice that he got from the conference pastor.

Alan: So that wasn't his idea?

Ken: No, wasn't his idea. And that, the church, the church pastor at that time, I never had much for him.

Alan: Who was it? I'm not familiar.

Ken: Clyde...uh...Clyde...

Alan: Did he ever preach over here?

Ken: Yeah, that tall guy. Last time he talked, well, he talked when we were talking about leaving, he came down and had a meeting. And I run into him a lot at conferences and stuff. Him and I was, the only time we got on a good page is when he was pushing some MDS stuff. Outside of that. Yeah.

Alan: I don't think I ever saw him.

Ken: But he came in there.

Ruth: He mean he was a preacher down here for a while?

Ken: No, he was a conference minister.

Ruth: Ohhhh, okay.

Ken: Clyde. I want to say Kraus. Kratz, Kratz.

Ruth: Oh wow.

Ken: And when he came, the last time he was down here, he came in here and he talked a little bit about it. He said, you know, the hurts and everything that went along with Sam being kind of being pushed out. He said, well, my home church, something like that happened 90 years ago and they still fighting over it. You know, it shouldn't have. And we have had a lot of disagreements at Mount Pleasant over the years. A lot of disagreements. Nothing has ever worked out like it did with Sam.

Alan: Yeah. Yeah, there's never been a split quite like that.

Ken: Yeah.

Alan: I say it wasn't really a split. It was just kind of a, over that period of a year or two, just a lot of people just fell away.

Ken: Another thing, I went to Sam at one time and asked him to talk to...Sam was over there in Albania. I mean, he's actually converted the first people over there and he has a lot of connections over there.

Alan: That's his gift.

Ken: And Linda had questioned...Linda Miller had questioned me on some of the work over there that the mission board was doing and I answered her the best that I could. Then she was wondering about what happened earlier.

I said, well, you ought to go talk to Sam because Sam was over there when it first started. She kind of hee-hawed around. So I went to Sam one day and I said, why don't you talk to Linda about some of the stuff over there in Albania and how it got started and everything because you know more details about it than I do. Sam's answer to me was, I can't talk to that lady. And that's where it stopped.

Alan: Yeah, there was some bad blood there. They came because she, after Laura, didn't she, she filled in for Laura (Wenger) as church secretary for a little while. They came to loggerheads and there was some bad blood.

Ruth: And they did a lot of good in Albania. Not here. but it makes me think, my first cousin Glen Zimmerly and his wife were in Albania for several years and they knew Sam. And I remember Glen telling me one time, yeah, he didn't really care for Martha because he didn't like that she was doing the teaching of women. She had a women's class he was teaching.

Ken: Yeah, some of this, I mean, they were over there working and so Sam would go over there and, well, see that was kind of under Cornerstone to begin with when it first started. It eventually left Cornerstone and came under the Virginia Mennonite Conference, or Virginia Mennonite Mission, but it was under Cornerstone to first start with. And, you know, he would go over there and Martha was, she was a leader.

Alan: And this is your cousin, Martha?

Ruth: Her husband, Glen Zimmerly, my first cousin.

Ken: And he would go over there and have meetings and he said, men only, no women. I mean, you're working with ladies over there along with men. And you want to work, talk things over with the people, the missionaries that are over there and you tell men can only attend, women can't attend?

Alan: Yeah, very frequently, especially if you're going to a new field, it's the women who come first.

Ken: Yeah.

Alan: And bring the men.

Ken: So that's, yeah, they kind of, Cousin Glen kind of had an issue with him because of that.

Alan: But it seems all Mennonite congregations, and Baptist, are the same thing, that you can't get three of them together without having two churches, you know. They're going to find a way to split from each other and sometimes over the most silly things. Just reading the histories of, because anytime I find a history of a conference, I get it and read it just to learn more about it. And the Franconia Conference split because they, in the first churches, they had the preacher's bench and there was no pulpit. To have a pulpit was considered raising the preacher above and the preacher is not above, the preacher is equal with the rest of us. Well, they built a new church in the Franconia Conference and they put a little pulpit in there. And the church split over that thing.

Alan: Were your folks Amish or were they Mennonite?

Ken: To my knowledge, they were not Amish. They were Mennonite.

Alan: From what I could discern from what little research I've done. Probably about half the folks here were, came out of the Amish church and half came out of the Mennonite church.

Ruth: Remember when we went down there to Berlin and went to that lady, that man, and I asked for the Bloughs and the Zimmerlys. He would not do the Zimmerlys because they were not Amish, but he would do the Bloughs.

Ken: Well, they were Amish and Mennonite, Amish background. I mean, if you went back far enough when they was in Pennsylvania, they was probably Amish there.

Ruth: Okay, yeah.

Ken: They could have been.

Ruth: Zimmerlys, he was a, was it John? My brother wrote books on history of all this stuff. He was very, very interested and did a lot of...he met with people. He went to Indiana, different places, would meet with others that are interested. He went to those meetings.

Ken: Yeah, he could very well have been an Amish background or that.

Ruth: Probably the Zimmerlys weren't because I think in his book, my memory, my great-great grandfather came over, was it? And they were in Switzerland. I don't think they were Amish.

Alan: The Amish were a gift to the Mennonites and still are because the Mennonites, from the very beginning seem to bleed members. I mean, they just lose members. So, you can have a family of 10 children and guarantee that on average, two of them will stay Mennonite and eight of them are not going to stay Mennonite, they're going to join some other church that fits their beliefs better. But the Amish have such huge families that their families bleed off into Mennonites and keep them going.

