

Ira & Maggie Miller with Robert Mast 1970's

Ira: Yesterday, Robert Mast, one of our pastors, gave me a book entitled "Life and Thoughts of George R. Brunk the First" by J.C. Wenger. It's not in the book, but my thoughts went back to the time Brunk had bishop oversight of our congregation here at Mount Pleasant. Although he lived over in Warwick County, it was two years after I was married when the young men of the community organized a baseball team, some married and some not. Clarence Miller and I were the only Mennonites on the team. George R. did not think any too well of our participation.

And one time when he was over [at Mt Pleasant] to preach, he casually mentioned baseball and quoted the scripture which says, "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. But when I became a man, I put away childish things." Although no disciplinary action was taken, in fact, none was contemplated that I know of, but we took the hint and sold our uniforms and quit playing ball.

There is an excellent review of the book in the November 9th issue of Mennonite Weekly Review by Gerald Stewart.

Robert: You said that you all wore uniforms and all that?

Ira: Yeah, yeah, we had light gray, trimmed in dark blue, and "Mount Pleasant" in dark letters. "Mount Pleasant" over the chest.

Robert: Who did you all play? Other teams in the area? Who did your team play against?

Ira: Oh, we went over to Kempsville and played, we went over to Salem Church and played Bayside, and different teams all over the place.

Robert: Were you playing in a church league, like you were playing against other church teams?

Ira: No, no, no, it was just a Mount Pleasant community ball team, that's all.

Robert: But the other teams that you played were not church teams either?

Ira: No, they weren't church teams either, they were just community teams, that's all. And all of it was, it was just community teams.

Robert: I understand from this book that George R. and his family, when they moved from Kansas, they had intended to come here. [to Mt Pleasant]

Ira: That's right.

Robert: Do you know why they were coming here?

Ira: Well, I know what the book says. That's all I know. Now, that was 1910, and that was the year we came. And I was 16 years old, and the church, whatever took place in the church, it didn't have much effect on me. I didn't pay no attention to what the church was doing at the time. They were just starting up here, and I didn't pay too much attention. So I don't remember anything, but now he talks about different outspoken individuals here at Fentress.

Robert: He even mentions the initials, like J.E.

Ira: J.E.? J.E. Yeah, Jake.Eby.

Robert: Jake Eby. Yeah, I thought that's who it was.

Ira: Now, Jake Eby's father, Isaac Eby, was a deacon here.

Robert: Oh, I see.

Ira: But anyhow, they were right active in the church work.

Robert: But Jake was not the deacon. His father was the deacon.

Ira: His father, Isaac, was the deacon. Jake's father, Isaac Eby, was the deacon.

Robert: Was Isaac still living at the time that Brunk thought about coming here? Was Isaac deacon here then?

Ira: Oh, yes, because that was in 1910. That was in 1910, and Isaac Eby, Oh, I remember Isaac Eby's funeral. They had a bear skin rug underneath the casket over at Jake's, [2017 Mt Pleasant Rd, west of the church] and Jake asked me to, when they lift that casket to carry it, they walked over to the church from Jake Eby's house. It was there where Nash's live now, and asked me to take that rug and take it over to the church and spread it down in the front of the church so that by the time they got over with the casket, it would be ready to set this casket.

Robert: A bear skin?

Ira: A bear skin, a big black bear skin. No, there was no head to it, just the skin, and the claws, I think, were all, if I'm not mistaken, I'm not sure, quite a thing. It was a rug, it was really a bear skin rug, is what it was. It had a lining to it. It was a bear skin rug.

Robert: You know, did the deacon Isaac, do you know anything about how he felt about Brunk coming over here? It was his son that said he didn't want Brunk to come.

Ira: That's right. It was his son that was outspoken. Isaac was a mild-mannered man. Isaac, I don't think, would have objected. I don't think Isaac would have made any objections. He was a mild-mannered, very nice man. Very nice man Isaac was. Jake was alright too, but he talked too much, that's all. And was very much putting out his own ideas, whatever he thought. But I didn't know, it was in this book that I first found that out, that there was opposition to George R. coming here. See, Wirt was already here. Joe Wirt, J.W., J.W., the bishop. He was already a bishop here. And I see in the book that he said that if George R. comes here, he'll leave.

Robert: I noticed that too, yes.

Ira: Now that was news to me.

Robert: You didn't know that before?

Ira: I didn't know, I didn't know that before.

