



Citation for this collection:

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Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Erich Kaeks, German immigrants, December 18, 1973, in Wilmington, Delaware, by Steven Schoenherr. Mr. Kaeks' answers are designated by the letter "A"; Mrs. Kaeks' answers are designated by the letter "B".

Q I understand both you and...

B I was born in this country, but I went over there when I was a year old to...at that time it was Polish.

Q How long did you stay over there?

B Until I was 16, and then I came to this country...through my uncle-- he had me come over here.

Q Could I ask you what your maiden name is?

B Boerstler.

Q Are you any relation to John Boerstler, who is the...

B That's my brother.

Q Is that right?

B How do you know who my brother is?

Q I think I've talked...either I have talked to him or will talk to him. He's on the list that Pastor Zimmerman gave me. And so he's your brother. Did your parents immigrate?

B Yeah, my parents immigrated here to this country.

Q Do you remember what year they came over?

B No, I really don't.

Q Was it before World War I?

B Yes. I was born in 1910, and I think my mother was here probably two years before that. Now, maybe she came in 1908 or 1907, something like that. Both of them came--my mother came from...they came from Gallitzen^(sp?) that used to be Polish at that time. Siedenthal was our town, but Gallitzen was our village...I mean, that's the province of Gallitzen.

Q And that's where your parents came from?

B My father. My mother came from another town, and I don't even know that, how it's spelled. But it was around there--it's not too far from there.

Q Did they ever tell you why they came to the United States?

B Well, my father's mother died and his oldest brother, he inherited the farm, and of course my father was younger, and you know how it

was, he felt that he didn't have any work, you know, so he came over here...to this country. But they...my father came to Johnstown... Johnstown, Pennsylvania...and that's where he worked.

Q In the steel mill?

B Yeah. And my mother came to Wilmington, and her brother was here in Wilmington. But another fellow came from Johnstown and met my mother and when he went to Johnstown back again he was telling my father all about that there was a girl there that would be right for my father. So my father came to Wilmington, and they got married here, and they stayed here for a while. But my father couldn't get any work here, so he went back to Johnstown with my mother, and...well, they didn't have any children then. I was born, and my brother John Boerstler, we were both born in Johnstown one year apart. And well, anyway, he was...my mother left...my mother didn't like it in Johnstown... she wanted to go back again to where she came from...and so she kept telling my father that she wanted to go back again. So my father said, "All right, you go back with the children and I'll stay here four or five years and earn money, then I'll come over there and we'll buy a farm." Well, things didn't go that well, because the war broke out, and my father never did go back there. And my father had a brother over there and my...he knew those people that had this house, and my mother bought this house with very little ground to it, so it was very hard for us to make a living on it, or you know, with the two children, and she was pregnant...had another baby there... and in the meantime that baby got sick and died. So my father stayed here 'til 1921, then he came back, and naturally things were quite bad. He used to tell us how in this country you have enough to eat and things were so much better. But my mother still had no desire to come over here. But when I used to hear my father talk like that, then I wrote my uncle, so that's how I...he had me come over to this country. And I came in 1927.

Q Why didn't your mother like it over here?

B Well, I think for one reason the children came so fast...they were in three years, three children....

A They didn't have the pill in those days.

B And she had...I think they baked their own bread and things like that, and she had two boarders to have to cook for them and wash for them... and with small children I guess she complained a lot about headaches and all, and she just didn't like it.

Q She liked it once she got back to Germany?

B Well, there was nothing else for her to do there but make the best of it, especially after the war broke out and all. We went through very hard times, and I'm sure she must have regretted it many times that she went over there, because when my father came, and then we had inflation, the money he had saved...well, they couldn't buy anything. They thought they would buy a farm, but it was almost impossible to buy anything.