Ruth: I was thinking about a little bit off the subject, but I shouldn't do this. It's just a little interesting thing. You know, you talked about everybody that comes here knows somebody or something. I don't think I did, but yeah, there's two people. One I knew and I didn't know she was here. The other one was Betty Mast. She came to Texas and we were voluntary service sisters. That's how I got here. Betty said, Ruth, we need a teacher at our church, at our church, Mennonite church here, school. And I said, uh-uh, I'm staying in Texas.

Alan: What part of Texas were you in?

Ruth: We were in a town called Mathis. It was about an hour's drive from Corpus Christi. Betty was there for about a year as a voluntary service. She worked in a little building nursing as a nurse. Just a small building, it was called the hospital. But basically, way back earlier, the 1W guys would go down there and they built this building for women. The Mexican people that moved from Mexico to the United States, they built this building, they called it a hospital, for ladies to come and have their babies because they found out that when they went, when they found out that these babies were dying because at the home, the baby would be born and they'd pick up anything old to tell the (unintelligible). So the Mennonites went in, V.S., and they built this hospital. And then they got connected with the small hospital. So Betty went down there in V.S. as a nurse. She was one of my V.S. sisters. There were four of us, four of us girls that were V.S.ers when I was down there. And so she, I don't want to get too detailed. That's what I do.

Alan: No, no, go ahead.

Ruth: I talk too much. I talk too much. But I got there and I taught, I was the school teacher at kindergarten. The Mexicans came in and they didn't know any English. So, the Mennonite V.S. started as kindergarten for these children to teach them about the Lord and to teach them English so they could go to first grade and understand it. Because they didn't do that. But when they went to school, they had to go to a, they didn't have kindergarten at that time, I don't think. But they had to go to school an extra year to learn English before they could go to first grade. So, Mennonites came in and made a kindergarten, a voluntary service kindergarten and voluntary service people teach. That's what I was doing for two years.

Alan: Teaching?

Ruth: Yeah, I had 30 kids in the morning and about 10% of them knew English. I didn't know any Spanish.

Alan: Did you learn before you left?

Ruth: Muy bueno. Pretty much. Yeah, the pastor's wife taught us six o'clock. We got up at six o'clock Tuesday mornings and she gave us Spanish lessons from six to seven.

Alan: And so from her connection, you applied for the school here.

Ruth: I didn't apply.

Ken: She was begged.

Ruth: Because what I'm telling this story is because I had those two stories, I'll cut it short. I had those two years and I liked working in the mission station. It was in Mathis, Texas and I was going to a mission and I liked working with them and I was working with the youth and all that. So I wanted to stay. So, I took a class. I applied and the first year I taught in their public school then after two years of VS.

During the year, I had to take three hours to get my Texas certificate. So, I did that during my year. I did correspondence and then that next summer, I wrote to Goshen and said, hey...that's where I graduated. I need three more hours of history. They said, okay, well, we have the history of the Westward Movement that summer. I said, okay, I'll go. I'll take that. When I went there and Betty said, Ruth, we need a teacher in Virginia. I said, I'm going back because I'm going to have the same students that I had in kindergarten this next year and they already know me. And I look at them and say, no, they know. First day they'll know because all of them I had before. So that was going to be a wonderful year. I was really looking forward to it. Well, God just kept closing doors and when I went to Elkhart, not Elkhart, went to Heston for the national Mennonite, the annual meeting that they, like it's now, it's Mennonite Jewish Day, but called different then. I went there and I was looking for someone to get a ride from there to Goshen and I did find a ride with the nursing instructor.

I went with her from there to Goshen on a Sunday night and I said, okay, the next morning we got up and registered. And when I went to register, they said, oh, we've canceled that class. I said, I want to go back and teach in Texas. I don't want this. So they said, okay, you can read the book. You can read 1,000 pages and take a final exam.

I said, okay. So I sat in the dorm, sweating, sweltering for two days.

After that, I called. I said, okay, Betty, I'll give up. I'll go to Virginia. Called my pastor down there and Paul Conrad, he said, Louie, can we stay? I said, I know. That's very sad. Very sad.

So I came here and a girl named, that I knew in Texas, named Sarah Weaver, she brought me down here. She said I have cousins down there. Well, she's first cousins to the Wengers. About Charlotte Wenger. Charlotte's the first person I met here. And I said, if I didn't know Betty Mast, I think I'd turn around and run. Not because she was ugly, but I said, I don't think I would live in a community that's so plain.

Alan: Charlotte was a sweetheart.

Ruth: Yes she was. And Sarah, she was Sarah's first cousin. Sarah was first cousin to Herbert, all of those. And she's still living.

But anyways, so there's two people I knew, Betty Mast, and the other person I found out that after I had married Kenny, her name was Emma Coblentz. She was a student of mine at Holmesville, down in Holmes County, my first year of teaching. She's Mrs. Lester Miller, Emma. So I know those two people. I didn't know anybody else. No relative and nobody.

Alan: Some of the women that have moved to the community have indicated or felt like they were outsiders. Did you ever feel that way? Or not accepted because you weren't born here?

Ruth: He would ask that question. I still struggle with it. When I came, it was unusual. I think it was a rough year. Robert Slabaugh had taken, the first year I taught, he had taken the letters down off of the school, and he picked four letters and put them back up. It was S-H-I-T.

Alan: I don't remember that.

Ruth: Oh, I sure do. That was my first experience with that school up there. Yeah. And then I was telling the students, I came up here and after being down there teaching those Texas kids and V.S., they required us to go down to everybody's home and make it personal.