Robert: I remember reading that later on, after Brunk was over at Warwick for a while and established over there, it was Jake [*Joeseph*] Wirt who made the motion in conference, in continued conference, that Brunk be the bishop over there. I think, isn't it true that at one time Wirt had been the bishop of both here, this Norfolk district, and the Warwick district?

Ira: That's right, he was.

Robert: And then when Brunk was over there for a while, like a year or so, then Wirt got up in conferences and made the motion that Brunk be bishop over there.

Ira: That's right.

Robert: And that was passed.

Ira: But then it was after Wirt had his difficulty that George R. temporarily took over the bishop oversight of Mount Pleasant.

Robert: Over here.

Ira: Yeah, he'd come over here. And later on, ohhh, well, there was some dissatisfaction. Some folks didn't like Brunk. And then one day they started coming down from the valley and relieved George R. of this. He wanted to be relieved of this charge over here. So they relieved him and the valley bishops took turns coming down.

Robert: What's this about the chitlins?

Ira: Chitlins?

Robert: Yeah.

Ira: Well, there's been quite a lot of discussion about the chitlins in the budget over the years. John Miller and I, we like our chitlins.

Roberr: Oh, I see.

Ira: And so we stick up for the chitlins, started the argument, and others, they run it down. Others run it down. Folks up north, they don't even know what chitlins are. Do you know what chitlins are?

Robert: Oh, yes.

Ira: Well, I thought you did.

Robert: Never eaten them, though.

Ira: Huh? Never eaten them?

Robert: No.

Ira: Yeah, I eat them until Maggie got to fussing about making her skillet smell. She ain't going to cook. Can't cook no more chitlins in her skillet. So I kind of dropped them off. But now last week, in last week's budget, Mose B. Miller wrote some, writes from Sarasota, Florida. And he writes an interesting article. It's not who's visiting and who's been here and who's gone home and all this and that. He writes about his fishing and things that he does. I try to make my articles a little the same way. And he said, now I've seen it all. I was to the market last week, and there was a half gallon and gallon buckets of frozen chitlins.

And so I had that a little different. I had his name in. I had in there, to Mose B. Miller, you're passing judgment before you have all the evidence.

Oh he said, And I left them there and said, as far as I'm concerned, they can stay there. And I had on to Mose B. Miller, you're passing judgment before you have all the evidence if you have not sampled the chitlins. But now I said, no, I'll back off of that. Because when you mention somebody's name, if you don't happen to hit them just right, they can get back on you some kind of bad sometimes.

Robert: That was a wise move on your part.

Ira: Yeah, I don't mention people's names too much.

Robert: Is that your... that's your budget articles right there?

Ira: Yeah, those are all carbon copies.

Robert: Now, you know, Ira, you ought to have those preserved, you ought to put those in the... you ought to let us put those in the, in our church archives up at Harrisonburg. So, because you have a lot of congregational material in there.

Ira: Oh yeah, it's...

Robert: Back through the years you've got all kinds of things.

Ira: A lot of history, a lot of history. A lot of history in that.

Robert: Yeah. You ought to let us put that... you know, we have... every congregation of the Virginia Conference has a designated spot in the archives. In fact, the conference pays the college a thousand dollars a year to preserve the the records of conference. So, we have our, our portfolio in the archives and all the church bulletins go there and, and things that we've been able to collect back through the years, old church records and all that are there in that box.

Ira: Yeah, well these are all in, in order.

Robert: They're all in chronological order.

Ira: In chronological order, yeah, everything is...

Robert: If you decide that you want to put those in the archives, you let me know and I'll...

Ira: All right, I'll keep that in mind.

Robert: Keep that in mind.

Ira: I'll do that.

Robert: Because you've got a lot of history there that's collected back through the years. It would be valuable to have.

Ira: Yeah, we have a lot of history.

Robert: When did you start writing?

Ira: In 1961. 13, well, let's see, 61, 71. Well, anyhow, the first year we went to Colorado. It was in 1961. We went out there, and when we left, Mrs. Emery Hochstetler used to write once in a while, but not regular. She said, "Ira, when you

get out there, you write for the Budget.” She said, “then we can all read what you're doing.” So, we got out there, and we got snowed in.

It was the first week in April. We got there on Good Friday. And Easter Sunday, we were snowed in. In fact, it started snowing Friday night, and by Saturday morning, we couldn't get out no more. And there was a telephone there, and Jess Kaufman... had charge of the work at that time... and he called me on the telephone. He said, “Ira, how are you getting along?”