- A It was a mistake he made when he got his money out of the bank, he bought Polish currency. And you know...I don't know if you read up on the inflation in Europe, but it was in Poland first, and then Germany got even worse, you know. It took a basketful of money to buy a loaf of bread...that took place. And the evaluation per day was so much...I hope I never see that again.
- Q We're starting to get inflation now here in this country. But, you're right, it was very bad. In fact, we found by interviewing many German people who came to Delaware that they came during the 20's, during the time when it was real bad...because of the inflation....
- A Yeah. '21 it started slowly and sure. '22...beginning of '23 it was at its height. I think...well, you're a scholar...you got a million marks...now we're already talking of big money, now. The prince couldn't even keep up with it...they would make a 500 mark piece of paper there, and then before they were ready to roll it out they made it into...just printed across one million marks. That's how fast it went.
- Q So you came back to the United States in what year?
- B In '27.
- Q Do you remember your trip and how you got here?
- B Very much so. Yes. I came on a boat...Leviathan.
- A British. *[The Leviathan was an American ship, formerly German.]*
- Q A British ship? Now your aunt sent you the money to come here? *J.C.M.*
- B My uncle.
- Q And they were living in Wilmington?
- B Um hmm.
- Q Had they written you in the years previous to when you came?
- B Well, my mother and my uncle used to write to one another once in a while. And of course my uncle tried to persuade my mother not to go over there, you know, but she just felt that she was very unhappy here in America. And of course if she'd known that there was going to be a war or something, probably she would have tried to stay here.
- Q Now this meant that you were ^{leaving} living your family, right? Coming to a strange country?
- B Yes, very much so...not a word of English. And I'll never forget it-- it's like it was yesterday, you know...you go on a boat...of course then you meet people who talk your own language, but when we got to New York, most of the...somebody had people meeting them and I was the only one...at least in that group that I was with...I didn't have anybody meeting me. So I didn't know what arrangement my uncle

had made, but it seemed that he just didn't know what I was supposed to do, so they gave me the money to come to Wilmington. And from Wilmington they sent me...someone must have telephoned or something... they had a taxi for me and they took me to my uncle's place.

Q You took the train from New York to Wilmington?

B Yeah.

Q How did you get from the boat to the train? Was it difficult?

B No. They provided with a taxi there too, then. First I stood for hours, you know...I didn't know what to do. And my uncle didn't have any telephone. And I thought for sure someone was gonna be there, but.... So when I came to my uncle's place, he said that it was a mistake, he thought that it was a week later that I was supposed to come, and that's the reason no one was there. So my aunt...she spoke German, but I had two cousins and they understand and all, but still and all...I had to work...housework...Jewish people...and I made out pretty good there. But everywhere you went, naturally, you know, you wanted to go...on my day off, if you went in town or anywheres you couldn't talk, and it took a while before you sort of broke in, and...

Q How long did it take you, do you think, to learn the language?

B I think six months so I could understand, you know, get along pretty good.

Q Did you go to school?

B I didn't go to school until a year later. I worked...then I left the Jewish people and went with some lady, she went to our church...she could speak English, her husband couldn't...and she didn't really approve of me going to school because they lived far out of Wilmington and I would have to take the bus at night time, you know, and the buses only run like once...at 7:00 in the evening and then at 11:00 again. And she didn't think I should be coming home that late. But I felt that I should learn a little more, and so finally she approved of it and I went for a while...just one semester, like, you know, from Christmas up through March, I guess they finish then--don't they Eddie? And that's where I met my husband, in school.

Q What was the name of the school, do you remember?

B Bancroft. I don't think they have that school anymore, do they Eddie?

A Oh, yes. Yeah, I'm quite sure.

B And they had sort of a play in school and they wanted to sing German songs and all, and I guess Eddie came to that. Isn't that the reason you came to....

A Yeah, I wanted to be an actor.

B And that's where we met.

Q Mr. Kaeks, can you tell me where you came from in Germany?

A Well, I came from the central part of Germany, province Brandenburg. I came over here in '26, in August...the hottest days, I think, in my life. I arrived with an overcoat and big hat on, you know...before I got to the train...my cousin met me at the pier...before I got to the railroad station, you know, I was sweating. He said, "Man, what are you doing with that coat on...take it off." So then I came out to Winterthur farms...H. F. duPont's place, and I stayed there from August 'til...over three years. I went home for five months for a holiday, then I came back and stayed...I came in September in '29...when I came back it was just about the time you know...I know the people with money on the boat coming back, you know, hanging around the ticker tapes there you know, because their stocks were going down...that was '29...just that time. And I stayed there 'til...I came back and worked at duPont's place 'til Easter of '31, when I went to New Jersey. Then I stayed there at Watertown...in Water, New Jersey we got married, and in '41 I came back to Delaware.

Q How did you get the job at Winterthur farms?

A Through my cousin who was a florist at Winterthur farms.

Q What was your cousin's name?

A Richard Boelicke.

Q Had he written you in Germany?

A Yeah.