Alan: Right.

Ruth: You know, serving, I mean, winning them for the Lord, mission station. But I went to each home and...what am I saying? I get these senior moments or senior hours.

Alan: You had to deal with feeling like an outsider.

Ruth: Oh, yeah, well. Oh, you had a dear sister. She was really, really, really, really special. She was just a sweet, sweet Allie (Allene Kissy Keffer) . So sweet. For the first, maybe the second week or so, I'm sure you've heard about this. Should I stop talking, Kenny?

Alan: No, go ahead.

Ken: Go ahead.

Ruth: I had the children were writing spelling sentences. They had spelling words. And one of my things is, I said, you need to, every week of a certain day, they would write, one of their assignments was to write a sentence for each word. And I made it, it doesn't matter. I made it. It was in English and in spelling because I graded, if you made a capital letter and put the period or the question mark or whatever.

Almost everybody in that one class had to, when they had school, they said, I hate school. That was there, and I said, these kids know Jesus, their parents, they have beautiful homes, they get to, they know about Jesus, they go to church. And that's what they're saying, I hate Jesus, I hate school. I said, I had a boy in Texas that had actually lived with his grandma in a chicken house. Well, sweet little Allene, she said, she went home, she said, you know what, our teacher has a boy in Texas. And Susan Hobbs, it was probably six months or so after that, she said, you know, Ruth, a lot of people around here think you have a boy in Texas. I said, what?

Alan: No, I had not heard anything like that.

Ruth: I kind of felt like, you don't have to tell anybody this. I still wonder how many people think that's true. When we got married in, you're getting a long answer for your question.

When we got married in Ohio, yeah, Sissy, I think Sissy, Needy, Susan Hobbs, a lot of them were there.

Alan: Oh, really?

Ruth: Well, some of your family, they had, some of your sisters, they had some, I think a reunion in Holmes County with your cousins there.

Alan: Okay.

Ruth: And it was over the same time. And they came up, so I had all of them helping unwrap my presents. I know when we had our 50th anniversary a couple, a few years ago, Nina, she said, Ruth, were they to your wedding? I said, yeah, because they had pictures of them unwrapping presents. I told them that was why, yeah. But Nancy Hobbs and Ray, they were going to Illinois about that time. So they went through, when they went through, they went through and they came to our wedding. And she said, Ruth, is it true that you had a child? I said, no.

I didn't have any rest until I was Mrs. Kenny Kurtz. I feel like a lot of people believe all this stuff.

Alan: I've never heard that story.

Ruth: I never, yeah, and then, yeah. And Kenny's family is, you know, they weren't a big family here. And Olus, she shared with me about some things that had happened. People put rotten tomatoes in his grandpa's mailboxes. I don't want to tell too...

Alan: There did seem, from my dad, my dad was a storyteller. And so we grew up hearing tales of their youth. And it did seem to be the young folks picked on your grandfather. In some ways, the way my generation might have picked on Melvin Wenger and Phil Miller by toilet paper pranks.

Ruth: So going all that, I don't, I don't know what people think of me.

Alan: I think you're Kenny's wife and a rather wonderful person. No, Kenny's your husband, you're running things.

Ken: Yeah. No, it was, you know, like you said, a lot of, a lot of people were really, were really related in this area. And when you grew up, it, it was, it was a little... I mean, I didn't feel like I was shunned or anything like that, but yeah, it was... And if, you know, families get together, yes, they do.

You know, I can remember, and it, of course, that was more a Sunday school class. then families, but they, I remember going down to Francis Miller's place on Thanksgiving. That was kind of like a Sunday. I mean, yeah, it was a Sunday school class would meet down there Thanksgiving day. But, you know, I really didn't, outside of, you know, the Masts around here, I wasn't really related to anybody.

Ruth: Makes a big difference. See, I can't, we're very, very different. He didn't have any family, and then none of, none of his first cousins were here. I had all my first cousins in my church up there. All of us were farmers. Even my mother, on my mother's side, my mother had one sister, and she married Daddy's brother. So the two of us families, they had six kids, we had seven, and we were just like this. And then there were other two families, and we got together every Christmas and every Thanksgiving because we didn't have two sides. And he had just about the opposite. You know, my heart really goes out to him.

Ken: So what, what are some of the things you heard about my grandpa?

Alan: It just seemed to be kind of an attitude. Vernon and Ivan told, I heard, but I think, I guess it was Ivan that told the story, said that he and Vernon were going to get some eggs one night, go steal some eggs, to go, whatever they were going to do with the eggs. And so they came across the chicken house, and they said, Sam Kurtz came out and said, who's out there? He heard 'em.

Veron said, "just us chickens". Sam said, "okay", went on back in the house.

Now, whether that story ever happened, I don't know. But that's the only story I remember. But it just seemed to be that there was a kind of a mixture of respect and, well, the same reason we toilet papered Phil Miller's yard and Brother Wenger's yard is because they were authority figures.

Ruth: So why did they do it to our yard when Sheila died?

Ken: No, it wasn't done when she, yes, she died afterwards, but yes.

Ruth: No, not when she died. When she was born, that's right. She was born, and she died three days later. When did they do the toilet paper? It was when she was born.

Ken: Yeah.

Ruth: I never heard of such a thing.

Alan: It was a young people's tradition here that they just inherited from their older brothers and sisters and their parents.

Ruth: We've been some—where else was it? There was someplace else, not in Tidewater. We were someplace else and people were familiar with that.