I said, “all right”. There was a coal-burning cook stove and a pile of coal outside, and there was an oil-burning heater, and there was an oil tank full of oil outside, and we had to taken an electric blanket along. And, oh, we were just all right, but we couldn't go nowhere.

And Jess said, “well, I was worried about you, but I can't get the road plowed open until the road crew gets the main highway open.” He said, “as soon as they get the main highway open, then they'll plow open the road up to the camp, and then you can get in and out. But if there's anything you need or you have any trouble, give me a ring.” He said, “we'll get in some way.” “No,” I said, “we're perfectly all right.” We never did get in touch with the outside world until the snow plow came in about the middle of the week.

And so, and there were some books on the shelves there, some magazines and stuff, and I read and read until I got tired of reading. So I told Maggie, “Well,” I said, “I believe I'll write a letter to the Budget while I'm sitting here doing nothing”. And so I did.

I wrote a letter to the Budget, and I ended up by saying that if this is printed, I may write again sometime. Well, there was no time at all until I got, well, in fact, the next Budget when people had time to answer to the Budget.,”Keep on writing Ira. We enjoy your articles. And keep on writing. Write every week.”

So I did. I wrote every week. Well, then we came home about first September... fall, we were there for four months, April, May, June, July, August, five months. And so, come home, I said, “well, I'll drop the budget letters. There ain't nothing to write from around here much. And Nettie Hoschtetler, she writes once in a while. She can write the news.” But, same old story. I missed one week or two.

In fact, I think I said that I wouldn't write anymore now. We were back home, and I wouldn't write no more. “Come and write a rebuttal. Keep on writing. We had a lot of articles. In fact, my sister Estes at Scottsdale. She subscribed to the budget, purposely, so she'd hear from us once a week. And my niece, Bill Livingood, from Springs, they got it for the same reason. So they'd hear from us.

And so, I started writing every week. And I've written every week ever since. Oh,

sometimes over here, and sometimes there. And now here lately, well, it's always been from here. I'm not sure. There might even be some pages there that go back from where we were up at Laurelville. I'm not too sure, but anyway. They go quite a ways back, I know that.

Robert: I noticed some of the bottom ones there were handwritten.

Ira: In fact, they go back here to where they were handwritten.

Robert: You don't have them all dated, do you?

Ira: No, they're not all dated. But they're just the year, I mean just the month. The year isn't on. Yes, by what I had written.

Robert: But is that from the time you began writing, you think?

Ira: No. No, they're not. It wouldn't be all of them. No, it's not all of them.

Robert: Somebody told me that George R. preached the sermon here at Mount Pleasant when the church was dedicated. Do you remember that?

Ira: I wasn't here. I don't know.

Robert: Did you all come after, just after that?

Ira: I came, he evidently, he came during the summer and we came in November, the first of November. I came the first of November, church was already dedicated. I wasn't here for the dedication.

Robert: That was in May, I believe.

Ira: May.

Robert: (to Maggie) You were there, yes?

Ira: Maggie was there for the dedication, yeah. But I didn't, we didn't get here until November.

Maggie: Maggie doesn't know much anymore.

Ira: So, George R. has been here, he came in the summer.

Robert: Maggie doesn't remember much?

Ira: Maggie doesn't, Maggie doesn't know much anymore.

Robert: Oh, you don't remember much about May 10, 1910, eh?

Maggie: No, some of it I'm glad to forget and some I wish I could remember.

Robert: I thought the church was dedicated in June. Your birthday is in May.

Maggie: The 23rd of May is my birthday.

Robert: Your birthday is the 23rd of May.

Maggie: Yeah.

Robert: Wasn't the church dedicated in June?

Maggie: No.

Ira: I don't know, I wouldn't argue with you because I wasn't here. But there's a history to tell it some place.

Maggie: Why don't you know? I don't know. It gets dark so early.

Robert: Huh?

Maggie: It gets dark so early.

Ira: If George R. preached a sermon, well, he couldn't, that wouldn't have been very, that...

Robert: It would hardly have been in this book.

Ira: It wouldn't hardly have been in that book, no, it didn't, it wasn't, that was just a, it wasn't controversial.

Robert: Yeah, right.

Maggie: I really don't need to say that because that might be repeated too.