Q Is that why you came over to the United States?

A No. It really was...after I attended grammar school...we had a farm...the government has it now...I went to school, then I worked a couple of years on the farm, then I went to agriculture school near Berlin. And after I graduated there I got a job on a farm... what they call inspector, you know, something of that sort...you tell the people what to do then they...right in the morning there, you know, and the same in the afternoon. And I worked there, I got up at 4:00 in the morning. I made sure the teamsters were on the job feeding their horses and grooming them. I had to make sure the dairymen would be in the barn milking and twice a month I would run a test, you know, with the milk, you know and so on...kept track of this. Then at half past five I would have breakfast. And at 6:00 I would ring the bell and then the day workers would come and I'd tell them what to do. And that went on...from twelve to one was lunch, you know, they called it dinner there, you know. You have a hot meal, and the noon meal...And then I would go out again, check the fields, come back at 6:00...was quitting time. You washed up, had dinner with the owner of the big farm, and at 10:00 I would maybe spend a half hour with the owner, with the boss, and we would talk things over about the next day, make the arrangements for the next day as far as labor and teams and so on. Then at 10:00 I would take my light and go to the barns, make sure everything is in

good shape, you know...most places were locked up...I checked the locks...so you went to bed at 11:00, and at 4:00 you got up again, seven days a week. And I was making less money than what a teamster would be making. But they called "Mister," you know. I had to wear a tie, you know, and a white shirt, sometimes a colored shirt, even, and a tie, riding breeches and boots, you know. I didn't make in two months what it cost for one pair of boots, so...I wrote to my cousin once and I said, you know, I said, really it's something else, disgusted. So three weeks later he sent me the affidavit to...and the fare...not the fare, the ticket, to come over on the boat. So that's how I came over. And I'm not sorry a bit.

Q Did you like working at the duPont farm?

A Yes. At duPont's I worked first at the farm and the second year I went to the dairy...I worked at the dairy...with the cows...for about four months, and then I took the job at the creamery, where I stayed until I left duPont's.

Q Were there a lot of other German immigrants working?

A League of Nations...you know, Italians, Swiss, Scandinavian...not too many Scandinavians...Germans...we had quite a few Italians.

Q I wonder if he made it a policy to hire immigrants.

A Yeah, I think he did. Mostly through people that were on the place... and he would go to them and would talk to--Mr. duPont--he would walk around, you know, once in a while.

Q Did he ever talk to you?

A Yeah. Quite a few times. In fact, before I left for Germany and when I came back...he was up...we had the milk coming in a cable car to the creamery, you know, and I was dumping milk there, you know, and all of a sudden, "Hi, Erich! When did you get back? Did you have a good time?" "Yes, thank you." He was very nice....

Q Why did you leave the farm, then?

A Well, I thought I'd go into dairying--wanted to get some experience in that. And after I left the creamery and I went to New Jersey, I went with horses...hunting horses and show horses.

Q Where in New Jersey?

A Monmouth County. The place I went to they had about 700 acres right back of Whitney's place...you know, the racing people...not far from where Monmouth Park is, we used to hunt over there in the winter time, and the fall season.

Q Who owned the farm?

A Laboytle (sp?)

Q And you took care of horses?

A Yeah.

Q Racing horses?

A No, we only had hunters and horses that we showed, you know, in hunting classes and so on.

Q And how long did you work there?

A Two years, and then I went to a private place, where they just had... well, we had a regular stock farm there. We would break the yearlings, you know, and start training them. But the second place I went to was a private place, a very fancy outfit it was...H. N. Strauss, he was the owner of Macy's...German Jewish family.

Q And you worked for him?

A Until he died...then they closed down.

Q What year was this?

A Must have been '33.

Q Do you remember Mr. Strauss? What kind of man was he?

A Very nice spoken fellow...very nice. So was the...he had three boys. Very nice family. She herself she was a maniac on dust...don't have a piece of dust, or she would get on you. I tell you, the tack room, which I took care of, even in '28 and '29 when they built this place, they spent more on the tack room, which wasn't much larger than this, and the kitchen and the dining room....

B That's him when he was younger...jumping a horse.

Q This was on the Strauss farm?

A No, that was on the stock farm. I haven't got any pictures...I had better horses than right there...that was a three year old. And we jumped her four times for first, second, third and fourth...I got second. That was this...Laboytle.

Q And after then...where did you go then?