Ken: Oh, it's done more often than what you think. Different places. Yeah, I remember one time we—this is—I'll say this. I remember one time my parents was gone. So, people came in the house and they rolled toilet paper all through the house.

Alan: In the house?

Ken: In the house.

Ruth: Really? You never—I don't—never ever heard you say that?

Ken: I told you this.

Ruth: Okay, could be.

Ken: So we knew who it was. We knew it was some Francis Millers. I don't know if the girls were involved with it or not, but Rodney was and some of the rest of them. So about four of us, we had been in town that night, come back with some toilet paper all through the house. So we started upstairs and rolled it all up and had the car backed up to the house and rolled it right into the trunk of the car and went down to Francis Millers and got out of the car. This was about one, two o'clock in the morning and we would put it out across the yard. Francis was standing inside watching us do it.

Alan: Yeah, that yard had toilet paper a little bit too. Another thing that some of the boys used to like to do, because he had a cellar door that was never locked, would sneak up and open the cellar door and throw firecrackers into the basement. They did my dad's yard once. Phillip (Miller) was in high school then, working for my dad. They only did it once because the next day, daddy made him clean it up and he went and said, don't do John's anymore.

Ken: But yeah, I've had people come to me and talked about it. I mean, Grandpa was supposed to be—he led singing a lot. He taught singing from when I was told.

Alan: He wrote in *The Budget*.

Ruth: Your Grandpa Kurtz?

Alan: Yeah.

Ken: I've heard, when he lived over in Newport News side. I've had people come and tell me that, you know, he couldn't pronounce all his words right. And three, pronouncing three, he would say "shree". So he would, sometimes he would get up. I don't know what song this was, but in one of their songbooks, "we're going to be singing shree, shree, shree today." But, you know, everybody I've talked to tells me how good he was at leading singing and knowing the music. And I understand he taught classes over there and over here.

Alan: Yeah, I think there's some mention of that in *The Budget*. And he wrote in *The Budget* for years. One of the things, a part of this research thing, I called *The Budget* first and said, could I, where can I find old *Budget* things? And they said, call the museum. They handled it.

So I went over. In fact, I made a trip up. We spent a day copying. And it was just impossible. I mean, I got maybe six months worth done. And you're talking from 1895 to the present. So Daryl Miller is the director up there. And so I talked to him and he said, well, we'll do it for you for \$10 an hour, whatever it was. I said, great. Anything that's got Fentress or Mount Pleasant or Kempsville or Newport News or whatever. And so there are thousands on that website. There are thousands of *Budget* articles.

And they're divided by year and they're searchable. So I use it. Like if I'm even now doing some research, I work on it and say, okay, 1956, so-and-so died.

Ken: Well, I had one of my, well, one of Uncle Irvin's kids called me or just asked me within this past year, maybe three, four months ago, what Grandpa died of. She said that their mom says he had cancer. Well, I hadn't read your article a month before that.

I said, well, I don't know what he died of. But I said, if you check your *Budget*, I heard he had a stroke and he wasn't doing too good. That came from what you put on Facebook.

Alan: Yeah, and that was from *The Budget*.

Ruth: Yeah, I saw that. You've been there to *The Budget*?

Alan: Actually, Miller, the founder of the budget is my great uncle. Great great uncle.

Ruth: I often wondered who y'all related to and where they lived.

Alan: Everybody.

Ruth: I said, maybe I even taught because when I taught in Homesville, the half of my students were buggy Amish. About 50 percent. They were in a public school. Yeah, Emma and I were talking.

Alan: What do you think of the school up here? What do you think of the school now?

Ruth: It's exciting to me. I mean, I didn't...

Alan: How many students did they have when you were there?

Ruth: My guess would be... They were all just Mt Pleasant kids. My guess...

Alan: Still the three rooms?

Ruth: It was... Yeah, three rooms. I had one, two, three, and four. When I first came here, Lenore had the fifth and sixth. I think they shared some, but Brother Wenger had the big room. But it was just those two and me. Yeah, it was interesting. I didn't have... I shouldn't go there.

Alan: No, go ahead.

Ruth: Linda, what's her name? Not Linda. Grace. Grace (Wenger) taught before me. And she had some problems. But she didn't have anything, so she bought her own duplicator, so she could duplicate papers. When I came, there wasn't any duplicator here. There was nothing but blackboard. Nothing else.

Alan: Oh, that's how they did it. Wrote the test on the blackboard.

Ruth: I taught, yeah. All that, put all the new words on the blackboard. After a while, I started...I started finding my own ways of doing things. And I had first... I had Allene, and I had Lynn. Eric. (Keffers)

Alan: How many years did you teach up there?

Ruth: I taught there one, two, three, before we were married. Because the first year... First year, I lived with...I was going to say, I was thinking a lot. I'm getting into two subjects. One, two, three. And then when I went back, Becky was a freshman. Was there two or three years? Five or six.

Alan: Who did you stay with on your first year?

Ruth: First year, I stayed with Harold and Twyla (Buckwalter). And I was thinking, we were talking a lot about the Kurtz's. I said, I was on both sides. Because when I was here, I lived with Harold and Twyla, and I was in the middle of... I was in the Miller of it all. Yeah, I remember Ivan told Harold, he says, you know, you're going to know everything about it.

I said, well, she doesn't tell us anything. I never, I didn't. I never tell them experiences about each other, children or anything. But yeah, I lived there, and it was interesting. Very interesting. Interesting. Your uncle. Yeah.

Alan: Which uncle?