Ira: But I remember we were in Ohio one time when George R. preached a conference sermon there in the evening. He certainly did preach a sermon.

Robert: He did.

Ira: Then he got out, he got off the pulpit and walked down the aisle and off, home.

Robert: Went home?

Ira: Home.

Robert: Didn't stay after the service?

Ira: Didn't stay after the service.

Robert: Shake hands with him?

Ira: No. I think he left. I think he said from the pulpit that he'd got another appointment that he'd got to meet tomorrow night. And he wouldn't be here for the conference. He was there for to preach the sermon.

Robert: Well, Maggie, how long was it after Ira came, he began to notice you, a young lady like you?

Maggie: He wasn't here very long. He wasn't here very long?

Robert: He wasn't here very long. How long until you started looking for him?

Ira: Young folks would go to some place for dinner. They did it every Sunday. Where's the crowd on a Sunday? Where's the crowd going today? Well, going so-and-so.

Anyway, the first Sunday, went to A.D. Wenger's. Purposely, because of me, coming in, and Fanny. Fanny [Ira's sister] was single then. And, uh, get us acquainted with the young people in the community. And she was there, and I saw her. I remember seeing her. And I was attracted to her somehow. But Ernest Miller was courting her then. And, uh, her brother Harvey was here. I remember him real well. He was the life of the young folks. Of the young, uh, the boys, anyhow.

Robert: You mean, he was like a crackerjack? A jokester?

Ira: Yeah, yeah, he was a good storyteller. And he had everybody interested. And had everybody into it. But anyhow, so. But, didn't pay no attention anymore. Because, after all, Ernest was courting her.

But in the meantime, Tim Wenger lived up there. And lots of times we'd walk down to the evening meeting. And walk home, and so one evening I started walking alongside of Molly Brunk. [one of Tim Wenger's daughters] And, after a while I got to take Molly out a time or two with a horse and buggy. But, uh, I never developed very much. But, uh, then Ernest went to Heston. And when he was gone, well that left, I still said that he went off and left the stable door open.

But anyhow, then, I don't know how, I wouldn't remember the first time that we went anywhere together. But, uh, I think maybe...we used to go to colored meetings.

Colored folks had protracted meetings, and they'd have a whooping big time, you know. And a lot of the young folks would be around the outside of the church. And, uh, I think one time I asked her go along to a colored meeting with me.

Ira: We used to go to colored meetings. Colored folks had protracted meetings and they'd have a whoopin' big time, you know. And a lot of the young folks would be around the outside of the church. And I think one time I asked her to go along to a colored meeting with me. Down here at this colored church.

Maggie: You asked me.

Ira: In Mount Pleasant. It wasn't the same building that's there now. They had a nice little building with a steeple. A dandy little snug little building. But when the cooperage company started down here. [Farmer's Manufacturing stave mill at Mill Landing] Why there was more too many people to get into this little building.

And the people at Fentress [Centerville Baptist Church] sold that, built their new church. And sold the old one. And these colored people bought it. Dismantled it. Took it apart. Piece by piece and brought it down here and set it back up again.

So that old church is still the old Centerville Baptist Church. That used to be the old Fentress Baptist Church. And their preacher was kind of a carpenter. And always did kind of feel like he'd done it to keep himself employed. So he'd get a little extra money. And anyhow that's what they'd done.

And let's see. I think they left the little old church there. And built the other one around it and to it. And I don't know. But it wasn't as nice. They never got as nice a job as they had in the original church. The original church was a dandy little church. And had a steeple on it. And a bell. You'd ring that bell. And Sunday mornings you'd ring that bell. Had a good church.

Robert: Yeah. How long?

Maggie: Ira would come in the fall. And I'd come in the spring. And he'd come in the fall.

Robert; Oh, the same year?

Maggie: Yes.

Ira: Yeah. She was here when I'd come here.

Robert: Then how much later than that did you all get married? What year did you get married?

Ira: Well, we got married in 1913. We came down in 1910. And it was about 1911 that we started going together.

Robert: So you went together a couple of years before you got married.

Ira: Yeah, yeah, we went there.

Maggie: My mother didn't think much of it either.

Robert: She didn't think much of Ira?.

Ira: No.

Robert: Not near as much as you did.

Maggie: No, no, no.