A Well, then I was unemployed for about...didn't have a steady job for about...what was it?--We were married then...when my daughter came from the hospital with my wife, that's when I was laid off at the Strauss farm...he had died, then.

Q And that was during the Depression...

A During the Depression...and you couldn't buy a job.

B He went to New York once or twice every week trying to get work.

- A You used to buy two gallons of Blue Sunoco for 25¢. So then I went... after two years not having a real steady job I worked for Warren Barbour (sp?) on a private place.
- Q Who was he, now? *Warren?*
- A Warren Barbour...he was a United States Senator. His family...they had the Barbour Treadmills up in northern New Jersey and I think some up in New England.
- B Ireland, too, didn't he?
- A Ireland, too, yeah...he was a United States Senator...Republican. So I worked there for six and a half years, then I came back to Delaware...that was just before World War II...and there was some friction in the family between husband and wife, you know...get a divorce, you know...and you know how things are...when those things happen, everything falls apart. And then we came back to Delaware, to Wilmington, and I worked for the Clover Dairy...are you of Wilmington?
- Q I've been in Newark for about three years.
- A Oh, well, then, you wouldn't know the Clover Dairy...Sealtest bought them out...I worked for them as a milkman for two years and then I went in business with another German fellow...the service station business. And we stayed together for 13 years and then we split up and I had a business of my own...he kept the old one.
- Q Did you get into another service station?
- A Yeah.
- Q Is that where you're working now?
- A No, I'm retired now.
- Q Did you sell your station?
- B Would you like to buy it?
- A No, I lease it now.
- Q You lease it now? You wish you had sold it now, right?
- A Well, there are many values to it...it's in a good location, nice lot.
- Q Well, can you remember when both of you were first married, as a young couple, you had been over here...what did you say, about two or three years?
- B No, I was here...let's see, '27 I came here...
- A She was five years....

Q You were here five years before you were married?

B Was it five years? That's right.

Q So by the time you were married, both of you were pretty familiar with the country...

A Oh yeah.

Q Did you have a great difficulty when you were first married?

B Well, we would, because you couldn't get any work then...that was hard. But otherwise, no.

....Dorothy's a school teacher--that's our oldest daughter, and the other one...

Q Is her name Dodds now?

B Yeah. Do you know her?

Q No, I've heard people speak of her.

B Yeah, in fact she taught...she just substitutes now...they have two children. And our other daughter, she...

A She was ready to go to Delaware and she went out for a summer job and she got stuck there....works for the Experimental Station.

B She liked the money and so she wouldn't go back to school then.

Q What does she do at the Experimental Station?

A In the cloth counter building?...where they test the nylon...the strength of nylon. And she went to...well, she was registered to go to Delaware, and then she took night classes. Do you know Dr. Kulig (sp?)--German teacher...she always told her, "Why don't you quit your job and come down here and study...It's so easy for you to grasp it...Why don't you make it a full-time education?" And then after she was at DuPont for about a year, they put her on shift work, you know. And then she met the fellow that she married later on at a fraternity party and then they got married, so she didn't go to finish college.

Q Did either of your children ever ask you about your immigrant experience?

A Well, you tell 'em once in a while, you know. And of course they, like so many of the Americans, they just sometimes think we were too dumb to know any better.

B Oh, no, they never said that.

A No, but seriously speaking, now, I mean to say, when I had boys from

school working for me, you know, I would tell them about the bad times I've seen in this country....oh, you know, he just went in the corner and told the other one, "He just didn't know any better." No...I hope none of them will have to go through a Depression like we had in '29 and the early '30's.

Q Did you ever think about going back to Germany at that time?

A No. I never...will say I've never been homesick like some of them claim they've been...and I never had a desire to go back. I was away for 2½ years from '26 'til '29, and you know there was just something that you wouldn't want to go back to. You know, it sounds strange, but in the two and a half years...well, I had been away already four years before that so it was six and a half years that I had been away from home. And then your friends are gone, you know...and some of them were married, and even if you meet them, you know, you have a glass of beer with them, you know, together, you know, but you only can talk so long, then you run out of material. The same thing when you go over there now, you know, the only one you really can talk to is your brother or if you have a sister talk to them...because the rest of them...I'm speaking of the Eastern Zone, now...the rest of them, they clam up. If you ask them, "How are you?" they're "Fine, thank you," and then they'll look at you. Sad, isn't it, when people are afraid to speak.