Ruth: Freddy. Lived across there, and I think they came. I love Harold and Twyla. I don't think people were out of the lane yet before. I heard about how they felt all about that day. And then when I talk about being different, the second year...first year I lived there...the second year, I lived with Herbert and Laura for about two weeks or so. Because they were getting... Edna Miller's mother, that she had died...they were getting that little house ready for me to live there.

But it wasn't ready yet. So, I lived with Harold, with Herbert and Laura for a while, two or three weeks. And Donna had just been born.

Alan: What did you think of Francis?

Ruth: Brent?

Alan: Francis Miller.

Ruth: Francis. Probably what I felt about him is what I heard from others more than... He was...I admired him in some ways, I really did. I didn't really know him much. I lived right beside him. I lived this close. But I never, I don't think I ever talked to him when we lived over there.

I lived with Lowell Wenger's wife, Janet. She was on the Book Mobile. And they would come to our school, the book people would come to our school. And Janet, I learned to know her. We just hit it off. And she started to date Lowell then, the second year. So when I lived in that little house, the school board found me that little house to live in for my place to stay. And Janet moved in with me. So, we were roommates in that little house.

Alan: Oh my goodness, that was cramped. Place wasn't that big.

Ruth: My second year here. That place wasn't very big. And that's when we were dating. Totally in love. And then, the other thing is when I married Kenny, I had someone say that, I said, we probably won't be friends with anyone. Well, no, probably not. And I'm not telling you who that was. Huh, that is very interesting.

Alan: Had they already built the school up here when you started?

Ruth: No, it was just three rooms.

Ken: Yeah, the school was... The first year that I went to school was the first full year that they met up here. They had moved the year before. They went to school down there (the original school at Carter Rd & Lockheed Ave)for until Christmas, and then they moved up there in January and finished that year out. My mom was... they bought a...when they went up there, they figured they... I don't know why all the kids would walk to school or get to school down here. But when they moved up there, they felt like they had to have a school bus. So, they bought a school bus and... and mom drove for the first for the first half a year and then Virginia Mast took it over 'cause they felt like she needed money. And she consented to drive.

At first, she was asked to drive, from my understanding. Dad was on the school board when this happened. And my understanding, she was asked to drive because different people were doing things to help her have money coming in. But she didn't want to drive. But then after the second... First full year, then she took the bus. So yeah, I rode the bus a lot when mom was driving it. But when I went to school, she wasn't driving.

Alan: Did the first... did the first bus have seats configured the way buses do now, or was there a road down the middle? Somehow, I never rode the first bus. They had a brand new bus when I started. But somebody told me or somehow got in my mind that the seats were parallel to the bus instead of...

Ken: I can't... I can't... I don't remember.

Alan: I remember seeing the old bus. But then they got a new bus when I started.

Ruth: If that thing rings again, I'll turn it off.

Alan: So you're excited by what the school's doing.

Ruth: Yeah.

Alan: I think it's one of the few things the church has done extremely well.

Ruth: I went... I went back to teach again. Well, for a few days. I shouldn't.

Alan: Why? What happened?

Ruth: We were going to have...Well, the first time, it was just a short time. We had... We had had Sheila and she passed away and then we had three girls. Then I was pregnant again and I was over 40. I was 40 when Becky was born. So, the doctor felt like I was not health-wise. I've already had four C-sections. They didn't want me to have any more because they told me I had to do that. I have to have a C-section if I have children.

So anyways, the doctor said, we really recommend that you get rid of the baby, abortion. So, we finally agreed to it and I was going to go. They had some man that was teaching that year. This was in the beginning of school. It was in September. And anyways, I was...I got a phone call from Brother Phil. He said, Ruth this man has been teaching. He said, he just can't handle this. Can't handle this (unintelligible) room. Grades, all these grades. He just can't do it and we're looking for somebody and they need tomorrow morning. I said, well, I just scheduled something else. So it was Sunday afternoon.

I went down to Kenny and I went down. He was milking the cows. I said, Ken, if y'all had called me about, could I please come teach tomorrow morning? And that's when I was supposed to have my abortion. And he said, I look at Becky and I wonder if we're doing the right thing. And so I came back home.

I said, okay, Brother Phil, I'll teach tomorrow morning. We were having revival meetings. But I went up to school to study for the next day to teach. And the next morning, I called the doctor and said, I'm not going to go through with it. I'm not going to do it. And a week later, I was at Herbert and Laura's and I started with the miscarriage. We were heading down there, we had that good cheer committee and I was having a meeting. And so, and then the Lord took care of it that way.

Alan: That's an amazing story.

Ruth: So we have two in heaven. Three here and two in heaven. But then my Becky was a sophomore, Kathy called me and asked me if, have you'd like to come back to teach? They need a teacher. So I did. I went back and I taught with Mary Ellen. Then I taught with Bev Belcher. And I just will say this, she was a very difficult person to teach with.

Alan: Who?

Ruth: Beverly Belcher.

Alan: I don't know her.

Ruth: She was, she did a lot of things that she should not have done. Not a lot, but she did things that she should not have done for me. I can tell you one. First thing when I learned to know her, we met, we assigned, we agreed on a night to go to the school and pick up our room. Well, I went there and she didn't show up. And so I waited for 45 minutes. I went home. She and her husband and her boys went there one day and fixed the room all up the way she wanted it. That was typical of things.

But to make a long story short, she got away with a lot of things. She did a lot of things that were not that good, including calling Kathy. And Kathy scolded me. Well, I bothered her because she would use things and put them where she wants. She, when I would have recess, I would come to school and go outside. My day started when the kids were done eating.