Ira: They moved up to Butts Station then. We were still going together. Eventually we got married. Uh, got married kind of on the spur of the moment. We'd planned to get married. Hadn't set any time. Then my mother died. And my three sisters... No, Fannie was already here. Two sisters came from Scottdale. Esther and Ella. My brother Noah from Springs came down for the funeral.

And we got talking this thing. Well, now this would be a good time to get married while these folks are here. And they'd be in on the wedding. But Noah couldn't stay. Noah had to go back. He had to go back right away. Right the day after the funeral.

We... It was a day or two after the funeral that we got to talking about this thing and decided on getting married. And, uh, Noah wasn't here, but the rest of the girls were all here. Fannie and Ella and Esther. And Ruth Bender. Now Ruth Bender was living with us at that time. And, uh, but then she left soon afterwards. Went out to Kansas to her father.

See, her father... Ruth, the Bender children were small. Ruth was just a couple months old when her mother [*her mother was Ira's sister Ida*] died. Paul was about maybe a year or two older. And Ralph was a year or two older than Paul. And they lived next door to us there at Springs, [Pennsylvania]. And when their mother died, why, uh, D.H. was left with these little children. So I don't know how he and my parents got together, but he had a room upstairs in our home there at Springs. And my parents took care of the children. And, uh, D.H. told my mother, said, "now you can have this little girl as long as you live. And are in your

right mind. I won't take her away from you." He said, "you raise her." And said, "you can have her as long as you're in your right mind and are living." So, when we moved to Virginia, well, of course she came with us. And, but then when mother died, well, that was the end of Ruth's stay with us.

She went back to Heston to live with her parents there, D.H. had the boys all the while. He had taken the boys with him. He went to Scottsdale first. He got married to a girl at Springs there, a cousin of mine. And they moved to Scottdale. And he was editor of the Gospel Herald. And they took the boys along. He kept the boys.

Then he was appointed president of Heston College. Then they moved to Heston. And he took the boys with him there, of course. And that's where they were when my mother died. And that's where Ruth went then. And that is kind of the way that Fanny and Esta got out to Heston.

They decided that they'd go out there to Heston. D.H. was there. And they, brother-in-law, and all, they'd go out there. [*D.H. Bender's first wife was Ida Miller, sister of Ira Miller*]

And that's where Fanny met Alan Good. He was a widower. And they got married.

And that's where Esta met Ed Yoder. He was going to school, and so was Esta. And they struck up a friendship. And they got married.

Robert: When you all decided to get married kind of quickly, like when you decided to get married rather quickly.

Ira: Yeah, right on.

Robert: What did you do? Go see the preacher then? Or how did you arrange for this thing? And who married you?

Ira: A.D. Wenger. We had talked about getting married for, oh, maybe six months or so. A couple of months. Some time. But hadn't set any date. Wasn't in no hurry. It didn't make no difference. What? Something. I don't know. Anyway, we didn't. When we decided to get married, well, I went and asked A.D. Now, those days, it was against the Virginia Conference rules to have a church wedding. Couldn't have a church wedding. Because the temptation to put on display and to make a show out of it. And those days, they kind of had a habit. I don't know where it ever originated. Sneak off and get married. Nobody know it until after you're married. So, we didn't spread it around.

I went up to A.D. And A.D.'s family didn't even know that we were getting married. He told... Etta [*Wenger*] was working there...And it was just a little while before Rhoda [*Wenger*] was born...and he told his family, he said, get the front

room ready. We're going to have company tonight. All right.

All right. That wasn't nothing too unusual for A.D.'s. And so, my folks walked up through the field from David Troyer's. *[Ira's father then owned what later became the Chester Wenger farm where David Troyer's lived for many years in the 1950's & 1960's]* Maggie and I had a horse and buggy. We went, we drove up with a horse and buggy. And went to A.D.'s in the front room. We just went in there, and there was the family with my folks. My father and my sisters and Ruth Bender and Etta were sitting there. And Etta and A.D.'s family.

Robert: Was any of her family there?

Ira: No. No, they lived up at Butts Station. They never even came. You know, she said her mom didn't think too much of it. No, they didn't even come down to the wedding. But anyhow, during the week, in the evening, after supper. And we just went in, stood there, stood up there. We never even sat down. A.D. got up. And we handed him the license. And he married us. And we turned around and went on out.

Maggie: That's it. Daddy, I don't know why you don't never forget anything.

Ira: Huh?

Maggie: He has a perfect memory.

Ira: How do I remember that? Well, I remember it. Yeah.