Q Why do you think they're afraid to speak?

A Oh, well...if you have a one-party system, you can't say much.

B I don't think it's as bad as we were there 15 years ago...16 years ago. Then it really was a lot worse, you know, naturally. Everything was still so new and all, and a lot of people they were still a lot more afraid. They had to produce so much milk and eggs and all that. Well, now it's a little different already. People...well, they don't own the farms anymore...the government has them now, and you just work there, like Erich's brother he works for the government there in the grain--isn't that where Richard works?

A Yeah.

Q Is he in East Germany?

B Yes.

Q It would be difficult for him to leave even if he wanted to.

B Oh yes.

A Well, he could leave for three weeks now, you know. He's past 65. But before anyone below 65, you know, they wouldn't let you out.

B They were afraid to take a chance.

Q Did your brother ever write to you?

A Oh, yeah.

B But we didn't know how things were 'til we went over there, naturally, then we found out. They don't like to write things like that because they're afraid...some of their letters are censored. And you don't like to take a chance.

A If they open it and don't like what's in there, they tear it up.

Q Did they ever tear up any of the letters that you sent?

B Well, we don't know, see. We don't know. We don't write that often.

A You say, are they afraid to talk. My brother was a well-known farmer in the county, and they were after my brother all the time. Why don't you sign over, and you'll get your regular monthly check, you know...they put it in the bank...they don't give it to you, they put it in the bank...instead of capital even today, they put the money in the bank...you don't get it. You can draw some of it if you like, you know. So that went on for a couple of years, and they attacked him publicly in the newspapers. And you know, when it finally came to blows, my brother said, "You know," he said, "you just get to the point where you don't know what to do anymore." So they got my brother and the neighbor...we all grew up together... and they got them to that meeting...it started at 10:00 in the morning. So they were hammering away, "Now you sign over and the rest will follow you." So it got towards evening there, you know, my brother said our neighbor, he said, "I could tell he was ready to bust." So he said, "Look," grabbed him by the shoulders and he said, "Excuse me, we have to get some fresh air." So they went outside and my brother tried to calm the other guy down. And they couldn't get away, even, from the meeting place. There were guys all around there, you know. So they went in then and they finally signed over. And you know, in early afternoon, they went all over the county broadcasting it in those loudspeaker trucks, you know, "Richard Kaeks has signed." And he said, "I hadn't signed anything until late in the evening." They went already in the afternoon. So that's why people don't like to talk much.

Q Do you have any of your other relations still living over there?

A My brother died in the war...in Rumania. Then I have cousins. That's about it.

Q Well, can you remember your first experiences when you just arrived here in this country?

B It was awful hot. And of course I remember very well about the food. Naturally we had nothing like that...white bread, you know, we would just get at holidays, and here you could have it every day.

Q Did you like it better?

B Well, now I eat rye bread because I like rye bread, but then, naturally, when I first came over and saw all the food that they

had here, I just couldn't get over it how well people were off... and the clothes and all. Well, even to buy an average...my uncle worked in a bakery, Freihoffer's, for many many years, and an average person...they had a lovely home, and I mean, nice furniture and nice clothes and all that...and I just, you know, couldn't believe why my mother went over there, you know, when she had all the opportunities here to have those good things, and so nice and we were so poor over there. Of course she didn't know the war was gonna break out, either. Oh, even a person who had a lot more ground and all, they could not afford what an average person here could... let's say a rich person couldn't afford the things that a poor person has here. This...to me...I thought it really was wonderful. Naturally we worked...you have to work any place you go...there's no two ways about it. But still you get a lot more for your money and you can afford a lot more than you can over there.

- Q Can you remember anything that struck you as strange...really confusing, or strange, about Americans or the way they behaved...things that you couldn't at first understand?
- B Well, I think you sort of forget those things. I sort of thought children talked fresh to their parents...that's one thing that impressed me quite a lot...because we wouldn't get away with anything like that...well, I don't know...eat an awful lot of candy and ice cream...that I couldn't understand either...because we would get money to just go to the corner store and buy all these things that we couldn't, and I had no desire for it anyway. I thought that it was an awful lot of candy and sweet stuff being eaten over here. And I still think so.
- Q What about the way the American government worked...the state government, or the political system...did you ever wonder about that?
- B I don't know...I sort of always felt that whatever they did was right.
- A Well, of course, when you come over first, you know, it's the language barrier, even if you buy a Sunday paper, you didn't know what you were reading anyhow, you know.
- B Comics were what I read, and that's how I little by little would read...but I don't look at them today...
- Q What about radio at that time...did you listen to that?
- B Yes.
- Q Do you remember any programs that stand out in your mind?
- B Yes. WDEL.
- Q What did they broadcast on that station?
- B Well, an awful lot of talking, like. They used to give recipes and