She had them in the morning. But she had special permission from Kathy, she said, because she could grade her papers in the morning because her husband was being sued. Oh, it's very interesting. Her husband was being sued by New York City because he created some kind of pipes and I don't know what all. But he couldn't really work. So she had to work. But she also had to do this so she could do that. So she had the kids watch a movie and eat candy every morning. Well, they were really kind of really hyper by the time I got there. But I get there and I went back in the room and the kids all were saying, what are you doing to me? Well, she moved us. Our seats were all changed when I went there. I don't know where anybody was. Anyways, different things. She did some interesting things.

Alan: Was Carol, were you there while Carol was there?

Ruth: No. No, Kathy. Kathy. I will just say this. Because I went to see Kathy about teaching the next year and she said, the board, we decided not to offer you. And I asked her kind of why; we didn't get along with Bev. I had other teachers. Others said, what is it like to teach with her? Well, I had been told by Kathy, you don't talk to anybody about Bev because you hurt her feelings. It was a hard, hard year, needless to say.

Alan: I can imagine.

Ruth: So it was hard when I found out that they weren't doing that. And a year and a half later, when I met Kathy up here in a grocery store, we talked for 45 minutes to an hour and she assured me how manipulative that teacher was. So, I don't know why I told you that.

Alan: Do you think that they'll ever get to full high school?

Ruth: I wouldn't be surprised. I tell you what, I went in there, I went in, Christina and Debbie, they gave me a tour. I said, I've never really seen it. And I was talking to Debbie, she says, why don't you come up sometime and we'll give you a tour. We went up there and Christina was there and they take me all through that place. And I believe the quality of the building was at least as good or better than Greenbrier Christian where my kids went after they left up here. I think some people would be really, really shocked if they looked in the books. I'm not saying this is bad. I've had enough experience for myself.

I'm talking about people who've served in the military. There's a teacher or so that actually served in the military. Several of them have their husbands in the military. When I looked at that little pamphlet, I said, oh my, I wonder how many people know how many people, how many teachers we have that are active. Either them or their spouses are active in the military.

Alan: A better question would be how many would care.

Ruth: That's interesting, yeah.

Alan: I don't think anybody would care. I mean, there is something about if you live in a community, you become familiar with the community. And while other Mennonite communities are very much anti-military, this one isn't.

Ruth: Well, I remember how Kenny would share that. I don't know if that's the right words, but people in Harrisonburg found out.

Ken: Ah, you don't want to get into that.

Alan: You know what, get into that. I'm familiar with it. I mean, I've talked to people in Harrisonburg. I just know there is a difference in the view of the military in this community than there is in other Mennonite congregations who don't have that day-to-day contact with individuals.

Ken: I think it made the school getting as big as it is. It has really helped the school out. It's not just Mennonite kids like it was when we went there. And, yes, I would like to see it, you know, they got a little, I guess they got a basketball team going now.

Ruth: I would love to go to a game, to be honest with you, but sometimes I sort of stay away because, yeah, wouldn't it be fun to go to a game?

Alan: Well, they made, I mean, she's retiring in a year or two.

Ruth: The lady that does that?

Alan: No, the.... shucks.

Ken: Walker?

Alan: Walker, right.

Ruth: Oh, Wendy.

Alan: Wendy. And I think she's done a good job there, but she is very adamant. She does not, she said, you need somebody else if you're going to make it a high school besides me. I'm not the person to do that.

Ken: Well, I think it does the kids good if they have a sports program.

Alan: Yeah, I do too.

Ken: I mean, that's, our kids went to Greenbrier and that was one of the main reasons. Well, they had little problems up here at the school too, but.

Ruth: Yeah, they were Kurtz's too.

Ken: But anyway, but I feel like that does a lot for their life later on and, yeah, I would like to see them go. I mean, it go up all to the high school level. Yes, you can't offer the same thing that the public schools offer, but yet.

Alan: You can offer some things that public schools can't offer.

Ken: Yeah.

Ruth: Because like when we talk about Christian, when I did that tour after we were finished, we were standing around there talking a little bit and there's some people went by that they've talked about and then about how it was growing and they said, well, just between themselves, Christina and yeah, and Debbie, they were talking about this one mother. They didn't know about coming next year, but I guess they will. But she says, if we come up, I have to listen to this God stuff.

Alan: I said, uh-huh, you will.

Ruth: This is a mission field.

Alan: Yeah.

Ruth: And wow, the people come here because it's cheaper.

Ken: You think that COVID had anything to really work with this, bringing as many people there?

Alan: I don't think it's as much COVID as it was the condition or the discussions that are going on in the public schools. And the fact that where they're located, if this school was located in South Norfolk, it wouldn't work. But because where it is, it's got a high income demographic. The people who live around it make money and they've got children and they can afford to take care of their children. It makes a big difference, you know?

Ken: Well, you know, you look at the school over there at Warwick, it's pretty much shut the doors now, but that community has changed to a lower class community. And...

Alan: In fact, it's ironic. There was a time that Newport News had the money and that was a classy place to be and we were still in the country and now it's changed.

Ruth: But do you feel like Mount Pleasant is gonna get back to 100, 150? Do you feel like they'll eventually get attendance like that?

Ken: The church.

Alan: Oh, yes, I do. Yeah, yeah, because churches do go through...When I was at Mount Pleasant Methodist, it's gone through cycles like that before and they talked about Mrs. Heath and Mrs. Mercer at one point were the only two attendees and the Methodists were talking about closing the church down because there was nobody there. That's what's been years and years ago. But then it grew up and when I was there, Tom Mercer was there and there was a group of young adults who were all dynamic believers and the church, you know, was full, very full.