Robert: She said, Daddy, I don't see how you never forget anything.

Ira: Anyhow, that's the way it all happened. We went back to my home. And that's where we stayed. We didn't go on no honeymoon. We didn't go on no honeymoon until, well, after I retired. We went up to Canada and we went down to Florida. And we went here, there, and yonder.

Maggie: Yeah, we did our courting later after we were married.

Robert: You had your honeymoon a little later, right?

Ira: I have found out that we sleep better, get along better if we have a very light supper, hardly any. These, we call them milkshakes, you get instant breakfast. Instant breakfast stirred in a glass of milk is supposed to have the nourishment of an egg, and two pieces of bacon, and a piece of toast, and I think a glass of milk.

Anyway, I guess, I don't know, I guess some too, because we always feel, we

always sleep good on it, and feel nourished. And I showed it to Naomi [Hobbs] one time, Naomi and Ruth [Thomas...Maggie's sisters] were down there Saturday, we were talking about supper, and I showed them what we're gonna had. I have chocolate, she has vanilla.

And, ah, Naomi said none of that. Said that stuff is loaded with calories, he said she can't handle that. But, if she didn't take anything else with it, Ruth said then, well, she said that would just be dessert for me.

She said I couldn't make a meal out of that. But we do make a meal, we make supper out of it. And, oh, we probably have, each of us have a piece of toast with jam on it.

I like peach preserves and she likes pineapples, so we each have our own.

Robert: You eat your larger meal at lunch time then. You eat your bigger meal at lunch time.

Ira: Yeah, yeah, the biggest meal at dinner time.

Maggie: We eat it like we, that's the way we would do it. But folks bringing it in for why it's, for dinner time.

Ira: We had fried chicken. That's the only detail.

Robert: Good to see the little lady still looking good.

Maggie: Oh, thanks. Thank you, sir. You know, somebody wanted to tell me here some time ago that I was looking...Well, I know it was all baloney, I didn't believe it, but anyway. Well, I looked younger than some of these younger ones that come to church here. I didn't believe it.

Robert: You didn't believe that?

Maggie: Nah.

Ira: She used to work at Miller's store down there. Yeah, in her day. She used to like to show them how she could take a hundred pound bag of sugar and put it up on the counter.

Robert: No.

Ira: Yeah. Yeah.

Robert: Did she work in the old store, Miller's store? [at Carter Rd & Lockheed Ave]

Ira: Old store in 1910. In fact, I guess she started working there as soon as she came here. I guess Ernest seen to that, that she got a job in the store.

Maggie: Oh, now...

Ira: Yeah. But anyhow, sure. Yeah, that's where I first saw her.

See, the Keims, the Keims came from Springs, [Pennsylvania] same way we did. I knew all these Keims. They visited our home before they ever moved to Virginia.

I In fact, they had something to do with us moving down. He had asthma and catarrh and so did my dad. And he wrote back and said he believed it'd be good for my dad down here. He believed he could breathe more freely and the winters weren't so severe. But they moved down here the year before we did. And Lawrence, they had one boy, Lawrence. Mabel had a brother, Lawrence, and he was just my age. And so Saturday night, we moved down here in the middle of the week sometime. And Saturday night, my dad suggested that I go down to Keims and stay with Lawrence overnight and go with him to church the next day and I'd get in with the young folks here.

And my dad was worried all the while for fear I would get homesick. And that would have worried him if I'd have gotten homesick. And so I went down, I walked down to Keim's. I'd never been down the road and it was getting evening and I was trottin' along. And here comes Joe Wirt out of Jake Eby's place with a two-horse team. And I was kind of running, so he stopped. Saw I was a stranger anyhow and was running, so he stopped. Wanted to know, did I want a ride? Well, I said, I want to go to Keim's. Do you know where Keim's live? Oh, yes, and I'm going right by there. He said, in fact, they just live down there in that next house down there. I said, I'll take you along. So I got up in a two-horse wagon and rode with him down to Keim's. Then after supper, Lawrence says, "well, let's go up to Miller's store."

They lived there where Clarence, in that two-story house on this side of the store there, where Clarence Miller's had lived at one time. Well, that's where Keim's lived. And said, let's walk up to the store.

So Lawrence and I walked up to the store. As we were walking along, it was dark. Lawrence says, "hello, George."

I said, "good night. are you talking to somebody?" I said, "I didn't even see anybody."