things like that...a lot more talking than...I didn't hear as much commercials then...at least we didn't think there was that much like there is now. They did a lot more...they gave recipes and things like that, you know, on the air. And then you would hear music. But now there's so much commercial on. Every three minutes they stop the program and advertise.

Q Did you read any German language newspapers?

B No. Philadelphia, I think they had it once in a while...I would get one from someone that would give it to me or something...

A No...oh, yes, I think I had the New York...oh...the States Herald, I think, was a German language newspaper...came from New York. And there were a couple of German fellows and a Swiss fellow on the farm at duPont's there, you know, they would get it and then we all glanced through there once in a while. See, when I came here in August...in October the night school started, you know...English, and they tried to give you history, you know, how the government functions and so on. And many many evenings...we had classes twice a week...yeah, twice a week. We walked from Winterthur farm to Montchanin...you know where that is? We came out the back entrance of Winterthur and came up 100 to Montchanin. At Montchanin they had a grammar school there.

Q About how many miles was that?

A Oh, about three miles. And wintertime too...sometimes snow on the ground...oh, four or five of us boys walking down there, you know...we didn't think nothing of it. Today, you know, you would sort of hold back there, you know, "What do you mean, walk?" So then...well, you know, they teach English and history...they prepare some of the people for their citizenship...those that were five years over, you know, and could qualify. The hardest thing, I think, for anyone who comes over here as a foreigner is the language barrier. This is really hard.

B And no matter what they would laugh at you always would feel that they were laughing at you.

A Oh, no. I laughed with them.

B Well, I did feel that way.

Q Was there any friction...you speak of the people that worked at Winterthur farms...all the different nationalities...was there any friction between like the Italians and the Germans...

A No, no. I tell you, the first time that I had wine, it was during prohibition in '26, you know. So this one Italian boy comes, he

says, "Hey, German," he said, "you come with us to town tonight... going to a party." And of course I knew very little English...so we went to that party in Wilmington...Italian people...very nice food, and you get introduced, you know...that there homemade wine, you know. So...it was wintertime, plenty of heat in the house, and you get a couple of glasses of wine, and the man of the house offered me Italian cigar, and that set me off.

Q What about during World War II...because Americans were at war with Germany...were you treated badly by anybody?

A No, no. I was in the service station business...first I was still in the milk business in '43...I got a service station in town. People didn't mind at all. You just gave them the service...sold them the goods and treated them right, and there was no...of course there was some...but very very few cases where they would make a nasty remark...there were very few.

Q Where was your service station?

A 11th and West.

Q You were there from '43 until?

A '47...'46, and then we built a station out on Maryland Avenue.

Q Well, you lived in Wilmington for a short while when you first came over, right?

B Yeah...until we moved here.

Q What was your impression of that city?

B Well, I thought it was very nice because where I come from was a village and we didn't have a big town...it was just a little town which you know had just a few stores and was more like a market-place outside...with all the Jewish people. But what impressed me so much here...the people mixed well...you know, Jews or Italian, whatever it was. We lived first on Conrad Street, where our uncle was, you know, and there was that corner store with Jewish people, and they used to come in, you know, and she would have coffee with my aunt, and I thought that was wonderful because you just didn't see those things over there. And here...and Polish and all...people seem to mix more here than they did over there. And of course when I was a younger girl there were a lot of Polish and Catholic churches around, you know. And we sort of used to think we were something better because we were not Polish, although we couldn't tell them that. Now when I came to this country there was no difference, you know, everybody was the same, and I thought that was very nice that they mix as well as they do here...get along.

Q Do you remember people living in ghettos or in their own little neighborhood...you talk of a Jewish person...did the Jews seem to live in their own little neighborhood?

B Over there?

Q In Wilmington.

B Oh, in Wilmington. I don't think so. I think that they sort of... I wouldn't know where there was any place where they would say...

A Brandywine Hills.

B Well, now, yes. But I don't think at that time when I first came.