And then after Tom left and a couple other preachers went in, some were not so good, one of them got in trouble with the women because his wife was a lesbian who had her girlfriend living with him in the parsonage. I mean, this is the kind of stuff that kills a church. And it went down. Now it's coming back again.

Ruth: Is it? I was wondering, yeah.

Alan: And I think this Mennonite church will too. I just do. I have no basis for that because churches do fail. I mean, look at Deep Creek. It failed because everybody left.

Ruth: We were going there.

Alan: Really?

Ruth: We went over there for 15 years. Oh, I didn't know that.

Ken: Yeah, they asked for help. When we first got married, you know, we haven't attended Mount Pleasant.

Ruth: Yeah.

Ken: All that, you know, in our early years, our first how many years was we at Norview work helping out in Norview?

Ruth: When Sheila was born, so it was soon after, right soon after we were married. So I had lived with Harold and Twile for a while and they asked us to come over there. So we were over there, I don't know how many years.

Ken: Yeah, I didn't know it was...

Ruth: I started a voluntary, voluntary service VS center over there teaching kids.

Ken: Oh, really?

Alan: I didn't know that.

Ruth: At the Norview church.

Ken: But the preacher that came in after they thought it'd be best to bring a black preacher in there, that was a mistake.

Alan: Why, what happened?

Ken: It went down from that. The preacher pretty well said there's too many whites around here. You got the whites got to get out of here before the church will grow.

Ruth: I think the last two whites were my sister Martha and Bayard.

Ken: And so a lot of us left, but he cut the VS. I mean, the VS program. We started the VS program, kindergarten, to get people from the community to come in. It was free. And we had quite a few people coming in there, but no, he, that was, he had nothing to do with the VS. They had to close it up. So after two years, or was it three, we closed it up. And its church, never been a church after that.

Alan: Who owns it now? Is it still a church or...?

Ken: The church building is there. To my knowledge, nobody meets there.
Who owns it?

Well, that's...he wanted the mission. We actually gave, there wasn't any money involved with it, but we actually, Norfolk Council, Norfolk District owned the church at one... owned the church building and land at one time. I don't know if Norfolk District was the one that conveyed the church over to, to, well, what's his name, the preacher's name?

But he wanted the church in, in, in the...to be owned by the people that attended Norview at that time. So, they had him and his wife and trust, two trustees was on the deed. I'm not exactly sure where the deed trusts, who it came from to go there. But I do know, I remember when we built, when Norfolk District built the church over there and started it. I did a lot, I did some work over there. So yeah, he owned it. I know later on

when I was on the mission board, we questioned him and Harold being, Harold Bergey being pastor of Mount Pleasant, of getting the church back into the district's name.

But I don't, or back under the Norfolk District, but I don't think it ever happened. Matter of fact, I know it didn't happen.

Alan: I didn't realize you were, because one of the things I want to do is when I get to the mission segment is on Norview and I didn't, every, and so I need to come back and talk to you again, just on Norview sometime. I didn't realize you were, in fact, I was scratching my head. Who do I find out about Norview? They're all dead.

Ken: Not quite. James Mast ain't dead yet, but he may not be. You won't remember. Harold Bergey, I mean Harold Buckwalter.

Alan: He can't remember.

Ken: He can't remember?

Alan: Harold has got a set of stories he tells, and it doesn't matter what question you ask, you'll get back to those stories. I've talked to him two or three times. Well, I carry him lunch every now and then.

Ruth: Which, who is this?

Alan: Harold Buckwalter.

Ken: Oh, yeah, he was the preacher. Yeah, I don't, you know, I know, I know quite a bit what took place over there, but I don't know everything. I was young at that time, when they started it.

Ruth: You were the Bible school superintendent one year, I remember that. I never thought my farmer husband was going to end up being a Bible school superintendent.

Ken: That wouldn't happen over here. Yeah, we attended Deep Creek for quite a while. As a matter of fact, yeah, my dad was, we had kind of quit going to Deep Creek when my dad was...when my dad's health was...somebody had to stay him doing church service. So, we started attending Mount Pleasant, then again, Ruth would stay there doing Sunday school or church, whichever, and I'd be there at the other half. So, we, and the first Sunday we went, after the first Sunday after, well, after dad died, the first Sunday that we went back to Deep Creek, Robert Mast stood up there and said we were closing Deep Creek. That's the first time I knew anything about it.

Ruth: We had been over there about 15 years, I think. Do you think right? I think so. At Norview, I don't know we were there many years at Northview.

Ken: I think it was a mistake to close it.

Ruth: You talk about which one?

Ken: Deep Creek. Deep Creek.

Ruth: Yeah.

Ken: I think it was a mistake to close it, but it, you couldn't get a pastor.

Alan: Who owns it now? The Black Church in Newport News as part of the Virginia Conference?

Ken: There's where the deed went to. I don't think that, as far as I know, they still own it. But, I don't think they have a...somebody else is in there now that's not connected with them. At least that's my understanding. The pastor that Calvary had in there had to go back to Africa, because his lawyer didn't keep up with his paperwork. And he had his visa or whatever he had run out, he had to go back to Africa. Then I heard there was somebody else in there, but I don't think it's connected with Calvary anymore.

Ruth: We went over there one time, didn't we, for church service? Remember that?

Ken: Well, a couple times.

Ruth: A couple times, okay.