George Johnson, colored fella, black. Yeah, he saw him. He knew him. But I didn't even see anybody. Black, he was black. And I went up to the store, and there was Maude and Maggie behind the counter.

But Maude, she'd come out. Lawrence introduced me to Maude. But I think Maggie stayed back at the counter. I didn't think I saw her. I didn't see Maggie until the next day up at A.D.'s. But she said she saw me. Said she had no idea that little skrup was going to be her man someday.

But anyhow.

Ira: Tim Wenger's buried a child soon after they came here, and A.D.'s buried a child, less than a year old, both of them, soon after they lived here. And then I presume maybe Lawrence might have been about the next funeral. No, no, Leslie Swartz's sister died.

That was the first funeral I was to here, and that was right within a couple of weeks after we came here.

Robert: What caused her death?

Ira: I think she had cancer. Mrs. ...ohhh... Carter. Mrs. Carter. I kind of think she had cancer, I'm not sure.

She was a comparatively young woman anyhow, she wasn't no old woman. Yeah, and Ed Musselman's wife was buried here, that was before Lawrence drowned, and she was buried before we came here. They were living here when we got here, Jake Eby's sister was married to Ed Musselman.

Robert: Were they the folks that lived where Titus Bergey was living at one time?

Ira: Yeah.

Robert: Did she die in childbirth, or what was her...?

Ira: No.

Maggie: She had a new baby.

Ira: Did it? Was it? Oh, I didn't know that.

Maggie: It wasn't altogether new, but I think that...

Ira: Maggie worked for him for a while. That was before you worked in the store. You worked for Ed Musselman's. Well, he lived right neighbors to him, see, just a ditch between them.

Robert: You said young people used to always get together, usually get together Sunday afternoon in a group somewhere.

Ira: Sunday dinner. And go on Sunday dinner to somebody's house. Sunday dinner, somebody'd have a group of young folks. And they'd spend the afternoon, oh, singing. And up at A.D.'s, he always had Bible questions. And he had a contest to who could find a chapter the quickest. He'd call out a chapter. And whoever found a chapter, no, I was always sunk. Used to embarrass me no end. I couldn't find no chapters in the Bible. But I know, at Keim's one time, the young folks were all there together, had chicken. And Mrs. Keim, Mabel's mother, said "now this chicken's pretty stubbly, but whoever gets the most chicken will get the most stubbles"

Maggie: What do you want, Daddy? What do you want?

Ira: I want you to sit still.

Maggie: That I can't do.

Ira: That won't do? Yeah, I want you to just sit still.

Robert: What else did the young people do for...

Ira: Well, that was about it.

Robert: They didn't have a literary society then, or...?

Ira: Oh, yeah, yeah, they didn't have a literary society. They started one later. Yeah, we had a literary society. Because I remember Molly Brunk. She was a debater from way back. Oh, she would put all into it she had.

And Mrs. A.D. [*Wenger*] was a good debater because she was educated. And she was a good debater. She generally wanted debates because of her education. But Molly just got hers by sheer pluck. She just had a common school education. But she would win a debate just by her pluck and her delivery, the way she'd put it out.

Robert: Who were the other debaters? Good debaters. Who were the other good debaters?

Ira: Oh, well, Charlie Warfel and Dwight Miller. They were just fresh from Goshen College. And generally they picked them two against each other. And...

Robert: What did they debate about?

Ira: Well, the only time I remember, debating was resolved that fire is more powerful than water. And I remember Dwight, he had the water part. And he said now he wants it understood right at the beginning that the power of fire to destroy the earth dare not be mentioned. Because that is supernatural and that dare not be mentioned. And I don't remember who won the debate.

Maggie: It didn't matter. It didn't matter.

Robert: Yeah. Well, young people used to go to...

Ira: And they used to go to the beach. And they'd have a hayride now and then with a team, take two horses, a real moonlight night. I remember one time we decided to go on a hayride. I think it was Carrie's [King, later Clarence Miller's wife] birthday. And we were going to surprise her and did. And she and Ada had already gone to bed, lived down there on Cason Road. And we went there with a hay wagon and all the young people on it except Carrie and Ada. And we whooped and hollered and they stuck their heads out the upstairs window. All right, they'd come on down. So they'd come on down. We went for a hayride, moonlight night. Loose hay on the wagon. A wagon with two horses hitched up and loose hay. Just sit on the loose hay.