A But you wouldn't call it a ghetto...

Q Well, I don't mean a ghetto. I mean in the old sense of the word, where, you know, one nationality lived...like you would say the Italians would live...

B Yeah, I think that that way there used to be different...like Lincoln Street was Italian and Browntown, Polish people lived more there...now where did the Germans live--6th and Jackson?

A No, from what I gather, they lived around ^{VILLE} 6th and French...all on the east side. But you know there was...like a bunch of Germans would live together on one block or two blocks and you would have Polish...Polish they went to Hedge~~row~~ (?) or Browntown. And then you had the Irish and....You know that word ghetto, you know, it was coined during World War II, you know, when they put the Jews all in one section like in Poland, there, in Warsaw, wasn't it? But I don't think that people felt bad about things...living amongst themselves. They didn't feel bad about it.

Q No. The word ghetto means something bad today.

A Yeah. Today...to live in a ghetto, oh!

Q But I'm talking about...ghetto originally meant where one nationality, like the Jewish ghetto would be where the Jewish people lived...that's all it meant.

A And maybe they didn't want nobody else to live beside them but another Jew...the same maybe with the Germans...or Pole or Irishman.

Q A lot of people say that the Germans don't live together as much...

B No, not anymore.

Q You think that's true?

B Yes. They're sort of scattered all around.

A I think that's somewhat controlled by the economic condition, too. You maybe have...when we came to Wilmington, first we lived in Bancroft Park, see. They were building houses on South Scott Street, the last block at Canby Park. So we bought a house there. Then we lived there 17 years then, well all of a sudden we feel like we

wanted to live out in the country. They were building those houses here, we bought this house.

B And there was more ground, too.

A Oh, a little more ground, you know...where we lived before was a duplex house...even though it was just as comfortable as this house...but you know, you wanted the four walls for yourself...not somebody living at this side of the wall...if they have a big fight you hear it, you know. And some of the Germans...well, you have them all over the county...the northern part of Wilmington, you have them in Newark section...well, I would say like our church itself, I don't know how far our people live apart. You know, when they had the church at 6th and Jackson, where the freeway is today, well years ago they all lived around there...in town proper, you know...but not anymore....they live all over.

Q Some people have said that, you know, they moved out because of the Negroes moving in right around the time of World War II. Did this affect your neighborhood...you said Canby Park?

A No, no. There's no Negroes living there yet. Maybe some people moved there...in the last ten years...that could happen, but 15-20 years ago it was so far-fetched, you know.

B We live here 15 years now, and we didn't have any apartments there at all. Now we have those apartments and I've seen colored people I think that live there, and even if one would buy next to you, there is nothing you can do about it. And if they're nice people, I certainly wouldn't try to treat 'em any other way...they're human beings, after all, they have a right to live here too, same as we do. And Germans...there are many people that you wouldn't probably live with either...we all have our faults. They make so much fuss about the Polish people in the jokes and all that...now from what I have seen over there, and we lived...the third house we lived on Scott Street, there were Polish people and they were just as clean as anyone could be. They always say they're dirty and all that, it's just--I imagine they just talk like that; it's not true.

Q What about the neighborhood where you had your service station, your first service station. What was that neighborhood like?

A Well, we had all duPont employees there. See we still operated six days a week even during World War II. We only could operate six days...during rationing, too, you know, twelve hours a day. And we were busy six days a week. Gasoline had as much with inside work...that's how we made our money. And well, we had a nice clientele, I mean to say, people that came in were educated people, you know...but I mean, they had been around, they knew the score, you know.

Q Do you remember any of your customers...any particular customer?

A Yes, I had one particular, DuPont Lee...I don't know if you ever heard the name or not. He was the first customer after rationing was off. And he drove his big car in there...took about 18 gallons of gasoline. And we were talking and laughing and joking

and he tried to drive off...never thought about paying. I said, "Mr. DuPont Lee, how about a little of this?" Sharp used to stop in there, who lives on the Kennett Pike. We had all kinds of people there.

Q How well did that rationing system in World War II work...from your point of view? Some people say that there was a lot of cheating.

A Well, the cheating was done...sometimes in the redemption centers and, well I tell you, we had an inventory of 4,000 gallons of gas. We only had one kind of gas, that was Blue Sunoco. And when the inspector came in, we had to have enough coupons to cover what's left in the ground.

END OF INTERVIEW