Ken: Yeah, it was, after they closed it down, they had a couple of us. David Zook was one and myself was the other. I don't know if there was a third person or not anymore. That they had.

Ruth: Oh, yeah.

Ken: Norfolk District had asked us to be the trustees over there, as long as they owned the building. And they had, it was actually a pastor that was down here at the Methodist Church. You know him?

Alan: Yeah.

Ruth: He went over to that church and preached a lot.

Ken: What was his reason for leaving down there?

Alan: He was fairly conservative and charismatic. He wasn't really a Methodist.

And he was also, he was there when we were, when I was working in Richmond, and we had moved to Richmond for a year. And then Linda, yeah, I was working in Richmond for six years. But after a year, she wanted to be back home. So we said, okay, I'll continue to work in Richmond. I'll commute, come home on weekends, maybe one night during the week. So she started going back to the Methodist Church down there.

And she had been Sunday school superintendent before we left. And so she was very quickly put back in Sunday school superintendent again. And there was a disagreement between her and the preacher. And I don't remember what it was about. It was about some theological question. And she was right and he was wrong. I think, I mean, I think her view, her viewpoint of what the Bible said on whatever this question was, was correct. Well, he removed her Sunday school superintendent because she would not agree with his position. He not only did that, he kicked her out of the church, which is not allowed.

So, and he took about half the church with him because the Methodists were going to replace him and went over and rented Deep Creek Church. Later when I came back and was here on Sundays then, well, I was here Sundays anyway, but when you're gone all week long, it just, we didn't get to church very much. But then we went to, when Tom came back to town, he was at Hickory. So we went to Hickory and joined there. And because I was still Methodist, they could just transfer my letter. And they were looking for hers and said, she's not a member. Tom said, I know she's a member because I brought her into the church. And he said, well, I said, no, here's what happened. The preacher took her off the roll.

He said, he can't do that. Methodist church, you're not allowed to do that. They can't do that. I said, well, he did. So she had to go through the whole rigamarole and become a Methodist again.

Ken: Well, anyway, they were, when they decided, when Norfolk District decided they was going to give the church to the Calvary because they wanted to bring a black preacher over there and thought it would take off, which it never did. And David Zook felt the same way that I did, that we didn't like the way they closed it down, closed Deep Creek down. And they had a lot of Deep Creek people that was going over there, kept on attending when this group came in from the Methodists. And then they were told, now you get out of the church because we're going to give it to the black people. David Zook and I both resigned. We wouldn't sign the papers to transfer it over. And we both resigned. So they had to get some more. So we caused some problems too.

Alan: Oh, Lordy. Well, I need to get going. I've got enough to work on here for a while.

Ruth: Oh, I was going to tell you.

Ken: I appreciate what you're doing because I'm interested in what's...

Ruth: Oh, yeah.

Ken: And I learned something this morning that, you know, this was probably came from the Landis. And this land right in here probably came from the Landis and the Wengers.

Alan: Most likely. And... So A.D. Wanger had some money. He inherited it from his first wife. She was wealthy.

Ruth: A.D. is Amos?

Alan: Amos's father.

Ruth: Oh, his father.

Alan: Right. He married this young lady whose parents were wealthy and she was an only child and they had died. And they were married for a year and she died. And he inherited the house, which was brand new in Millersville (Pa) that she had had built. And two farms. And she still had enough money...Now, mind you, this is back when wages were \$600 a year. She gave over \$10,000 in cash to various Mennonite missions. And he got the rest of the stuff and took off for a year and went around the world and wrote his book, you know.

So he had money.

Ken: So where did he come from?

Alan: He came from Shenandoah Valley.

Ken: Okay.

Alan: The Wengers were from Shenandoah Valley.

Ken: They was from Shenandoah Valley.

Alan: And his brother was...T.J. was a brother. Abram Wenger's father was a brother.

Ken: So T.J. was a brother to...

Alan: A.D.

Ken: A.D.

Alan: And they came here at the same time, yeah. And he became a... Well, he went to the Moody Bible Institute. He taught school for a while. They went to the Moody Bible Institute and that's where he got his indoctrination on premillennialism and evangelism. And he became an evangelist. He was well-known throughout the churches, the Mennonite church. And he would preach in, you know, for weeks at a time as long as they... wherever he would go.

And he came, settled in Millersville and was named pastor at Millersville but didn't preach very much because he was usually on the road preaching. Well, and this young lady was a member of the church. They met, got married. So he bought a lot of land. He owned a lot of land around here. Usually in partnership with Landis.

And they had a... In fact, Abram, he had bought... One of his brothers had bought a farm in Canada, in Manitoba, I think it was. Anyway, in the western part of the plains. And then left that one to California and AD wound up with it. And Abram went out and farmed it for a while. And that's where John and Charlotte and most of them were born.

Ruth: That's right, yeah. I remember talking about that.

Alan: And then he came back here and bought the farm that is the Wenger farm. And I think Herbert and the younger ones were born here. But they were...I just finished working, some research on the Wenger thing. They were much more liberal than this community when they moved here. Cause he didn't wear a plain coat and she wore makeup and jewelry. And they figured out that, hey, you know, this is the only church to go to, that's Mennonite. And they're playing. If we're gonna fit in, we're gonna have to do it. And so they adopted the plain dress and so forth. But I think Abram...

Ruth: That's interesting.

Alan: Abram was probably one of the... One of the best men I've ever met in my life.

Ruth: Which one?

Alan: Abram. He's just generous and kind and Well, anyway let me get down the road